



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

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 14, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Pursuant to Section 56(3) of The Financial Administration Act, relating to Supplementary Loan and Guarantee Authority, I am now tabling certain loans and advances and guarantees as required under that Act.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I wonder if we might have leave to revert back to Reading and Receiving Petitions. (Agreed)

I have reviewed the petition and it conforms with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense. (Assemblies of Manitoba Chiefs and Others funding request re Aboriginal Justice Inquiry)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the public gallery, where we have, from the St. George School, forty-five Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Clint Harvey. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Bob Rose).

Oh behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Seniors Transport Services Program Continuation

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): My question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Our worst fears are now reality. Seniors Transport Service announced it must fold immediately at this Christmas season, so cold, because this Government reneged on its election promise. They well know what the promise was.

This service was started and run by volunteers such as the Fort Garry Legion, Age and Opportunity, and assisted by contributions of over \$50,000 from companies such as SuperValu and others. These companies and others gladly allowed volunteers their time off from their duties at work to assist Seniors Transport Service, a perfect model of cooperation between the service groups, private enterprise and Government.

Instead of using this as a model to expand throughout the city, as was the original mandate, this Government

has callously pulled the plug on volunteers and seniors alike, a disheartening move and a signal to all volunteer groups in Manitoba. Does this Minister have the last-minute plans to save this efficient, personal, vital service for seniors of Winnipeg?

* (1335)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): In the fiscal year that we are just completing, this Government and the previous administration have given \$75,000 towards STS. We have also given \$100,000 towards the extended Handi-Transit and will continue to work with the City of Winnipeg on funding over a four-year plan and continue that relationship and that commitment to seniors throughout the entire City of Winnipeg so that all seniors throughout the city will now be eligible to have that transportation.

Mr. Rose: We never did like broken records but to the same Minister, this Minister, the very least he can do is live up to that election promise to keep Seniors Transport Service alive till the end of April and during the coldest season that we have here so that indeed the service clubs and private industry can be approached again for support where the Government has failed.

Mr. Ducharme: I guess if he calls it a broken record, again where was the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) when he was part of the City of Winnipeg when they decided last spring to discontinue that program? Where was he?

As I have said, we will work and cooperate with the City of Winnipeg to make sure, in our negotiations in regard to the plan that has been set in place, that we will continue to work for all the seniors throughout the total City of Winnipeg.

Handi-Transit Expansion

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Now that this STS has failed, will this Minister contact the city to expand the Handi-Transit fully and immediately? Will he advance Manitoba's share of funds for this immediately? Will he ensure that Handi-Transit's mandate now will include seniors, as is not the case today?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): We are in close contact with the City of Winnipeg, our department, at all times. There was a program set in place. It is a four-year program. A four-year program is set in place so that all seniors, regardless of where they are living in the city, who cannot take the regular transit system, will be eligible for that particular service. So let us not have the particular Member on the other side try to grey that particular area. There is a service out there that is being expanded and will be expanded over the next four years.

Seniors Transport Service Medical Certificate

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): I have another new question to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme): The Seniors Transport Service was scuttled not only by the Tories at City Hall and in this Government but without one single contact with the dedicated volunteer board. I wonder if this is a signal that all volunteer boards are getting.

Close friendships have been shattered in Winnipeg because of this. Seniors who have been used to this service, without it, will be forced from their homes, many to higher-costing institutions and less friendly, and yet this Minister callously refers to the service as exclusive. This move is reminiscent of the federal Conservative move to de-index Old Age Pension and it is certainly sending seniors the same type of message.

As a major funder of Handi-Transit, will this Minister use his influence to stop at least the demeaning and cumbersome practice of demanding medical certificates for seniors, and will he insist that Winnipeg Transit advise all seniors that (interjection) They think it is funny. I guess you have all the way along. You probably laughed in Cabinet too.

Will this Minister insist that Winnipeg Transit advise all seniors that Handi-Transit is open for business for them with service at least equal to Seniors Transport Service?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, let us get it on the record. This Government did not scuttle the STS. We contributed \$75,000 and we contributed the two previous years.

Also, Mr. Speaker, let us get it on the record that now, through the city and this particular Government, all seniors across the city will now benefit by this particular program. Not only that, but there are handicapped people, through the extended program, who will now also benefit along with all the seniors.

Mr. Rose: We should live so long to see the day.

Board Meeting

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): I would like to address my first supplementary question to the Minister who advocates for seniors (Mr. Neufeld). Has this Minister intervened with the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), and indeed Cabinet, to save this valuable service for his seniors, and will he now extend the courtesy of a meeting with the board of Seniors Transport Service?

* (1340)

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): We, of course, are working with the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) and the city to give the services to the seniors that they deserve. I think the Member has been well answered today. I do not know what else he wants.

Continuation

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): To the same Minister who advocates for seniors, because his Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) has not, I would like to ask the Minister who advocates for seniors, through you, Mr. Speaker, have you informed yourself of the operation of Handi-Transit in the city? Have you studied it? Will you go to bat to see that all seniors in Winnipeg, through one area to the other in Winnipeg, all of it, get immediate service to the level now offered by Seniors Transport Service in Winnipeg?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) and I have been in constant touch with respect to this matter, and we will continue to be in touch. Yes, we are consulting and we will continue to give the services to the seniors that they deserve.

Klinic Community Health Centre Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Acting Minister of Health. Last week, we asked the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) if he understood the implications of the freezing of the capital expansion for the Klinic program. That was inconsistent with health reform that was written by this Government and placed in the Speech from the Throne.

Can the Acting Minister of Health advise us what further action and review has taken place with the project, Klinic, in light of their letter on December 13 to the Minister of Health, stating that they are exasperated by a recent fire inspection report which requires renovations and modifications to the current facility to meet the Manitoba Fire Code? Could the Minister please advise us on the status of the fire inspector's report and the status of this much-needed project in terms of the City of Winnipeg health services?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Acting Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I think that is a question that should be answered directly by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and I would be pleased to take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health at this time.

Mr. Doer: Thank you.

Health Care Program Cuts

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings). Would the Deputy Premier, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, investigate the distorted priorities of the Conservative Government where every preventative health care program has been frozen and put on hold and needed preventative health care programs have been cut by the present Conservative Government in terms of the programs and resources in this community, whether it is the Klinic, the Health Action Centre, the Home Care Programs?

Would the Deputy Premier please investigate the fact that the Morden facility, which was on the priority list, has proceeded and the Clinic and the Community Health Centre has been cut by this present Government in terms of their lopsided priorities?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): The distortion that the Member speaks of is entirely on his side of the House. There has been an increase of 23 percent in Home Care in this province and, no matter how he wants to cut it, we still are doing everything within our grasp to provide the services that the people of this province demand.

Mr. Doer: The Member knows that the increase is similar to the increase in the last Budget. The Member knows that there are cutbacks going on.

Home Care System Complaints

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Neufeld). In the Estimates, Monday, he stated clearly in this House that he had not ever received a call from seniors dealing with the Home Care Programs and services to them in this community and indeed in Manitoba. We have received all kinds of calls this morning—a number of calls this morning—and we have received all kinds of calls before today in terms of asking the question.

My question to the Minister of Seniors is, are seniors phoning his office and complaining about the lack of senior services or just that they do not have any faith in this Government in terms of rectifying that situation?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): I would be pleased if the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) would share the names of the people who have complained to him and we would look into it.

* (1345)

Health Care Seniors' Support Services

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): We wrote the Premier (Mr. Filmon) some eight weeks ago and still do not have a response from some seniors. We wrote again last evening, still do not have a response on some of the seniors. My final question is to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Neufeld). Would he please, on behalf of seniors, meet with the Premier to discuss the cutbacks that are going on in the Ministry of Health and the numbers of calls and numerous calls we are getting from seniors on a daily basis with the changes in the policy and the implementation of the policy by the present Conservative Government?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): It is my understanding that the budget has been increased by some 9 percent and, if the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), and I will repeat, shares the names of the complainants with us, we will look into it but, until we get those names, there is nothing we can do with respect to those complaints.

Charleswood Bridge Environmental Impact Study

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Many citizens in the constituencies located in St. James are very concerned with the proposal of the Moray Street Bridge-Charleswood Corridor Project. The main areas of concern are with the lack of genuine public consultation, with the total neglect for assessing the environmental effects on the residential areas and with the inadequacy of those responsible to submit alternative considerations.

On June 27, Prime Minister Mulroney stated that mechanisms should ensure that economic decisions must take environmental impact into account. Can the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) tell the House what the environmental impact will be on the surrounding community both north and south of the river?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): To enlighten the individual across the way, when the city requests the Urban Affairs for funding for this particular bridge, then we will decide at that appropriate time to look into these matters, but until now the City of Winnipeg has not requested the province to fund this particular project.

Mrs. Yeo: Can this Minister tell the community when they might anticipate some sort of environmental impact review to be undertaken? Does he have to wait for the city to give him direction? Will he advocate a public hearing and will the public be allowed to make representation?

Mr. Ducharme: To repeat, when the city does come forward and requests funding for that particular project, then any of these things can be considered. However, until they decide that they are definitely going to come forward and ask for those funds, then the Minister at that time acts on the request from the city.

Negotiations

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): To the same Minister, inasmuch as part of the capital budget of the city is from provincial funds, has the Minister had any meaningful liaison with representatives of the city with regard to this particular project?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): The Minister of Urban Affairs does have negotiations, to the Member across the way. The Minister and our Cabinet meets with the city on a monthly basis and, not only that, we usually meet together with councillors at very appropriate times. I have met with the chairman of Works and Ops and we know that there is a bridge in the mold in that particular area. However, I must repeat again, when they come forward and do request funds, then all considerations will be given at that time.

Property Taxes - Winnipeg - Assessment Process

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): My questions are for the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings), and concern the complications of the assessment process. Mr. Speaker, the intent of the assessment process is to provide a system that will allow for a fair and equalized evaluation of properties for taxation purposes. The theory is that comparable properties would be taxed in the same amount. The assessment process is in such a state of confusion and turmoil that it is doubtful that it might ever be straightened out. The last complete assessment was in 1975 and that still remains to be validated. Large blocks of properties have to be factored out. There are backlogs, unevenness, inequities and mass confusion in the current system. It is not the fault of an understaffed, overworked Assessment Department in the City of Winnipeg which had to deal with 15,000 appeals, for instance, in 1987 but clearly there are problems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we see a judge frustrated, his hands tied. He feels that he would like to dictate legislation instead of trying to interpret legislation that leaves him handcuffed and unable to approach it. The whole assessment process is up in the air. Will the Minister share with this House his plans to address the concerns of the existing assessment process?

* (1350)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that is a very complicated issue and could take a fair length of time to answer but, first of all, regarding the preamble and the comments of the judge that are in the papers today, I will refrain from making comments on that until the judge has made a ruling.

In terms of how the assessment reform should progress and how some of the inequities that are in the system can be addressed, we have been working diligently towards assessment reform for 1990. It is a process that we believe has not moved fast enough. There have been inequities and problems, not only in the city but in rural Manitoba as well, that we identified very clearly in some of our campaigns. We are working to meet the 1990 deadline for reassessment process and in that process a complete revision of the Act that relates to assessment and allow the people of this province to again have confidence in the equity of the assessment system.

Mr. Angus: The indications of the Minister that they are indeed moving it back a year, I suspect, are so that he can get a better handle on it and we would not be looking forward to legislation until 1990 instead of 1989. Perhaps he could clarify that, Mr. Speaker.

Weir Commission Recommendations

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): My supplementary question then is that the Manitoba Assessment Review Committee Report, known as the Weir Commission,

was released in 1982 and it contained many positive and good recommendations. Will the Minister advise the House as to what action the Government will take in carrying out some of these positive recommendations in the Weir Report?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Again, Mr. Speaker, the Weir Report is largely the basis upon which an awful lot of work has to be done in the area of assessment.

I would like to correct something that the Member said in his preamble. If I left the impression that legislation would not be brought forward until 1990, what I was trying to say was that our objective is that legislation and reassessment would be in place for 1990. That is a goal that we are working towards. When he talks about what role will the Weir Commission Report play, it will play an important part but the decisions are still of an ongoing nature and, as problems are identified, they will be brought forward and dealt with as we work towards the 1990 deadline.

Property Taxes - Winnipeg Assessment Process

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): The existing system which allows for five areas and 12 groups to be processed in a different basis have caused some frustration in the courts for the appeal process and I am hoping that the Minister will address that. But what is desperately needed is financial help to the City of Winnipeg so that the Assessment Department can address the problem properly with the right people and the technology advances.

Will the Minister address the concerns of the city in relation to bringing them up to date so that they can meet with your end-result desires by 1990 and have fair and equitable assessment throughout the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am not clear if the Member is advocating on behalf of the city that the province insert resources in order to help them meet their assessment deadlines. If that is what he is saying, I guess we can add that to the \$700 million of additional expenditures that they have been advocating since our Budget came down.

The assessment process in rural Manitoba is not meeting its five-year deadline either, and that is why the part of the assessment reform process will involve putting all of the assessment material on a computerized system where it will automatically update changes in the assessment. Mr. Speaker, if the system works as we are expecting it to, by inserting sales information on a regular basis -(Interjection)- Well, this is a reasonably complicated issue that affects all Manitobans and I would expect I could finish my last two sentences. If the computerized process works as we expect it to with the information inserted in the program on an ongoing basis regarding sales, we can in fact do a biannual or triannual reassessment and bring the assessment process then up to date.

* (1355)

University Students' Alliance Meeting Cancellation

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): My question is for the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). The Minister of Education just received a letter from the Manitoba Alliance of University Students, a letter that I can only term as angry in tone, because of the Minister's cancellation of a meeting scheduled for December 1, on a few hours' notice, Mr. Speaker, that was purported to discuss many of the issues the student alliance had raised with this Minister in a previous meeting.

Given that this alliance represents some 30,000 students across Manitoba who have a sincere interest in the development of appropriate quality education in our university community and that this meeting was cancelled because, quoting from the letter, the Minister did not have sufficient knowledge of the agenda to prepare for the meeting, can he tell the Members of this Legislature and the university community when this Minister is going to sit down and come to grips with the issues that are facing our university community? Can we expect that in the near future?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Member does not have the accurate information with regard to the meeting. The meeting was set up and, in fact, we had asked for an agenda for the meeting and, when we had called back to the individual involved who requested the meeting to ask whether they had an agenda and asked for a return phone call as to when we could expect the agenda and also set up another meeting because on that particular day we were not able to meet—we were willing to meet on another day. That phone call did not come back to the office, Mr. Speaker. We are still waiting for that phone call and, as a matter of fact, I have personally not seen the letter that the Member refers to and would comment on it more elaborately when I have seen that letter.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary, the Minister is not reading his mail. It is no wonder he does not understand the issues. The agenda that this Minister was waiting for was hand delivered to him on October 20 when he did have a meeting with this group and they were expecting some response to the issues they had raised.

U of M Faculty Association Meeting Cancellation

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): My supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister also indicate to this House why he also cancelled a meeting with the University of Manitoba Faculty Association, another group with a vested interest in maintaining the University of Manitoba, the quality of education there? Can he indicate why he cancelled the meeting with this group?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh! Hang on to your chair.

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

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): Well, it just shows you how narrow minded this Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is. When we met with the Students' Association in October, we covered the agenda. So, therefore, it was not an agenda that was carried over to another meeting, so he is wrong on that count.

I would like to inform the Member for Flin Flon that last week the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), along with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and myself, visited the University of Manitoba and, in fact, we did go through and tour some of the facilities that are in need of repair and have been in touch with the University of Manitoba on an ongoing basis. So all of his allegations have no foundation. He is wrong, as he always is, and therefore his allegations are just not true.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Storie: My final supplementary to the Minister of Education, I am not wrong about the cancelled meetings, I am not wrong about the cancelled meeting with the faculty association of the University. The fact of the matter is this Minister keeps post-secondary education at the bottom of the priority list for this Government.

* (1400)

Universities Funding

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): My final question, given that this Government is involved in the development of budgets which are going to impact on all of the universities—the Brandon University, University of Winnipeg, CUSB, and the University of Manitoba—can this Minister indicate whether he is prepared to meet at all with the faculty association, with the students' association so that they can help him address the major funding problems that are facing our universities, or is he going to keep his door closed to those groups of people? (Interjection)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that this Government and this Minister have met with the various organizations many more times than the former Minister, especially the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) did when he was Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, I have met with the three presidents of the universities in this province, and we have discussed at length some of the very important issues that concern the universities in this province. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that we have addressed the capital facilities aspect and the deterioration of capital facilities, which that Government did not have the will to address. The University of Manitoba was about to lose its accreditation in dentistry because nobody would

address the needs in that particular faculty. This Government has addressed those needs and we have ensured that accreditation to the School of Dentistry is there and is in place. We will continue to address the needs of the universities in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon, on a point of order.

Mr. Storie: The Member clearly is misinforming this house. The previous Government had developed a \$20 million University Development Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to table a letter from the University of—

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

GATT Negotiations Agricultural Subsidies

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): I think all of us are somewhat disappointed that at the recent Montreal round of GATT negotiations that there was no resolution to the ongoing subsidy war between the European Economic Community and the United States. This means that Canada once again will have to be competing with the treasuries of these two major grain exporters and Canadian producers will once again have to rely on ad hoc measures such as the Special Grains Program.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). What initiatives are he and his provincial and federal counterparts taking to come up with techniques that will buffer the Canadian farmers from these trade distorting practices so that they will not have to rely on ad hoc measures and band-aid measures in the future?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Certainly all members of the industry of agriculture are disappointed that the GATT negotiations did not proceed smoothly along the path of resolution of the trade wars between the United States and Europe. Clearly, the positions that the two countries put on the table were hard and fast positions that neither would accommodate in terms of further discussion at those meetings.

It is our belief that the issue is not dead, that there will be continuous opportunities to come to some manner of agreement in the next four months. I understand there will be another meeting scheduled for Geneva in April where the issue will be brought back to the table. We hope that the 14-member group of countries which involves Canada will be able to have some ability to get these two major powers back to the negotiating table. That is the only solution that we can hope for in the near term is that we get those two major powers back to the table to agree to a schedule of capping subsidies and slow removal.

Agriculture Industry Income Support Program

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): A supplementary to the same Minister, at the recent Outlook Conference, Mr. Mazankowski indicated that the federal Government is seriously looking at one all-encompassing program for income support to Canadian farmers. My question is to the Minister. What negotiations have taken place between the federal Government and this province? When can we anticipate such an all-encompassing single program being brought into action?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, this one all-encompassing support program for farmers has been discussed in the newspapers. There has been no official report tabled that we as a Government can analyze to see what role we might play in it, whether we would support it or ask for changes in the proposal. We are expecting the proposal, basically called Grains 2000, to be tabled for discussion in the very near future. It has a lot of positive merits, but the method of implication will undoubtedly be difficult.

Mr. Laurie Evans: In that same vein, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister what measures he plans to take to make sure that such an all-encompassing single program will first of all be market neutral; secondly, that it will not be in contravention about what might be regarded as good agricultural conservation practices.

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, when we get into the discussion, when we see the report, we will be in a position to respond in that direction. Certainly, we would want it to be conservation conscious. I can assure the Member, as I did in concurrence yesterday, that we are actively looking at making the Crop Insurance Program more acceptable to the farm community in an intermediate period of time until that proposal has some opportunity for discussion.

I would have to suggest that we are three or four years away from seeing implementation of that program because of all the complexities of getting the present programs geared down and into that kind of a program if it ever sees the light of day.

Rafferty-Alameda Project Water Quality

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner). When the Minister tabled the technical report dealing with Rafferty-Alameda Dam, he promised at his press conference of October 13 that he would: "He would require project proponents to prepare an assessment of post-project water quality at the Manitoba-North Dakota border." Has the Minister asked the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers to extend their environmental impact statement to study the downstream effects of the Rafferty-Alameda Dam project in Manitoba, as he promised to do so on October 12 and 13?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, yes.

Environmental Impact Study

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the same Minister, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the U.S. proponent of the Rafferty-Alameda project and, according to information I received from the U.S. project manager, Stu Foley, this morning, they have not done a study on the project impact in Manitoba, nor have they been asked to. Will the Minister admit now that the U.S. Corps of Engineers is not doing a study on effects on water in Manitoba. Will he call for a Canadian environmental impact study on the project?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, after considerable discussion in this Chamber and also considerable discussion about water quality and the downstream effects of the Rafferty-Alameda project and the impacts of those projects beyond Minot to Manitoba, we wrote a letter to the federal Minister of the Environment, asking the federal Minister of Environment to approach the American Government and ask the Army Corps of Engineers to in fact continue the study from Minot to the Manitoba border. That request has gone out from the Canadian Government to the American Government and to the Army Corps of Engineers.

So the reference that the Honourable Member makes to myself not having made that approach is simply not so. Those approaches have been made, the request has been made. We simply do not know whether the Army Corps of Engineers is going to concur with that request or not.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister could table that letter that he sent, because obviously the message did not come down to the project manager, and the ones who are carrying out the work have not received the direction.

The Minister is also on record on September 13 as saying that if the work done to date does not satisfy the province it will launch an independent study of the environmental impact. Since the Army Corps of Engineers is not doing a study downstream in Manitoba, will the Minister now keep his promise and call for an independent environmental impact study in Manitoba?

Mr. Penner: The information supplied by the Honourable Member again is not factual. We have no indication at all from the Army Corps of Engineers that they in fact will not concur with the request that was made by the federal Government to the American Government through to the Army Corps of Engineers. There is no indication from the Army Corps of Engineers that they either have intentions of or do not have intentions of concurring with requests that were made to them. - (Interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Goulds Point Development Plans

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) is aware of the Moose Lake-Goulds Point Recreational Association. I had brought this matter up earlier in Question Period and have not received any answers. In view of the recent press release by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), where the Premier signed an agreement between Manitoba and Minnesota on November 21 to promote cooperative, encourage new initiatives, on the night of August 18, 1986, the Minister supported a proposal of a road from Middlebro to Goulds Point and he is quoted as saying that in Hansard. My question to the Minister is, is he still in favour of that project?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I should apologize to the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake). He raised his question in the House earlier and I have not responded as such, but I would like to indicate that I have always supported any projects within my constituency, particularly this one. I have over a period of time had consultation with my colleagues from across the border, the American officials at various levels, and I am in consultation with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) looking at the possibility of requesting that a proposal call of nature could be developed for Goulds Point so that we have some justification for possibly putting a road in there.

Mr. Mandrake: I appreciate the answer.

Feasibility Study

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): The Minister was advised at a meeting of August 22, 1988, which he and I attended, that there are \$150,000 worth of fishing and hunting licences sold annually in this area. My question to the Minister is, will he speak to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) today and request funding from this year's budget so that this association can do a study as to the recreational area in Goulds Point?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Yes, I will speak with my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), today and make that appeal to him.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Speaker, that is what I call cooperation.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Highway Construction

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): I have spoken to U.S. officials on the road to Goulds Point. They are more than willing to sit down with this Minister and in lieu of the agreement which was signed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), I am quite confident that if the Minister talked to the people in Minnesota that we would get a road to Goulds Point. Will he do so?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I might add that this project itself or this endeavour is not quite that simple. It is a very expensive road program that we are talking about. What I am trying to establish is that we have some justification for putting a project into that area, and I will continue to work with the Minister of Natural Resources to see whether we can get some development going. The road itself without—(Interjection)—any—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I might add that to just build the road into that area out of a justifiable project out there would not justify the cost, especially when we have many roads throughout the province that need a lot of attention, but I will continue to work in that direction, together with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), to see whether we can establish a project so that we can justify the Manitoba portion of the cost and look forward to cost sharing with the American people on that project.

Free Trade Agreement Subsidy Definition

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) will have time for one short question.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I would like to address a question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). The U.S. has made it clear that Canadian subsidies to industry would be contrary to the intent and spirit of the Free Trade Agreement, but subsidies have not yet been defined. I would like to ask the Minister, will he have an opportunity, he and his staff, to have some input into the definition of subsidies? Will the provinces be involved in this process?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I can advise my honourable friend from Brandon East that never before in the history of dominion or federal-provincial relations has there been as extensive a consultation process between Ministers of Trade in the provinces and the federal Government. All during the process of negotiations with regard to the Free Trade Agreement, that occurred when the previous Government was in office. It has occurred with respect to the GATT round considerably, and will continue through the free trade negotiating process for the question of subsidies. We anticipate to have considerable input over the next coming months.

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

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On November 29 and December 1, I took under advisement points of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) regarding the admissibility of Bills 25 and 33, respectively, on the grounds that both are Money Bills and therefore cannot be introduced by a Private Member.

I have examined these Bills, reviewed Manitoba's rules and precedents and the usual parliamentary authorities, and have consulted the Assembly's Law Officer.

Bill 25, The Unfair Business Practices Act, assigns a significant number of duties and obligations to the director of the Consumers' Bureau of the Department of Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs. These are new duties being added to that officer's existing workload. The Bill does not contain any direct expenditure provisions.

Bill 33, The Employment Standards Amendment Act, does not impose or assign any specific duties or obligations on the Government. The Act does place additional obligations and responsibilities on employers. Ensuring that these are met may place an additional burden on Government. However, this is not clear from the Bill. This Bill also does not contain any direct expenditure provisions.

Manitoba Rule 53, which generally reiterates the provisions of Section 54 of the Constitution Act, 1867, states in part that any Bill introduced in the House to impose any new or additional charge upon the public revenue or upon the people shall be recommended to the House by a message from the Lieutenant-Governor before it is considered by the House.

I have reviewed the Manitoba Speakers' rulings delivered in relation to alleged Money Bills introduced by Private Members during the last 30 years. In every case, the Bills objected to included specific direct expenditure or taxation provisions, including provincial tax exemptions, for a specific organization; payment of a specific amount to a specific class of citizens; elimination of the salary ceiling for certain school board employees—50 percent of said salaries being paid by the province; and creation of a new category of persons to be compensated under an existing compensation program.

The practice prior to 1958 appears to have been generally the same, although the information available in a few cases is so limited as to conceal the specific reasons for the ruling given.

Confusion arises in these matters because the words in Rule 53, "a charge upon the public revenue," are sometimes regarded as being synonymous with "any public expenditure."

The term, in fact, means a very specific "charge" or direct and distinct provision for the expenditure of public funds or the imposition of a tax.

In referring to the authorities, I noted that according to Erskine May, "a charge upon the public revenue or

upon public funds now means an obligation to make a payment out of the Consolidated Fund," and that Money Bill, "in its widest sense, means a Bill, the main purpose of which is either to impose a charge upon public funds or to impose a charge upon the people, i.e., a tax."

Beauchesne's, in Citation 557, states "A bill, which does not involve a direct expenditure but merely confers upon the government a power for the exercise of which public money will have to be voted by Parliament, is not a money bill, and no Royal Recommendation is necessary as a condition precedent to its introduction."

Reference has been made to Speaker Walding's ruling respecting an amendment to The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act introduced by the then Honourable Member for St. Norbert. In that case, the amendment sought to create a new category of compensation for victims of crime which could be paid at the discretion of the board in addition to the compensation already provided for in the Act.

In my opinion, neither of these Bills involves a direct expenditure of public funds or imposes a charge upon the public revenue. Therefore, they are not Money Bills and are not required to be recommended to the House by message of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Parker Burrell (Swan River): I move, seconded by the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz), that we change Mitchelson for Hammond in Law Amendments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Statutory Regulations and Orders be amended as follows: St. James for Ellice; Selkirk for Springfield; St. Vital for Sturgeon Creek; and Wolseley for Inkster.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Agriculture be amended as follows: Springfield for Selkirk.

* (1420)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I think there is a will among all Honourable Members to waive Private Members' Hour today.

Mr. Speaker: Do we have leave to waive Private Members' Hour today? (Agreed)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Bills, as listed on today's Order Paper, in the order in which they are found?

Once Bill 52 has been distributed and once we complete the Bill that we are on at the time of the distribution, could Bill 52 then be called at that point and then carry on from there?

Mr. Speaker: No problem.

DEBATE ON THIRD READING

BILL NO. 35—THE LOAN ACT, 1988

Mr. Speaker: Debate on third reading, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 35, The Loan Act, 1988; Loi d'emprunt de 1988, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). (Stand)

THIRD READING—AMENDED BILL

BILL NO. 37—THE CROWN CORPORATIONS PUBLIC REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General) presented Bill No. 37, The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability and Consequential Amendments Act, for third reading.

MOTION presented.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I move, seconded by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 12—THE STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (1988)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), Bill No. 12, The Statute Law Amendment Act (1988); Loi de 1988 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak to Bill No. 12 at this time dealing with the amendment of a number of Bills contained in The Statute Law Amendment Act. Traditionally of course, this Act—an Act similar to this has been passed and brought in by Governments to facilitate the minor amendment usually called housekeeping amendments of a number of different Bills rather than bringing in separate Bills for each amendment, and of course this is attempting to do the same thing, I would think, although there are some amendments in this Act that are rather substantial in nature—substantive in nature, I should say—and there is some question in my mind as to whether in fact they should have been placed in The Statute Law Amendment Act, Bill No. 12.

One of those that I am particularly interested in is the one dealing with The Crown Lands Act which makes payment of compensation for possible future flood damage subject to agreement between the Crown and the purchaser and provides for the agreement to run with the land and to be supported by caveat. This has some history to it, this issue. The Provincial Land Use

Committee of Cabinet, PLUC, has for years considered the sale of flood-prone Crown lands and, over that period of time, has in fact turned down the sale of many of these pieces of Crown land to the lessees, usually the farmers who have been leasing that land for a number of years because it is subject to flooding.

When I say flooding, I believe the figure is the one in a 100-year flood limit which obviously, by definition, does not occur very often but in fact there is that potential for flooding and the potential for compensation to have to be paid to the owner once he has purchased that Crown land. So, Mr. Speaker, what happens is that the Government could be incurring future liabilities by sale of this land. So what in fact the Government has done over the years is to know that land will not be eligible for sale to the agricultural lessee. In fact, he will be able to continue to lease that land but we will not allow him to purchase that Crown land.

That was in many cases frustrating for many potential landowners of that Crown land. Therefore we had a number of representations made to us in Government prior to the election over the years, of probably 1983 to 1987, in which people protested the fact and appealed the fact that this land was not being sold to them on the grounds that perhaps there could be some flood damage at some time in the future.

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

They all, almost without exception, expressed the opinion that they would have no problem agreeing to no future compensation if there was a flood because that was not the primary motivation for them purchasing the land at all, as a matter of fact. They wanted to consolidate their property, add it to their holdings to facilitate the operations of their particular farm operation and for future generations perhaps. They really did not contemplate a need for compensation for any damages that might be done due to floods in the future. But because of the law the way it was, it was not possible to make that sale and still have a legal and binding caveat go with the title, so that if future purchasers were to own that land they too would be subject to that particular reservation, that they would not be eligible for compensation.

* (1430)

With this amendment, the Government is now rectifying that situation so that when lands are purchased that are flood prone that the caveat can go legally with the title and that any subsequent buyer will also be bound by that caveat. So we think that is a good provision; it was a necessary provision. It was one that we intended to bring forward in the last Session of the Legislature and, therefore, I support. However, I indicate again to the House that because it is rather substantive in nature that it should have been brought in by a separate Bill, in my opinion, than in The Statute Law Amendment Act.

I think the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) talked about—and I have heard this quite frequently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people saying, well, if only we had had a little more time, that we as a former Government

seem to say that we had a lot of things and, gee, if we had only had a little more time.

I think the most important fact that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) should remember, and all Members of the Government, when they reflect back on us making comments of that nature, that the last election was not planned. Therefore an agenda of the Government was not completed, it was ongoing. There were a lot of things in the mill, so to speak, things that were going to be done as they would be planned, as they moved toward the end of the term, as any Government does.

If you look at the Mulroney Government, surely they were in a real mess in mid-term in their Government and they would not have been re-elected at all two years earlier had they gone to the people for any kind of mandate on anything. There is no doubt about that. They were down about 22 percent in the polls. So the fact is that Governments tend to go in cycles, their popularity down during mid-term and usually work towards an up cycle around election time. In fact, that cycle was cut off—well, hopefully for Members opposite, they realize of course that their term could expire at any time. Therefore, they have to be perpetually ready. They cannot work on a four-year cycle. They have to be introducing legislation, taking action that they feel is in the best interest "... of the people of Manitoba at all times." Of course, they cannot do anything that is particularly unpopular. That is one of the drawbacks of a minority Government. At least consciously they cannot do that. They are doing things that are unpopular all the time, but they do not know it.

I just reference those points for the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) because he did facetiously make a facetious comment that we were making excuses that we did not have this done. In fact, we have to look at the circumstances leading up to the last election to realize that is in fact true, that in many cases work that would have been completed very shortly was cut off, unmercifully. Now, enough reflection.

I want to make some comments about The Fisheries Act as well, which is contained in The Statute Law Amendment Act. There is a major change there that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) was responsible for bringing forward, along with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), I would expect, because in fact the \$6 million limit for MACC loans has been exceeded. What is in fact happening at the present time, the Government, through MACC, is loaning the money to fishermen probably illegally at the present time. It will not be made legal again until they bring in this amendment.

They have increased the maximum from \$6 million to \$10 million. I have to ask, and I asked at the time I was Minister and I did not want to bring in an amendment that would have simply increased the dollar figure. I have to ask the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) now, who is responsible for The Statute Law Amendment Act, why he would bring in an Act that would simply increase the maximum from \$6 million to \$10 million for loans to fishermen, why in fact he would not have simply provided a clause here that would have enabled the Government to establish, by

regulation, loan limits for fishermen, as opposed to enshrining it in the legislation. I think the Attorney-General should discuss that with his colleagues before the debate is completed or at least so he has the answer in committee, because I will ask him and his staff why they are recommending and why they are indeed introducing an Act that provides, again, a dollar figure which would simply have to be amended in a few years' time again by a Government at that time with inflation and with more and more people involved in some of these programs. Quite often, these limits are exceeded from within a few years. I, therefore, wonder at the wisdom of bringing in an Act that simply replaces six with ten insofar as the Loan Authority.

I notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that most of the other changes of Acts that I am particularly interested in as a critic are not of a substantive nature. The Highway Traffic Act simply, from the advice we received from the Government, corrects drafting errors. The Municipal Act simply repeals the definitions for provincial judges so they would be included under The Interpretation Act. The Off-roads Vehicle Act corrects drafting errors. So all of those that are in my critic areas, I feel are of a minor nature and that we will not have any particular difficulty in supporting.

So I wanted to, in concluding, draw again to the attention of the Ministers responsible, the two Acts and the concerns that I have particularly with The Fisheries Act, where we have dollar limits set in the Act itself rather than including them in the regulation as is the case with most pieces of legislation at this time in our history.

Certainly years ago, many Acts had dollar figures. I raised this last year when talking about The Public Works Act amendments that the Minister had brought in where he had included dollar figures, gave examples where this had continued in some cases for 50 years where an Act was not amended and the dollar figure that was used was still the one put in in the 1930s. That was the way things were done then. But now, usually, Governments change and revise figures for costs for penalties, fines and assessed fees through regulation rather than by Acts of the Legislature. I think it would be consistent with that principle for the Government to indeed undertake that in this particular Act as well.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few comments on the record with respect to Bill 12, The Statute Law Amendment Act. I have reviewed in particular the amendments to The Public Schools Act, which are being proposed through The Statute Law Amendment Act, and I am in concurrence, in principle, with the intent of the changes, the amendments that are being proposed to The Public Schools Act.

I do, however, have a significant problem with the fact that these amendments are in this particular Act. The Statute Law Amendment Act is a traditional perennial, an annual, statute before the Legislature, which corrects in most cases administrative problems, errors in legislation, as my colleague has said. Then, if you go through this list of amended Acts in this Bill,

you will see some what I would call administrative changes that are being made.

Section 32 of The Occupiers' Liability Act, replacing the word "snowmobile" with "off-road vehicle," well, that is an appropriate amendment. We had an Off-Road Vehicles Act in the Legislature. We had amendments to the Act, the previous Act, The Snowmobile Act, and these amendments are consequential amendments that are necessary in additional pieces of legislation down the road. We have amendments to The Optometry Act, which is extending a minor addition to the authority available to the councils. We have cross-referenced, in some cases, additions to the Act, previous amendments to old Acts.

* (1440)

All of that in my opinion is technical. What we should not be doing is starting to include in The Statute Law Amendment Acts that come before this Legislature, we should not be including major policy changes. The amendments that are being proposed to The Public Schools Act through this Bill are amendments in the fiscal year for school divisions.

I was the one who initiated the school year change. I believe it is supportive of good ~~(Interjection)~~ I have not patted myself on the back yet, but I can assure the Member I intend to ~~(Interjection)~~ No. I did do pretty extensive consultation with school divisions with the Manitoba Association of School Business Officials, with all of them, about the realistic possibility of changing the school year so that it more closely reflected a school year, rather than the Government's fiscal year because, if you can imagine the situation with funding to schools, the Government in the middle of its fiscal year coming up to the time when the Estimates are fixed for the preceding year. In other words, the planning for the 1989-90 year that is going on right now in Government was the time at which we fixed the Budget for the 1988-89 school year, which is from January 1 to December 31.

So we have our fiscal year in Government from March 31 to April 1 of the following year. We funded schools from December to January, and the school year was from September to June. What we are doing by this amendment is, in effect, funding schools from September to June and that gives, as far as I am concerned, two advantages to that.

No. 1, the Government will be required to address its funding, the next year's school funding, in the upcoming Budget. It will give school divisions an opportunity to review their funding and do their appropriate year-by-year, school-year funding on the basis of money that they know they will be receiving. It will facilitate the schools' planning for the upcoming year. So I think it is a good amendment, but that is only my opinion. I believe it is only the opinion of the current Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), and this is a significant change in the way that schools have been funded historically.

It is an important change and I can tell you, despite what I believe will be fairly broad support for the amendments, it is not unanimous. There are school

divisions who do not like the change, particularly the first year because it is going to require a speed-up of their normal planning time. For larger divisions, that is more of a problem than for smaller divisions but there are some problems. My point in all this is I hope this Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) does not make it a habit of including significant policy changes in legislation through The Statute Law Amendment Act. Traditionally, this Act is administrative changes of a minor nature that do not require extensive scrutiny, extensive questioning on the part of Opposition because their intent is obvious. These changes, some of these changes I believe are very significant policy issues and they require, in my opinion, separate legislation, a piece of legislation amending The Public Schools Act which then flags for the general public, those who are not involved in the detailed review of legislative changes, that there is something going on.

I think that perhaps the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) will regret the fact that the amendments to The Public Schools Act were done through Statute Law Amendments. There is no Public Schools Act amendment in this Session but the Act is being changed nonetheless, and there are going to be people out there who are not familiar with the changes that we are about to consider in this Legislature, and that is not fair.

I believe certainly that every school administrator, every school board, every school division has the right to make comment on the changes that we are proposing and, because it is buried in the Statute Law Amendment, I think it is unlikely that many school divisions are going to be here to address their concerns to the committee when this Bill goes on to committee.

An Honourable Member: That is right.

Mr. Storie: Is this Bill going on to committee?

An Honourable Member: Yes, this Bill is going on to committee.

Mr. Storie: My colleague, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), assures me that, yes, in fact this Bill will be going on to committee. We do not know when, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it definitely will be going on. I can facilitate this, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) indicates to me and, yes, I do intend to facilitate this.

This is the only piece of legislation that directly falls under my responsibilities as critic and I will chalk this one up, this inclusion of The Public Schools Act amendments in the Statute Law Amendment, to the inexperience of the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). But I want it on the record that the Attorney-General has an obligation to this House not to include amendments of consequence in Statute Law Amendment legislation. In my opinion and perhaps in the opinion of others, these amendments are of consequence and should have been highlighted for school divisions, for those associations who have an interest in the activities of the relationship between the Department of Education, the Government and the school divisions.

Mr. Plohman: I find this quite offensive.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) suggests that he finds this offensive. I would not be so strong. I think that the inexperience of the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) is perhaps the reason for this—(Interjection)—Pardon me? No, I think the inexperience of the Attorney-General is perhaps the reason for this oversight and I simply suggest that I hope in future we can have faith that the changes which are before us in Statute Law Amendment are administrative changes only and not issues which should be debated in a public way, which should be highlighted for the public through the introduction of a separate Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those comments and if there are no other comments, we are prepared to see Bill No. 12, The Statute Law Amendment Act, go to committee. I understand there is at least one more speaker and perhaps it will go then.

Mr. Bill Uruksi (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on this Bill as well. I have reviewed some of the areas dealing with the amendments in agricultural Bills and I find most of those being of an administrative nature but there is, as my colleague from Dauphin pointed out, some significant changes in amendments to, for example, The Crown Lands Act. It is a major change, one that I want to indicate that I agree with, with the amendment, but let us recognize that the change is not minor. It is a significant change in policy when dealing with the sale of Crown lands that are subject to flooding or other—with flooding specifically.

This change allows the Crown to come to an agreement with a prospective vendor that no claim for damages can result if this land is sold, and no claim can result from future owners of this land once a caveat is put on this land. This is not a minor change because, in most instances, when properties do change hands and flooding should occur, the normal course of justice prevails and, if there are programs for compensation, applications can be made and citizens can apply for compensation.

* (1450)

This will exclude those types of applications on Crown land. I recognize that there are instances where this deals with the problem in the area of agricultural Crown lands where natural resources—one of the major caveats and concerns of natural resources in the sales of Crown land has been the placing of notices that the land may have been subject to flooding in the past. Because of the cost of undertaking major surveys in the area to actually deal with the specifics on site, those costs are prohibitive and rather than get into the whole appeal process and the discussion of people who live or use that land in particular or may have used that land for many years and have said, look, this land has not flooded since I have been on there, but yet from water resources criteria or details this land may have been, from their criteria, subject to flooding and it cannot be sold.

I believe that the Government has an obligation to indicate very clearly those caveats will be in place and

sales that are made with this caveat are clearly recorded and notices filed to those purchases. There should be a provision, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if title changes or is about to change hands that notice be provided to the new owners. So I do support this change, but I believe that the Government should not have brought this change as a minor change in The Statute Law Amendment Act. It should have been a Bill on its own because it is a significant change in policy.

The other area, and my colleague for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) raised it as well, I would encourage the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) or the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), whoever wishes to bring forward those amendments dealing with The Fisheries Act, quite frankly to leave it open, leave it to regulation in terms of the loan capital. This is probably the second or third amendment in the last three or four years to this Act raising the loan limits under The Fishermen's Loan Act. Quite frankly, I believe that for the purposes of administration, a regulation change on behalf, through the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), would be sufficient and giving that authority to the Government. I certainly would be supportive of that, and I encourage the Ministers of either Natural Resources or Agriculture to bring in those amendments.

The third change or at least one of many changes, but the other significant change that is here that is not clear by the notes that have been provided, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is The Health Services Insurance Act, where the notes that have been provided to Members opposite indicate: "Corrects a drafting error and provides authority for retroactive regulation respecting payment of benefits. The retroactive authority is necessary because negotiations for benefit changes are often protracted and result in retroactive changes. The amendment makes the section uniform with Section 59 of the Act and with Subsection 6(2) of The Health Services Act."

We would like some clarification of these changes, as to how they will be applied, and what kind of services or benefits will be applied retroactively and how this can be carried on, or whether or not the reverse can take place, whether the cutting off of benefits or payment of benefits, which may have been normally provided can be taken away and not paid for in the future. That clarification is, in my mind, required to this change.

The changes dealing with the The Justice of Victims, The Limitations of Actions Act, The Natural Products Marketing Act, those changes that I have perused personally, in my area, are of an administrative nature. I certainly have no hesitation of putting this Act to committee, recognizing that the changes that I have listed should have been Bills of a separate nature, but we will expect to hear clarification of some of the points that we have made in committee.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

SECOND READING

BILL NO. 52—AN ACT TO INCORPORATE "THE WINNIPEG CANOE CLUB"

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I understand that Bill No. 52 is to be brought before the Chamber. Is there leave to have the Bill brought before the Chamber? (Agreed).

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the Members of the House for helping me to expedite this Bill at this time.

Mr. Rose presented, by leave, Bill No. 52, An Act to Amend An Act to Incorporate "The Winnipeg Canoe Club"; Loi modifiant la Loi intitulée "An Act to Incorporate 'The Winnipeg Canoe Club,'" for second reading.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Rose: It is indeed a real pleasure for me to be able to introduce this Bill to the House today on behalf of the executive of the Winnipeg Canoe Club, their 1,000-plus members and their many, many thousands of past members over the decades that have belonged to and enjoyed the Winnipeg Canoe Club.

As I mentioned in introduction of the Bill, the Winnipeg Canoe Club has the distinction of being the second oldest private club in Canada. This club was incorporated in 1893 and is still thriving today. As a matter of fact, the original concept of this club was that many Winnipeggers from all over various parts of the city built summer homes there so they would be close to the club and enjoy the banks of the Red River.

When I visit this club, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that strikes me is that there are no bars at all to people. I see people of all walks of life, all creeds, religions and colours. I have met people there ranging from doctors, teachers, lawyers, mechanics, tradesmen, several union members and union leaders, even the odd politician. The club also enjoys a varied range of recreational and sporting activities and has so over the years.

The founders of this club contain names also that are very distinguished. One of them that pops out is Hugh John Macdonald, who was the son of Sir John A. Macdonald. In perusing the original founders, we see that many streets and businesses still existing are named for many of the original founders of this club in 1893.

* (1500)

The club has also hosted and competed in many important and auspicious events. They were host of some of the events of the Pan American Games, of rowing. They have competed in the Olympics. They have had teams, on many occasions, that have participated in the British Empire Games. In 1937, as a matter of fact, the records show that their team of six people won practically every race that was put on that year. They have hosted, in 1970, the Davis Cup

Matches, which points out the adequacy or more than adequacy of their facilities. In 1926, a race was started there that was to continue on for many years called Les Voyageurs Race. It was a 65-mile, two-day race which started at the club. They went to Lockport, they camped overnight there, portaged then to Selkirk and the next day returned to Winnipeg. I would also point out, in talking about games, that this club will be host to some of the racket sports for the 1990 Western Canada Games.

It is significant also to note that, unlike some other clubs in the city who are renown for being restrictive, this Winnipeg Canoe Club has welcomed ladies since back to 1930. So there is never any fear of getting any bad press if anybody wants to hold an event over in that club. With the advent of the ladies and the mixed groups there and what have you, it was natural that many marriages resulted. In fact, some of the estimates are that some 50 percent of the members married other members of the club from their group.

I might also point—and some of those with a little graying hair may remember the old pontoon bridge that was at the foot of Osborne that was built in 1905 and met its demise somewhere in the early 1950s. This was owned and operated by the Winnipeg Canoe Club to expedite their members from getting access to the club from all over Winnipeg. In those days, we had the old City Park where Churchill Drive is now.

I am very pleased to say that under the direction of the past commodore, Mr. Rick Borland, and the new commodore, Murray Coates, and ably assisted by their general manager, Ron Gregory, that this club, although it has had some minor problems perhaps in the past, is now prospering and expanding. That brings about the main thrust of this Bill, and that is to increase the share section from 1,000 to 2,000 shares and the capitalization from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

On behalf of the executive members of the Winnipeg Canoe Club, I would ask for swift passage and appreciate this so that sales of shares can continue and, hopefully, that the club can serve Winnipeg for another 100 years. Thank you.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The Government has had an opportunity to review the Bill. It concurs with its intent and its import, and therefore it recommends that it proceeds to committee.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 38—THE MENTAL HEALTH AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), Bill No. 38, The Mental Health Amendment Act, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am focusing my attention on this issue of Bill 38, The Mental Health Amendment Act. I want to be very clear

on my approach to the discussion of this topic. The most important thing is patient's rights must never be violated by this amendment, and the ability to provide the patient with the best possible care in a uniform and continuous manner must be the utmost priority.

This Bill deserves our support, as was indicated earlier by the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles). This Bill contains some changes which are very minor and technical. The Mental Health Act, when it was amended in 1987, there were to the best of my knowledge two committees struck to review the possibility to deal with the problem of this Bill. One committee was to work on the controversial issues and the second committee was to look at the technical correction that Act needed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 38 probably represents only the recommendation by the technical committee. We would like to know what happened with the other working committee and the recommendation, and we will be looking forward to further discussion at the committee stage.

This Bill could have gone further to discuss the number of various problems which from time to time the professionals come across and that does not help to carry on their functions such as under the current Section 16(1). It states that a psychiatrist, who examined a patient in the psychiatric facility and who had assessed a person's mental condition, may admit the person as an involuntary patient on the psychiatric facility by completing and filing with a medical officer in charge a certificate of involuntary admission in the form prescribed by the regulation, if the psychiatrist is of the opinion:

- (1) If the person is suffering from a mental disorder as a result of it, further, if he or she is likely to cause serious harm to himself or herself or others or to suffer from a substantial and mental or physical deterioration if not detained in a psychiatric facility.
- (2) If the person is in need of continued treatment, that can be reasonably provided only in a psychiatric facility and further if the person is unwilling to agree to a voluntary admission.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the criteria which was established in 1987, there were significant improvements. However, this section would be of greater utility with the inclusion of some of the following provision or maybe further discussion with the various groups to have at least some of the provisions included in the present Act or at a later stage. Like, if there is a reasonable prospect that the mental disorder in question is treatable; No. 2, if the patient is unwilling or does not have the capacity to agree to voluntary admission; and No. 3, if the patient lacks the capacity to make an informed decision concerning treatment.

The last recommendation is especially important, as the entire process relating to the certificate of incapacity could be obviated. I think this could be further discussed with various professional organizations and with the Mental Health Organization of Manitoba and the

Patients' Advocacy Group to include some of these important factors to make the achievement possible for the patients and keeping the patients' best interests in mind. That could be done and we will certainly support some of that and be willing to discuss at a later date.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was also Section 16(4) that says that the psychiatrist who applies cannot certify. This provision would make it most difficult to obtain another psychiatrist to certify especially on long weekends, within 72 hours, and especially when we do not have enough psychiatric manpower in Manitoba when we are dealing with a patient in the rural community or in the smaller community hospital where there is one psychiatrist maybe on leave or on holidays. That could be improved, but that needs further discussion and should be discussed with various professional organizations and the Patients' Advocacy Group.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will let this Bill go forward to the committee stage, and we hope that the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) will be notifying the patients' rights groups as well as the other professional and community organizations to have the input at the committee stage. Thank you.

* (1510)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): In rising to speak to Bill No. 38, I first want to record the support of the NDP caucus for the principles of the Bill. However, at the same time, we clearly want to indicate that the NDP does not believe that this Bill goes far enough at all and, in fact, we are somewhat surprised that the Government would bring in such a limited piece of legislation after all their criticism of similar types of amendments to The Mental Health Act that were brought before this House a little over 17 months ago in June and July of 1987.

Their criticism at that time must be noted. It was criticism that was directed at the type of technical amendments that were required at that time, which are very much similar to the type of technical amendments that we have before us now.

You know, it is interesting to watch the difference between the Members of the Conservative caucus when they were in Opposition and the Members of the Conservative caucus when they are in Government. There are some remarkable transformations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have occurred over the past number of months. I know you did not have the opportunity to sit in the House and listen to them when they were in Opposition, when they knew all the questions and had all the answers. Perhaps it will be helpful to reflect a bit on what was said at that time and what is being said now to put this matter into its proper context. One has to really stretch their imagination, perhaps even a bit too far, to even think that these are the very same people who sat on this side of the House during that period of time and had, at that point in time, much

better answers to the problems or at least they thought they had much better answers.

Their approach to this legislation, amendments to The Mental Health Act, Bill No. 38, and the need for legislative change in this area is a classic example of that difference in both language and action.

I realize as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that some of the Members who are now sitting on the Government side of the House within the Conservative caucus were not here to have heard their Members such as the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) or the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) or the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) rally against the similar type of technical amendments that we brought forward in 1987. There are some distinct differences, some distinct areas where there are dramatic differences in their approach then, when they were Opposition, and their present approach now that they are Government.

It must be noted that now they have the opportunity to put into effect all those good ideas and good suggestions and helpful hints that they were constantly throwing at the Government when they were in Opposition. That is important to note, but what is more important to note is that they now also have the responsibility. If they do not do it now, they either are incompetent and cannot do it, they have changed their minds and they are not telling us they have changed their minds, or they really did not believe what they were saying when they said it when they were in Opposition. It was all a game to get from one side of the House to the other side of the House. Because if one does, in the profession, seek to become Government to make change in society, to make things better for fellowmen and women, then one should take the suggestions that they had in Opposition which they thought would effect that change and implement them when they are in Government.

They really have a responsibility to live up to those earlier words, and put some flesh and bones and details to all the rhetoric which is so easy when you are in Opposition. In order to highlight those areas where there are those dramatic differences, I think it is necessary to compare what the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) in introducing this Bill said less than two weeks ago and what his caucus colleagues said in criticism to those similar amendments by the previous administration a little over a year ago.

I want to frame it in the overall context and then work from the general to the more specific. The Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) told us a couple of weeks ago that this amendment: "... deals exclusively with technical matters." That becomes an important point. It becomes an important point because the Bill which they were criticizing a year and a half ago also dealt exclusively with technical matters. At that time, they found that an abhorrent approach, an illogical approach, an irresponsible approach. Yet, it is exactly the same approach they are taking after having had a number of months in Government.

He was also critical in his comments a couple of weeks ago of what he thought to be: "... that haste with which amendments to The Mental Health Act were

pushed through the dying days of that Session," in the dying days of that Session, the Session of 1987, and they were at that time very critical of the haste that they perceived as being part of the process. He just reiterated it a couple days ago, so we know they have not changed their mind on that particular matter. He then, and this is probably a foolish mistake on his part, went on to identify the dates of the movement of that amendment through the House in 1987 under an NDP Government, so as to prove that we had acted in haste to push our Act through the Legislature.

Well, let us look at those dates. This information is taken right from the Attorney-General's (Mr. McCrae) comments 12 days ago in this House. In 1987, the Bill received first reading on June 5; it received second reading on June 10; and there was a weekend in between. So you can see that it received second reading as soon as it possibly could after distribution. It was introduced for second reading well over a month before the Session ended. I want to make that point, because we had a practice and it was a practice that was suggested by the Opposition House Leader, Mr. Gerry Mercier, when I was Government House Leader, and it was one which we concurred with because we thought it was appropriate that there would be no major Bills, no major legislation, introduced in this House less than one month previous to the ending of the Session. They asked for that agreement each year that I was House Leader because they said it is impossible in the dying days of a Session to deal with new Bills if they come forward in a fast and furious manner. How did we know when a Session was going to end is an interesting question from the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr).

We knew when the Session was going to end, because we sat down very early in the game and said we would like to reach an ending of this Session by a certain target date. We did that internally, within our own caucus, and we said, okay, we hope to have this Session in this particular instance ended by such and such a date. As we move closer to that, it was my job as House Leader to go to my caucus colleagues, the Ministers responsible for Bills, and to say, you know, after such and such a date, because we want to be out of here in mid-July—in this instance—after mid-June, you are not going to have an opportunity to bring any Bills forward. So, if you have your Bills, get them in now and do not come later on and suggest that, all of a sudden, an emergency has occurred that a Bill is required.

If it is a real emergency, then it will be a Bill that all Parties of the House will agree to pass through and we can bring it forward but, if it is not an emergency, then I am not even going to suggest that it be brought forward even for consultation between the critics, because we have an agreement between the two Parties in the House, at that time, that we would not bring forward Bills in the dying days of the Session. It is a very good agreement, and it is something that this Government should think very seriously about.

We are quite concerned, as Opposition, and I think I speak on behalf of both Parties now, about the number of Bills that have come forward in the dying days of this Session. We think it is a wrong practice. We think

it is inappropriate. We think it is inappropriate for all the same reasons that the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness), the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) and, particularly, the Member for, at that time, St. Norbert and the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) thought when they were sitting on this side of the House. They needed more time to reflect on the legislation, to help make it better legislation. They thought the public needed time to review the legislation to help it become better legislation. So we all agreed that we would not introduce those Bills after we were one month away from the ending of the Session.

By that time, I have usually had discussions with the Opposition House Leader of the Day to try to determine when we thought a date might be possible to shut down the Session. It started well before the last week or the last 10 days of the Session. It started a month or two months before the end of the Session, because it takes that long to work things out.

* (1520)

We are not going to make a major point about the fact that Bills were introduced very late in this Session this time. We make note of it, but we also make note that it is a new Government and it is learning and it is a minority Government and it has to feel its way through some different circumstances. But I give notice that we are going to make a very large point about it in the next Session. At least, the New Democratic Party Opposition is going to and I believe the Liberal Opposition will as well, because I think they agree with the appropriateness of introducing the Bills as early in the Session as possible and not waiting until the last moment.

So we are going to be more stringent about that next Session, but I want to get back, after having digressed for one moment based on this question from the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), to what actually happened this time with this Bill and what actually happened in 1987. You see, in 1987, we got first reading on June 5, second reading on June 10 and, of course, it was distributed before it got second reading so everyone had a chance to look at the Bill. The Bill was spoken to on two different dates in that second reading, on two different dates in that Session, July 3 and July 13. On those dates, Members of the Opposition, and that included both the Conservatives and the Liberal Opposition, spoke on that particular Bill.

That was well over a month after they had had an opportunity to review that Bill, to talk about that Bill with outside parties. They had a fair number of opportunities to speak to the Bill. It was passed. It was referred to committee on July 13, passed second reading, and then it moved very quickly. The committee heard representations on July 14, and the Act was passed for third reading on July 15 or 16 when the House shut down. So it did move very quickly in the last phases, but there was that front end time, well over a month, well over a month and a half or about a month and a half, I should say, with respect to its introduction in the House and its distribution and its final passage.

Now how does that compare with the present circumstances? Well, this Bill received first reading on October 31. So we know that at least as long ago as October 31, the Government knew it wanted to proceed with this Bill. When did it actually get distributed in the House? Anyone remember? November 28, before it is distributed in the House—second reading, introduced for second reading on December 2.

There have been two opportunities to speak to it. It will be referred to committee today, for committee tomorrow and, hopefully, it will pass third reading some time next week. So we have actually had a much more compressed time frame to deal with this Bill than did the Opposition and, more importantly, members of the general public to deal with similar types of amendments in 1987.

What is particularly telling and problematic and troublesome about the dates this year is there was a period of almost a month when the Government knew it wanted to proceed with this Bill. It had this Bill on the Order Paper. It is not a long Bill, it is a fairly short Bill, and yet we saw nothing of the Bill. It was deep within the bowels of the Attorney-General's office, or the Legislative Counsel office, I do not know where.

What that shows to me is that it was not very good planning on the part of the Government because they knew they wanted to change this Act when they were in Opposition. So they should have started on it as soon as they gained the Government if they wanted to live up to what they said in Opposition. They also knew that there were requirements for technical amendments which are easy to do. They knew that they were going to do it this Session as of October 31, and yet they waited a month to get it to us and then they expect us to pass it in less than a month.

If the actions of the previous administration, in the mind of the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), were hasty, I would suggest that by comparison his own actions fall somewhere in between railroading this Bill through the Legislature and steam-rolling this Bill through the Legislature. So I think he did make a foolish mistake when he suggested that the Bill was passed in a hasty fashion in '87, because it has been passed in a much more hasty fashion now. By doing so, the debate on this Bill has been effectively restricted, and the awareness and debate and discussion of this Bill outside of this Chamber, which is equally important to our work here, has been effectively restricted.

Having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and making the point that the Attorney-General's criticism of the other day rings somewhat hollow, I am brought back by that statement to the Conservative criticisms of a year ago last July, because I think in comparison they also ring somewhat hollow, or the Government's actions of today ring somewhat hollow. Those criticisms are relevant today primarily because of the way that they were framed by the Conservatives, primarily the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) who was the Opposition Health critic at that time and is now the Minister of Health. My, how he has changed in 17 months.

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) knows that. He is a seatmate. The Member for Portage (Mr.

Connery) knows that. The Member for Emerson says that he is the only one who has stayed the same, I think is what he said, and I think that is probably true. He is an Honourable Member. He has always been relatively steady and an even hand at the keel, not quick to flare. I know he criticized me as House Leader on a couple of occasions for what he thought was mishandling of the House business, and I note he has not criticized his own House Leader for what is, in everyone's mind, mishandling of the House business from time to time, but I think that is probably a matter more of Cabinet solidarity than it is of personal inclination on the part of the Member for Emerson.

The criticisms of a year ago or a year and a half ago are relevant today because of the way they were framed. A year and a half ago, the Conservative Opposition not only knew all the questions—

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): We had all the answers.

Mr. Cowan: Yes, the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) filled in the blank, one sentence too many. The Member for Portage tells us, yes, we had all the answers. He must have been reading my notes. Let me read my notes exactly from the page. A year and a half ago, he not only knew all the questions, no, more than that, he even had all the answers.

In those days, the Member for Pembina's (Mr. Orchard) main criticism of a very similar technical amendment on the very same Bill, The Mental Health Act, was that, and I quote from the Hansard of July 3, 1987 when the Member for Pembina spoke to this Bill. It is a very enlightening statement. He said: "So, Madam Speaker"—it is a habit he found hard to break at the beginning of this Session but I think he has gotten over that—"this legislation does nothing to advance the delivery of mental health in the Province of Manitoba. It is, from that standpoint, a most seriously flawed piece of legislation."

Now, if the very same type of amendments on the very same Bill in July of 1987 was a most seriously flawed piece of legislation, why is the Member for Pembina, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) now concurring with bringing forward exactly the same sort of amendments and not standing in his place and at least having the honesty to say that he believes it is still a very seriously flawed piece of legislation? Was he smarter in 1987 than he is now? Some will answer, yes, but I do not think that is the case. Was he more in tune in 1987 than he is now?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): We are all smarter now. We are all smarter today.

Mr. Cowan: I am not certain what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is saying, but the fact is he knew that this type of legislation was seriously flawed in 1987 and, if he knows today, he is not saying it, so either he has forgotten what he said, he did not mean what he said, or he is keeping his mouth shut. Somebody has put a sock in it. I do not know what it is, but logic would lead one to believe that it has to be one of those three things, or he has gotten extremely smarter.

What else did he say? It is very interesting. What else did he say on that day? He said, and it is the next sentence in the Hansard: "Now the recommendations that are made, I think, have to be seriously considered by the Government and that this Act only be passed if it has a sunset clause in it and only enforced until The Mental Health Act is rewritten to provide the guiding framework by legislation of the innovative new system involving increased and greater emphasis on community services."

Now I know that the Liberal critic was not in the House then, but he probably read the Hansard and he probably knows that the Opposition of that Day put forward, the Conservative Opposition, an amendment that this Act only remain in force for one year to force a rewriting of the Act. So I am going to be very interested to see how they respond to a similar type of amendment this time—

An Honourable Member: It is a good idea.

* (1530)

Mr. Cowan: —because if it was good enough in 1987 and it was good enough then because they were dealing with a seriously flawed piece of legislation, then at the very least we should have the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) vote for that amendment, and I think that is enough to carry it, vote for that amendment so that they can stand true to their words of a year and a half ago.

What else did he say? Oh, oh, talked about leadership. You know, this Government likes to think it provides leadership. So he talked about leadership in 1987: "It is only when you provide the leadership through legislation that you can establish the kind of targets that the community needs, the department needs and its supporting organization needs to revamp the delivery of mental health in Manitoba. Unless the Government is prepared to do that, then this Act will fail and they will remain a dinosaur Government in the delivery of mental health care in Manitoba." Well, welcome to the Precambrian Shield, to the Members of the Government now, welcome to prehistoric times because, if we were a dinosaur of a Government, they are in fact a brontosaurus of a Government, because they have had the opportunity and they even knew all the answers a year and a half before they tried to do it, to take that sort of action, and they did not take that sort of action.

So, what else? If the Minister responsible for Health (Mr. Orchard) was here, if he was here, do you know what I think he would do? I think he would stand up and he would say, but we are doing something about mental health; we are reforming mental health in this province. We have indicated to him that we will support those efforts where we think they are community based, innovative and a reform style of efforts, and we will. And we will say to him, well, how can you say that, Mr. Minister of Health? How can you say that you are reforming the system? He can say, because I introduced a policy and a number of pilot projects the other day that are intended to develop the plans and policies to

reform, the mental health —(Interjection)— well, the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) says that is exactly what he would say.

An Honourable Member: His little buddy.

Mr. Cowan: And he is shaking his head, yes. The Member for Morris says that I was not wrong in my interpretation of what he would have said. You know, I wish he was here to have been able to say that, because I would have read back to him what he said in 1987. What he said in 1987 is: "Madam Speaker, that simply is unacceptable today because mental health does not need any more demonstration projects as to how it can be more effectively delivered to the people of Manitoba." He had the answers in 1987. There was no need for demonstration projects and the best he can come up with in 1988, and the Member for Morris agrees, is pilot projects or another word for demonstration projects, a synonym perhaps in the mind of everyone—demonstration projects, pilot projects, the same thing.

We did not need them in 1987 because he had all the answers. The Conservatives had all the answers. Now, when they have the responsibility to do something with those answers, they cannot even figure out all the questions anymore.

But the Member for Pembina in those days in a speech in July of 1988 went on to emphasize that major flaw in the legislation in more specific and detailed terms, and let us look at a couple of them and what he had to say. Oh, you know what he said was wrong? Exactly the same sort of process we are dealing with here, exactly the same sort of technical amendments. He said: "The Act, and I remind the Minister, only complies with the Charter of Rights . . ."—I am sorry, that is Brian Mulroney. The Member for Pembina said: "The Act, and I remind the Minister, only complies with the Charter of Rights. There is no innovation in this Act. There is no blueprint for the 1990s in this Act. There is no mention of community-based services in this Act and there is no mention of quality of health care and what that means. That is a failing of the Minister and this Government."

Well, if it was a failing of the Minister of Health in the NDP administration and a failing of the NDP Government, then it is certainly a failing of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in the Conservative administration and a failing of the Conservative Government because there is nothing in this Act that is innovative. The Minister responsible for the Act, the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) himself, said it is exclusively technical amendments. That is all it is. That is what he said a couple of weeks ago.

There is no blueprint for 1988-89, much less in the 1990s. There is no mention of community-based services in this Act. There is no mention of quality of health care and what that means in this Act. So how come, when it was the NDP that was on that side of the House, the Government side, the Conservatives thought that sort of approach was a failing and that the legislation was seriously flawed? How come they are not standing up today and rallying against the

Attorney-General and the Minister of Health and saying, do something more positive for mental health in this province? Bring forward the innovation, bring forward the newness, bring forward the community-based services, bring forward the definition of quality of health. Why are they so silent? What is wrong with them? What has happened in the last 17 months that they have lost their tongue? It is remarkably silent from the Government benches.

What else did he say, because we are not through yet. How did he think that previous administration was doing when it introduced exactly the same sort of Act? "How can a Government blindly flounder along with a Mental Health Act that does not address those two basic inequities comparing Manitoba to Saskatchewan? Why would this Mental Health Act not be here in this House showing a blueprint for the future of community-based mental health services?" A good question on July 3, 1987, and an even better question on December 14, 1988.

I ask Members of the Government who are responsible for this legislation, why did you not do it? Why did you not do something? What is wrong with you? Have you lost your courage or have you lost your sense of direction, or were you wrong in '87 and you were just spouting the rhetoric so you could get from one side of the House to the other so that you could do as little on that side of the House as you did from 1977 to 1981? It has to be one of those things, I say to the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger). I like him as an individual and I think he fights hard in his caucus and his Cabinet to make things happen—and he shakes his head he does—but he must be going up against a tremendous backward force that keeps driving his progressive instincts back because nothing happens.

Let us hear what else the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), when he was the Opposition critic, had to say on that famous July 3 day. He said: "There is nothing new and innovative in this Act, there is nothing changing in this Act. I suppose if I can take the liberty and quote directly from the brief that all Members of the House have received from the Manitoba Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association, page 9 probably sums up the problem that we are faced with in this legislation that changes nothing." Then he says that a number of procedural rights guaranteed by Bill 59 are useless—and I underline useless—without a solid community support system as an alternative to institutional care. "That really does sum it up in two very succinct sentences, the total failing and lacking in Bill 59 to address the mental health issue."

You can put Bill 59 next to Bill 38, which we are debating today, side by side, and you would see very little difference. He goes on to say: "And is that not the whole reason why we should have a Mental Health Act, to ensure that someone in need of mental health treatment from the professionals should receive it and not simply have certain rights enhanced in terms of committal process to an institution that may provide them no help, which is what they are doing right now?" But what does he say in 1987? He says that is very thin gruel on which to base amendments to the Mental

Health Act, which do not address the needs of today and project a plan for the future.

Where is that plan for the future when they have the opportunity and the obligation to bring it forward? He went on to make a number of other general comments about how seriously this legislation was flawed in the overall sense because it did not address those issues.

The point I want to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is if he believed that sincerely and truly in 1987—and in this House we have a tradition that we accept what Members say as honest and sincere beliefs on their part and as truth on their part and we have to do that. If he believed it then, what has happened in 17 months to dissuade him of that opinion? Why can he not put some force into those words? Why can he not put some action into those thoughts? Why can he not make those ideas concrete now? He has had lots of time to do it. He has had a tremendous amount of time to do it, given how much he knew in 1987 as a starting base, and yet nothing has happened.

I do not believe that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is lazy; as a matter of fact, I know otherwise. I know he works long hard hours. I do not believe that he has given up the goal of trying to make the mental health system better for Manitobans. I believe he has that goal. I believe he does not implement it in the right way. I believe he has made some tragic mistakes with respect to arbitrary movement of psychiatrists without proper consultation, even although one would agree that there needed to be movement and there needed to be change, but it was the way in which he tried to implement that change. Maybe that is what scared him off this amendment. Maybe he saw that things were not quite so easy to implement as they were to say. No, I am wrong because this Act came forward before that incident, so that could not have been tempering his lack of innovation now.

* (1540)

I do not know why it is. All I know is, if he thought we failed, he has failed even more miserably because he knew what needed to be done and he did not do it. If he thought our amendments were inadequate, his are even more inadequate because he knew what should be in there and he has not put it in there. If he thought that there was a need for legislative blueprint for mental health reform in this province in 1987, he does not think it anymore because he has not brought forward that sort of legislation when he had the opportunity to do so.

It is even worse than that because not only did he have those general criticisms in 1987, but he had some specific criticisms about the Act that he wanted us to address at that time. Let me read out what some of those were. This is an interesting one, and I want the record very clearly—(Interjection)—I think the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) was asking how much time I had so that I would be prepared to ask for leave when required.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member has eight minutes remaining.

Mr. Cowan: How time flies when you are reflecting upon the past!

Let me make the point, and I want the Hansard to show as clearly as it can show that this is the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) speaking a year and a half ago because I certainly do not want these words attributed to me. I quote from the Member for Pembina July 3, 1987—

An Honourable Member: The current Minister of Health.

Mr. Cowan: The current Minister of Health, speaking to the Mental Health Act on exactly the same type of amendments that we are speaking to today in principle. The quote is: "Let me digress"—which is always dangerous when he does—"just for a minute, if I may. The Mental Health Act, even as amended, contains enormous powers"—I can hear him saying it now—"vested in the State. Now that is fine in a democracy where we have associations like MARL, where we have the Ombudsman, where we have a number of built in, presumably, protections through the courts, but the Mental Health Act has enormous powers of control over the individual. In here are powers to withhold records on treatments, to recommit people against their will, those powers are part of this Act. I suggest to you, and I do not do this trying to stir up any philosophical differences across the floor, but I would suspect in totalitarian states that presume to have so-called elected governments, I will bet you they have provisions in their Mental Health Acts exactly as we have here, in the power of states that do not care for the rights and freedoms of individuals. The Mental Health Act is used to detain dissidents and people who speak out against the state, used consistently and constantly in the Soviet Union for that very purpose." Well, if that power bothered him in 1987, why is it not part of the amendment in 1988? I think he is softened on communism; I think he has gone soft of communism. I think the man is mellowing.

One has to question what has happened in that period of time. But let me, in a more serious vein, Mr. Speaker, tell you some of the other things he thought should happen. "Some amendments I do not believe have been made that should have been made." He wanted these amendments made in 1987. One of the amendments is in terms of a definition and this particular definition is of "psychiatrist." So he wanted that definition changed. It is not here now, what happened since July 3, 1987?

He said it was a serious problem then. He also said: "Madam Speaker, the Standards Committees and others need to be seriously looked at." It is not here in this amendment, it is not in any other Bill before the House. What happened? Did he get cold feet? Did he forget what he said? Was he not being perfectly forthright in 1987? I do not know, it is a question that only he can answer.

The Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) says how could that be. If I had more than six minutes remaining to me and a lot of leave, I would be able to tell him, but I do not think I can in a short time. He also mentioned

Brandón, and he said why would the Standards Committee not allow them to appoint a qualified, experienced person, knowledgeable in the operation of the Brandon mental health system to the Standards Committee, because it had trouble keeping a psychiatrist in Brandon.

Well, they have more trouble keeping and getting a psychiatrist in Brandon now than we did then. There was a psychiatrist there at that time. Why is he not bringing forward that sort of an amendment at this time?—(Interjection)—Now, as the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) says, he has been chasing them away. He has not been chasing them away from Brandon, he has been chasing them away from Selkirk. Why is there not something in this Act now?

Oh, here is another one. One has to ask what the new provisions of appeal to this board that are present in this Act, a psychiatrist who is in limited numbers in the Province of Manitoba willing to take time away from his profession to sit on a board to make decisions. I suggest that you are going to have the greatest of difficulty staffing that appeal board.

So again I suggest to you, Mr. Minister, why would you not consider membership on that board of a registered psychiatric nurse? These people could adequately represent the Government but, more importantly, not the Government, the patient's interest on a board of appeal. That qualification is much too restricted, much too limited and has to be expanded, and I offer that suggestion of the registered psychiatric nurses to the Minister for his consideration.

In 1987, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) was in here speaking on behalf of the CMHA, he was speaking on behalf of MARL, he is speaking on behalf of the Registered Nurses' Association, and some of his suggestions were good suggestions and should have been taken up at that time. Others needed to be thought about. I particularly like a number of them, but nothing happened when he had the opportunity to do that.

So what went wrong with this Government? What went wrong when they had the chance to live up to their words? What went wrong when they had the responsibility to live up to their suggestions? What went wrong when they took over the Manitoba power and then froze? Because we have seen a Government that has done so very little in its first six, seven, months of its mandate that one has to question why they even bothered to bring down the previous administration? I know my colleagues to the right in the House do not ask that question, but one would have to ask that. Why did they even bother if they were not going to act upon things that were so crucial and so important to him in 1987?

I do not believe it is hypocrisy; I do not believe that it is laziness; I do not believe that they did not fully know what they were talking about in 1987. I do not think they understood all the ramifications of what they said, but I think they had some good ideas and some good suggestions. So I do not know what it is that freezes them in this defensive posture of not taking action on what it is they thought to be necessary and beneficial a year ago.

I have used this speech to make that point. I have used this speech to make another point as well, and that is with respect to legislation coming into this House in a timely fashion. I think they are both important points. I believe, if we had this Act a bit sooner and if we had a bit more time for consultation, we could have probably helped the Government along with some of the organizations that he talked about in 1987, draft the type of amendments that would make this a better Bill. I am not certain. I am going to talk to my friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), because he is very knowledgeable in this area. I appreciate learning from him and his advice. I am going to ask him if he thinks we should put forward the same amendment—and I am not going to do it, I will do it privately, I want to give him notice—but for the same amendment that the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) put forward, that this Bill will die in one year. It forces them to take action. He said that. I am sorry the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) missed my comments earlier, but he actually put that amendment forward last time because he thought this was a seriously flawed piece of legislation.

An Honourable Member: Oh, shame on him!

* (1550)

Mr. Cowan: Perhaps we should help him regain some of that courage and some of that commitment and maybe that is the way to go. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to put those comments on the record. I think they are important comments. I think they are indicative of a Government that does not quite understand where it is going yet and, more importantly, how to get there if it . . .

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member's time is expired.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 40—THE CITY OF WINNIPEG AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), Bill No. 40, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (2), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer). The Honourable Member for Concordia will have 26 minutes remaining.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I will only take a few minutes and then pass on to my colleague, the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill).

We have expressed our position this week on The City of Winnipeg Act and the whole difficulty we are placed in by the piecemeal recommendation without any other plan or any other vision in terms of the City of Winnipeg. The whole process of dealing with parts of the Act are becoming very difficult for both Parties. I hope that we can resolve certain parts of the Act that I know were being discussed very recently with both of the caucuses and with the Minister responsible.

We are very concerned about the issue of the size of city council. We do not believe that one councillor

can represent 30,000 people. It is a very onerous task that we are placing on people. We do not know what the relationship of the mayor is going to be with the other members of council and with the board of commissioners and the Executive Policy Committee. We want to know the full picture in terms of dealing with The City of Winnipeg Act.

We understand that almost every public presentation on the boundaries had people recommending that the 29 be used. The people of Winnipeg have said, with those boundary presentations, that they believe that the most appropriate boundaries for their communities, for their work in their communities, for their daily activity is for the existing 29, as appropriated for the change in populations in the City of Winnipeg. We should point out that this is the first independent Boundary Commission in a major city in North America, I believe. It follows on the tradition in this Legislature, I suppose, of the Boundary Commission that operates on an independent nature in this province, a model that we do not always agree with the results but certainly a model that is of a nature that eliminates gerrymandering and other practices that have taken place in other jurisdictions.

The public hearings have taken place. The Minister is not supported in his ad hoc announcement some time in the middle of June, I believe. We need the whole picture. We need to know the whole vision before we can deal with part of the package. For that reason, we will certainly listen to the public at the presentations but the public, so far, has taken a contrary position to this Government. We believe that the democratic rights of the public dictate that a council have one per 22,000, or whatever the ratio is now, and to reduce that ratio we believe is to reduce the rights of the public for their access to their elected representatives. If we want to reduce costs at City Hall, perhaps we could look at the—it would take at least generation after generation to make up the small amount of money that would be saved in terms of this reduction in city councillors with one bridge that is going in in Charleswood that most people do not want.

Perhaps that is what our priorities should be. Instead of an unwanted bridge in Charleswood that is going ahead without the necessary environmental impact study, perhaps we could leave some of the - (Interjection)- There is the Member for Portage, Mr. Deputy Speaker - (Interjection)- Again, the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) shows his true ignorance. The day that his own Bill was passed and proclaimed on March 31, 1988, I know the Minister is uncomfortable with having real responsibility. It is easier just to criticize, but the Minister has the ball in his court and, quite frankly, the responsibilities under that Act for the new Environment Act does provide for rights of citizens for environmental impact study. The ball is in the Minister's court. I am surprised that he fumbles it on a daily basis because it is not just political points we are trying to make when it deals with the environment, it is the whole irresponsibility, the lack of any accountability, and the total failure on the part of this Government over eight months to deal with their responsibilities under the new Environment Act.

The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) keeps chirping from his seat. We will bring in the Downey amendments

to The Executive Council Conflict of Interest Act. He can just wait for those amendments to come in, dealing with the untendered contracts and all the other kinds of untoward behaviour in this Manitoba Legislature.

We await the full plan of this Government on many issues, and we wait for the full plan of this Government on The City of Winnipeg Act. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): This is one of those areas that, just like the previous area where my colleague was talking about the importance of the changes and the need for changes coming forward in The Mental Health Act, where we really want to be supportive to progressive legislation, but unfortunately it is not coming forward.

They are talking about priority areas where they want to improve and they recognize the need for improvement and they are saying how important it is but, when push comes to shove, they are really not doing anything about it.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

What we would love to have been able to do was to approve the major and significant amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act, not just the ones that the Minister is putting forward. It is not that there is anything terribly the matter with some of them. I think that his intention to eliminate the outdated business classification system and tax structure, to decrease the disparity for businesses where the rate may range between 6 percent and 20 percent depending on the type of business for their assessment is not an unreasonable thing to do, and it is not something that we would not want to support and certainly increasing maximum fines for water- and sewer-related offences, to take them up from \$50 to 1,000 and indeed to have a six-month imprisonment for individuals and a \$5,000 fine for corporations. I am not sure if the corporations can also be imprisoned but I think, since they are the major polluters, that we should take a very serious look at having fines and inhibitors that are really going to stop them from polluting, not ones that are at such a level that they just pay it without even thinking about it and carry on doing what they were doing before. So, we want to make -(Interjection)- \$5,000, just a spit in the bucket for a lot of them in terms of the cost that they would have to bear if they corrected the -(Interjection)-

So I want to say there are a couple of those areas that we want to support and really do not want to speak against but we need to have more. It is hard to understand why the Minister has chosen these things out of all the things that were so important and all the changes that were so important. Clearly, one of the ones that he is concentrating on as being the most important is reducing the size of council. With so many other things that are important to the City of Winnipeg, the lack of planning being one of the major deficiencies recognized by everybody who spoke before the Cherniack report, that the planning seems to be done not by any leadership or initiative or policies or planning by the city fathers but by initiatives taken by the developer, by the private sector.

That has been the policy development and has determined the development and the quality of life for our city. We think that is a serious deficiency, but there is not anything in here that is recognizing that as a priority, to improve the planning at city council.

The suggestion that all of the problems can be solved by having 23 members instead of 29 is, I think, really very simplistic and I am not sure that there is evidence to show that there is going to be any improvement with 35, with 29, with 23, unless some of the other amendments are brought in that deal with the issues of the role of the mayor. What is the mayor's responsibility? What kind of a leadership role and what authority is he going to be given?

* (1600)

But more importantly, to talk about the size of city council in isolation of talking about the role of the community committees, I think is really a major deficiency. The Cherniack Report tells us that the role of the community committees should be significantly upgraded. First of all, they should have more resources so that they can really study and do the job but, secondly, if there was overall planning done by city council, the local community committee should be given zoning and planning authority. In other words, they should be able to approve subdivision in their local area, providing it conformed to the overall plan and development approved by the city.

Now, whether or not that is what we want to do, I do not know, but I do know that issue should be resolved before we talk about the size of city council. They are talking about what part of the responsibility is going to be carried by the community committees and what additional authority are they going to be given, because I think that we can see them being given additional authority. Then, what is the job going to be of council, how big should the council be, what size of population should they be representing, are things that all can be dealt with as a package.

It is true that in the Cherniack Report, when asked a very simple question of would you like to reduce city council, a lot of people said yes. Just as I suspect, if we asked them if they would like to reduce the size of the number of people in the Legislature, when they are particularly annoyed at us or think that you are not representing them very well, they would probably say, you know, get rid of some of them, they are not doing their job.

But if you asked the more serious questions, do you want access to your city councillor? Do you believe that he should have an area to represent that is of a size that he can keep in touch with you, attend your community committee meetings, know what is going on in the community, and be available to the residents of the community to meet with them and talk to them? They would say yes. And if you said, do you think he or she will be able to do that with the size of the population that would be required to reduce it to 23, I think the answer would be no.

So we have to be very careful not to make major changes like that based on a very simplistic question.

I think that the \$130,000 saving that the Minister mentioned is really just peanuts in terms of the major cost to the taxpayers of Winnipeg through the actions. Here we had a council of 29, and I do not think it would have mattered if it was 23, that was willing to cost the taxpayers millions and millions of dollars by approving a major development outside of the urban limit line that had nothing to do with the size of council.

So if you want to save money, what we need is a city council that operates with clear roles and lines of authority, with planning and leadership, with policies and with a development plan that does not allow development to be determined by the developer, which we know is always costly because the only thing they want to do is make money. They do not care if we have to jump out and put in sewer and water and infrastructure at \$40,000 for a house, when the development inside the city could be done much cheaper because the infrastructure is there.

Of course, one of the other concerns that we have over decisions that are being made like that is not only the cost to the taxpayer, but the loss of agricultural land. We know that Statistics Canada said, and studied between 1976 and 1981, that the rate of residential growth was greater immediately outside the City of Winnipeg than it was within the city. They said that had very serious implications for the nature and the scale of provincial and municipal resources that were going to be required to service it but, even more importantly, it added to the growing erosion of Manitoba agricultural land. These are the things that are costing—I guess what point I am trying to make to the Minister is that these are costly.

The loss of our agricultural land cannot even be measured in dollars. The additional burden of building schools when other schools are closing down inside the urban limit line is extremely costly and far exceeds the \$130,000 that he is going to save by reducing the size of city council.

Mr. Speaker, I think some of the areas we would have liked to have seen is some changes in legislation for conflict of interest, a very important area, so that they have to conform to the same laws that we have to at the provincial level that say they have to let the public know what money they are given, how much and by whom for their elections. I think, when you are dealing with developments of millions and millions of dollars and the potential for abuse, it is very important that the public knows when decisions are made like the recent one to approve a major development outside the urban limit line, that it has not been done because of the relationship or undue pressure, or padding of a bank account by developers. The public has a right to know that. That would have been an important piece of legislation to bring in, in this Session.

So conflict of interest is important. I mentioned the role of the mayor, the role of community committees, environmental protection, protection and management of our urban waterways, major areas of importance and with recommendations coming from the Cherniack Report. These are things that really, if they are important, why are we not dealing with them in this Session?

Other very important areas that the public will be sad to see not brought in this Session, and not brought in, in the Minister's Bill, he is bringing in a few areas—I wonder why he perhaps did not come in with something that would have protected and expanded citizens' rights, a very important area for the people of Winnipeg, and one they would have liked to have seen given priority.

The suggestions made in the recommendations of the Cherniack Report were to have a City of Winnipeg ombudsman—that was one suggestion—and access to information by-law, so that they have the same access to information as our people do at the provincial level, so that when they want to know the decisions that are being made and the information, they can go to City Hall and get that; and protecting and safeguarding residents' rights by having some mechanism for appeal, from decisions that are made regarding, I would imagine, zoning, regarding decisions that city council can make that affect an individual's rights, some sort of an appeal body that can look at those.

All those things would have been very popular, very important, recognize the importance of the role of the citizens of Winnipeg in determining the development of our city and in influencing and reacting to what their local level of Government is doing, as they react to us when they think we are not doing things properly. Strengthening the resident advisory groups, I mentioned before, giving them more resources and looking at the role to expand their activities, possibly in approving some zoning and development only, I might add, when it is consistent with the overall development plan of the city. When they do not have one or when they do have one and they do not follow it themselves, then it really raises the question of what the value of it is.

I think we need more participation as a business community. I think in terms of determining the support they give to the development of our city and the importance of maintaining our business community, I think they should be more involved and have a mechanism for involvement in the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we are saying overall is that there are some amendments in here that we would not be opposed to supporting, except the one reducing the size of council from 29 to 23 we think is premature, is isolated, should only be brought in as a total package and probably is not going to solve the problems that the Minister thinks it is going to solve and will create some additional problems in terms of adequate representation for the people of Winnipeg, but that there are many others.

The most important part of this Bill is what is not there, not what is there, and the need to have those come forward more quickly and to need to know that this Government and this Minister give a priority to things like citizens' rights, protection of the environment, development of our urban waterways and looking at the management of city council are all areas that we would like to have seen some improvements in this Session.

* (1610)

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think that we will say that it is disappointing, especially knowing that they have

now had so much time. They have been in what—is it six months? It seems like six years sometimes but it is six months, really an adequate time to have studied the report and to have made decisions on what amendments to come in with in this Session.

We look forward to seeing the amendments that the Minister is going to bring in, which he says is in the next Session. If they are along the lines of dealing with the critical issues facing our city and city council, we will want to be supportive of those amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act that we have been asking and hoping for, as have the citizens of Winnipeg. In the meantime, we will have this go forward and have to continue to oppose, I think, the reduction of councillors from 29 to 23.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Can I close debate and make a couple of comments before closing debate?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs will be closing debate.

Mr. Ducharme: I appreciated the comments made by both Opposition Parties and I have taken a few of them down and noted a few. There have been many comments, and I guess the one that speaks most is the piecemeal effect. I have to tell the Members on the other side that, other than the one of 23 or 29, the request of the ones that have been brought in are ones that have been requested by the City of Winnipeg and that is why those particular ones have been brought in.

As you can probably appreciate, I have made comments in the past in regard to changing The City of Winnipeg Act more extensively in the next Session, and that will be done through a consultation process. As you can probably appreciate, even when those changes are brought in, there will be many changes coming on stream from the City of Winnipeg. As a matter of fact, I have had three in the last week from the mayor. One I am trying to get in as an amendment—and I will be introducing, I hope, at committee—dealing with the pensions. The only problem is that we all appreciate that when you are dealing with pensions, you are dealing with financial situations and our Pension Board will have to look at it, a request that just came recently on December 9.

The Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) mentions a couple pieces that she is concerned about. She mentions the 23. Well, she has to remember that her own Government did bring in a proposal on that 29 without dealing with the rest of the Cherniack Report, and that is because that has to be done because there is a Boundaries Commission meeting that will not meet until nine years from now. So I am suggesting that we are not out of form to discuss that.

To be fair with the people and the Boundaries Commission, I advised them that I was going to be introducing legislation—I mentioned to them in June—and to prepare two sets of maps, one at 23, and 29. These maps have gone out to the public. There have been comments made on both 29 and 23. There are

people who said that they are not going to make comments on either one. If you do look at the maps that were drafted up, the 23 has problems and so has the 29, and by experience on city council as a member who sat and did represent over 30,000, sitting as the Executive Policy chairman at the time, I did relate to this 30,000 people that the Member was talking about.

Also, there has been reference made to why we would have more MLAs in the city than we do have city councillors. Well, we are comparing apples to oranges. There are not too many councillors right now who will give up their full-time occupation and sit more than three days in a row at City Hall, never mind as backbenchers and as Ministers and everybody else who sit five months in a row as MLAs do. So there is quite a difference if you start comparing the role of an MLA to a city councillor.

These considerations were given. When we looked at the plan, we looked at how a 23 number would affect the boundaries of the community committees. When the original maps were looked at, and when we looked at them personally, there was less interference at the 23 than there was at the 29, and I am talking in dealing with the community committee boundaries.

I will answer these questions at the committee. I would like it to get on with the committee so at least whatever the committee decides and whatever the legislation decides, whether they decide 23 or 29, that the Boundaries people can go back out to the people who they have to do in January. They have to go out with their final maps and they have some changes on both. They have changes on 23 and 29. I am looking forward to that time that they do go-out to the public.

There has been mention by some Members that there has been no planning. As the Members realize, under Plan Winnipeg, there is a significant part of The City of Winnipeg Act that instructs the City of Winnipeg that they must have a Plan Winnipeg and it must be reviewed and renewed every five years. They have just gone through that process in April of '86 on the Plan Winnipeg dealing with the urban limit line and everything. So they do have a plan in place that has to be looked at every five years.

There were some questions from the Liberal Member. It was dealing with the business assessment. The business assessment is something that has certain disadvantages. I have supplied the Member with my briefing notes since he brought up his questions. I have given him a little bit more information on why the City of Winnipeg wants the new business assessment. If he has questions at the committee, I will be glad to answer those on the information that I gave him. The chief disadvantages of the present system is that it is principally outdated and it has been going on for a long period of time. The city does want to deal with it in 1989.

I look forward to answering the questions maybe on the conflict of interest that the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) has suggested, and it is a good suggestion. However, I feel that it is a type of thing that can be dealt with after consultation with the City of Winnipeg. I assure her that I will do that when we bring in the major changes of Plan Winnipeg.

I hate to keep being repetitious on why there are some piecemeal, but these are things and amendments that have been requested by the city from the previous Government and from ours, and we felt that we would like to accommodate them this time and then go through the White Paper that you produced with them, that you have tabled. I will use that as background, I will use the Cherniack Report as my background, I will use the suggestions that have come forward with the city as my background when dealing with the total City of Winnipeg Act. Those are the reasons why I will be doing it in that procedure.

I thank you for your comments and I move that it go on to committee.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 41—THE LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery), Bill No. 41, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). (Stand)

BILL NO. 45—THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CONFLICT OF INTEREST AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), Bill No. 45, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conflits d'intérêts au sein de l'Assemblée législative et du Conseil exécutif, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is a pleasure to stand and speak on this Act, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, when the Speech from the Throne was presented in this Legislature, we took the high road on this idea to have a cooling-off period prescribed in the Act.

I have asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to reply to other questions I have raised on this Act and its application. I have not yet received the answer whether this Act would apply to former Members when you read the Act, and whether, for example, a former Member of this Chamber, the Member for St. Norbert, can be appointed to the chair of the Liquor Commission and be in breach of this Act or not. I think the person is a very capable person to do that job. Actually, I think he has a lot of merit in terms of taking that job. I am just wondering, in the overzealous attempt of the Government to attack, quite frankly, one of the most Honourable Members who has ever sat in this Chamber, Larry Desjardins, the former Member for St. Boniface, whether they have not potentially disenfranchised some of their own appointments. I await for that answer—

An Honourable Member: It has been over a year.

Mr. Doer: No, it has not. It has not been a year. The Member was a—

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): He was not in Treasury Bench.

* (1620)

Mr. Doer: If you read the Act, it says "member," and I asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to answer the question. It does not just say Members of the Executive Council. It says senior civil servants, Members of the Executive Council and Member. I have asked the Premier for an answer to that question and I expect I will get it in due time.

We did take the high road when this was presented in the Speech from the Throne. We said this is a positive move that we would support and I was absolutely shocked to hear this Bill being called the Larry Desjardins Bill, a person who had all his affairs in a blind trust, who operated on behalf of Manitoba for 20 years in a very, very admirable way, who had provided long and dedicated service to this Chamber and to the people of Manitoba, and for the First Minister to go out of this Chamber and take cheap shots at that Member, I think was despicable.

I think it is unfortunate that a Bill of this nature that deals with a real problem of senior public employees, I believe that there should be a one-year cooling-off period and Cabinet Ministers should have a period of time to cool off.

One must also look at that issue and look at the actual private conditions of Members of this Legislature. There are absolutely no severance provisions for any defeated Member of the Legislature. Unless you are wealthy or of particular wealth in your own right, I think there is a serious deficiency between the rules that are usually applicable in the private sector and the rules we are applying in the public sector, and I would ask Parties to look at that discrepancy.

We support the concept of the Bill and the two particular sections of it, but we believe it should go further. We believe that as we move and every Government takes improvements and incremental improvements on the rights of the public and the responsibilities of elected Members, we believe we should improve upon those rights and responsibilities of the Members of this Chamber.

We believe that this Bill can be improved. We believe that there should be amendments made to this Bill to provide for mandatory disclosure of any untendered contract that would be released by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on a timely basis. I happened to believe when I was in my short period of Government that everything should be tendered in the department I was responsible for. I know the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) knows that was the case if he looked back through the Department of Urban Affairs.

We have seen two very major situations in this House recently. The one occasion was the \$175,000, I think it was, contract untendered, given eight, nine weeks after the Government changed to an auditing firm, not

even to a professional accountant. The Budget of the Conservative Party was established on this document that was not even prepared by a quality accountant, and it was untendered and the Government of the Day received the criticism that was due for this untendered contract.

When we questioned the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on that, Mr. Speaker, he, and I believe he was saying it sincerely, said to us that the reason why a contract of that nature was issued on an untendered basis was that they did not have time to get their Budget ready. They did not have the time to do it and normally a contract of this nature, a very, very large contract of this nature, would be tendered and the people of Manitoba and the companies of Manitoba would have the right to apply for this contract in the normal tendering way.

Well, that was on a Monday night a week and a half ago and what happened the Tuesday? What happened the Tuesday after? Well we found the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) handing out another untendered contract for \$100,000 that followed on another contract that he had issued on an untendered basis for \$20,000 to a company that he had already called on August 2, a company that is friends of the Conservative Party—no, he did not say Conservative, Mr. Speaker, he said Tory Party I believe in the Hansard of August 2, 1988. I apologize.

Mr. Speaker, that was behaviour—and I was surprised the Premier did not answer the questions in the Chamber. It was very unlike him. He likes to answer questions in this Chamber when they are addressed to him, and it looked to us that the Premier did not even know about it, that the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs was carrying on in ways in which he is known to carry on in terms of his behaviour with his department and his public announcements on certain financial matters of this province. It is a pattern that we are getting a little worried about.

We saw—I mean I do not know whether the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs walks around with a chequebook on behalf of the Government, a blank chequebook that is given to him by Cabinet, but it must have been interesting when he was confronted by his Cabinet colleagues for the other \$9 million that he did not have. I would have liked to have been a fly on the roof when that discussion took place in the old Cabinet room. There he was giving out milk money he did not have, a \$9 million man. He is even better than the - (Interjection)- Yes, I know the Member from Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) is suggesting that was a little slip of the old throat there and I would imagine that was true. He must have got thrashed in Cabinet for announcing money he did not have and rightly so.

So we have this situation where the bionic Minister from Arthur, the \$9 million Cabinet Minister, was announcing \$10 million, did not have the money in his hand, had to go back red-faced to his Cabinet colleagues. I hope he got taken to the woodshed and he had to get that other money that he announced and, hopefully, he will get it because the people of Northern Manitoba who are affected by that announcement were left with an empty envelope from the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, at least when we said we were negotiating contracts, we were negotiating them. We were not announcing them before we had them negotiated, and we particularly were not announcing contracts when we did not have the Cabinet authority to spend the money.

An Honourable Member: His red-neck area was starting to move a little lower down.

Mr. Doer: I believe you, Mr. Speaker. I believe there must have been problems in that Cabinet room that day.

No Government has ever been perfect on the issue of untendered contracts. Our friends in the Liberal Party know there were untendered contracts to one David Walker from one former Minister of Transport. We know that. The Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) knows that. We know of the legacy of contracts that were released shortly after the 1984 election. I know that we, from time to time, had the odd untendered contract, I would regret to say, and now we find the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs who is becoming the king of the untendered contract to Tory contacts. I believe that just in the same spirit that we are moving forward - (Interjection)- No, you are the man of the year from the accounting firms. No you are the man of the year, he is the king of the untendered contracts.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with the new morality in Government - (Interjection)- well, you could talk to the bionic Minister. Did you give him the \$9 million cheque yet? I would wonder if the Minister of Finance has given the bionic \$9 million Minister the \$9 million cheque that he announced, probably the largest gaff in the history of financial spending in the Province of Manitoba by a single Minister out on his own limb, cutting it off at the same time he was making his announcements.

* (1630)

I cannot recall, and my colleague, the Member from Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), cannot ever recall a Minister so far out on the limb, sawing away with his \$9 million saw without Cabinet authority, as the example from the Minister responsible for Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey).

We will be bringing in an amendment that I am sure the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will be pleased to support. It will be an amendment that will require all Ministers to release publicly all untendered contracts over \$5,000 on a time-sensitive basis. I am sure that is an amendment that will go down in history as the Jim Downey Amendment on the Bill that we have before us on the First Minister.

Secondly, one of the - (Interjection)-

An Honourable Member: Start with Elijah.

Mr. Doer: Elijah is a fine man and he never announced \$9 million he did not have. - (Interjection)- The Minister for Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) should take heed of the behaviour of the Member from Rupertsland (Mr. Harper).

We also will be proposing an amendment to deal with one other loophole in the Act, and it was a loophole that was created under the old 1983 Act. It was our loophole, and that is the provision for 5 percent to be disclosed, but not a minimum amount of money. If you have a 5 percent in Exxon, that is a lot of shares, or 4.9 percent, you do not even have to declare maybe \$49 million worth of shares in a company because of a loophole that requires you only to table or disclose information that is consistent with that Act. So it is a minor technicality and it is dealing with one of our faults, one which we readily admit and we will be bringing forth that amendment.

The last recommendation that we are going to be bringing forward is to deal with some of the recommendations arising out of the Parker Commission, which is the last commission that has dealt with the whole issue of conflict of interest. They are actually very complimentary to the Manitoba policy of full disclosure, a policy that has been followed by all Members in this Chamber consistent with the Act. They do say, and they do recommend, and I think it is good advice that, if there are private holdings in an area that one has public responsibility, you should not only disclose those holdings, which has been done in our opinion by everybody in the Chamber, but also you should divest of those holdings at the earliest opportunity or there should be changes in one's portfolio.

That is the recommendation. I will send the Parker Commission to you, and we will be dealing with amendments to deal with that problem. As I say, it is ironic that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has named this Bill the Desjardins Bill, because I think it is unfair to one of the finest Members who ever sat in this Chamber, a public person who has served his community well, a person who I have a lot of deep personal respect for. I think we could have dealt with this Bill without any labels or political shots at a Member who could not even defend himself in this Chamber.

We will be bringing those other amendments forward, but we would have been pleased to deal with this Bill, as we said, right after the Speech from the Throne without getting into the partisan debate on this issue, but we plan on bringing forward those amendments that will deal with some other problems that we have identified in this Chamber and will tighten up the Act even more.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 46—THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), Bill No. 46, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2); Loi no. 2 modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Atcock). (Stand)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Attorney-General

(Mr. McCrae), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. Deputy Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I call this committee to order to continue debate on the Concurrence Motion.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): As I understand it, with concurrences, we have free range on all the departments. The particular item I just want to mention very briefly, I will not take too much time, deals with social allowances. I am not necessarily overly concerned because the Minister is not here, because I want to address this to the entire Government, particularly the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), and that is my concern that we are not treating our social assistance recipients as generously as we should in this year at this time.

The Minister of Economic Security (Mrs. Oleson) announced some weeks ago that the rate increase for the year beginning January 1, 1989 would be 3.9 percent. That 3.9 percent was based on a calculation of the Consumer Price Index for the period ending August of this year. Indeed, I did check it out. Indeed, if you look at the first eight months of 1988 compared to the previous year, you will see that more or less the rate was approximately 3.9 percent.

(Mr. Chairman, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

What has happened since then is that inflation has escalated and has escalated rather seriously. Right now, for the last month that was available, I think that was the month of November, the rate I believe is 5.5 percent, 5.7 percent, quite a bit higher than the 3.9 percent. You might wonder whether that is really much of a difference. We are telling you however, Mr. Chairman, that we are dealing with the poorest people in this province. I would like to appeal to the Government through the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that this be reconsidered in the light of the rapidly escalating inflation that we have in this province.

* (1640)

I understand that recently, and I only have this verbally, but that Ontario recently adjusted their rates at 5 percent. I do not believe they have had really any more inflation than Winnipeg. Winnipeg, which is the only place that Stats Canada calculates inflation, I believe, is among the top of the cities in Canada in terms of inflation at this time.

So what we are talking about is really giving 23,000 social assistance recipients—and I would remind you that those 23,000 recipients include 10,000 single parents and it includes about 10,000 disabled people

and another 3,000 miscellaneous for a total of 23,000 people who are among the poorest that we have in the Province in Manitoba—poorest, financially speaking, I, of course mean. These are people who have no other source of income and, therefore, they are dependent upon the social assistance system that we have developed, which has been developed and paid for under the Canada Assistance Program and shared 50-50 cost-wise with the federal Government. So what we are doing, by giving that particular group of people 3.9 percent effective January 1 is really causing their standard of living to be reduced. By the time the year is out, even if you take the earlier part of the year where inflation was not running at such a high level, even if you average it for the year, it is certainly going to be above 3.9 percent. I suggest that therefore we are providing an increase that is just not adequate for these people.

I would remind the Minister also that last year we provided a \$1 million additional payment for school supplies and winter clothing. Although we indicated at that time, because we did not want to be committed, we said, well, this is a one-time payment, although as Minister, I had indicated to my staff and others that I thought this should be repeated because many other provinces do this. In fact, many provinces give a bonus or a grant at Christmas time to their welfare recipients.

I think that if we are truly concerned about the disadvantaged among us—and these are people who are on long-term social assistance. As I said, we are talking about disabled people. We are talking about mentally handicapped people who live in the community. We are talking about a lot of young women who have family responsibilities and who are struggling to make ends meet. Surely, but surely this Government should, as I indicated the other day, in the Christmas spirit, spirit of Christmas, find within its heart, find within itself, some way of adjusting this amount upwards.

I note that in looking at the last quarterly financial statement tabled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that a lot of departments were underspending from what was budgeted and including incidentally the Department of Health where tens of millions of dollars are not being spent at least at this point in time. That is also true I believe of the Department of Economic Security, which is the relevant department when we talk about social assistance payments.

The fact is that this Government is spending less than it had budgeted for, and I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will tell us that we want to spend even less because that is our objective, because ultimately we want to have a surplus so that we could start working on the debt, and I appreciate his concerns and his objective.

But at the same time, let us not eliminate deficits, let us not reduce debts on the backs of the very poorest people among us. I mean I would rather take that \$5 million or \$6 million or whatever it was from the CPR. You know the Province of Saskatchewan took that money, locomotive diesel tax, as I understand it, took the money. We were going to do it but we backed off of it. We gave up millions of dollars, not one time but forever, or perhaps indefinitely. I would have rather said

to the CPR and CNR, who I believe are important industries in this province, but nevertheless who will be here for a long time to come, could well afford to pay that to the Treasury of Manitoba, likewise with some mining taxes, likewise with the forgiveness of some taxes to Inco. Surely we can work towards reducing spending if that is what you want to do, or rather not spending but rather reducing deficits if that is what you want to do, or trying to cut back on debt that has been accumulated, but do not proceed by zeroing in, by penalizing the poorest people in Manitoba.

The poorest people income-wise are this group, they are scattered throughout the province. There are, as I said, 10,000 disabled people. These are physically disabled people, people who have for whatever reason become disabled through accidents or disease. They are mentally handicapped people; they are young mothers, single parents and others who would rather not be on social assistance, but for whatever reason they are there. I would really urge this Minister and his Government to rethink this matter and show a little generosity and say that they are prepared to make an adjustment upward of this payment as 3.9 percent is simply not adequate.

I think that it is quite proper for the Government to rethink this and possibly come forward with some adjustment upward so that the people involved will at least be paid an increase to cope with the inflation because, if you do not, Mr. Chairman, what you have done, what this Filmon Government has done, what this Conservative administration has done, has effectively reduced the standard of living of the poorest people in this province.—(Interjection)—Mr. Chairman, there is no question about it that this is what this Government is doing and it is not as though they are not aware of it. I drew this—well, at least some people are listening. I drew this to the attention of the Minister and so it is not as though the Government has not been made aware of it.

I know that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is a compassionate person and he wants to do the right thing and I am sure he does not want to hurt the poor people of this province, but effectively this is what we are doing. So I would again urge reconsideration on behalf of all of these people. It is Christmas time, it is a good time to rethink this, Mr. Chairman, and I commend my recommendation to the Minister of Finance and to the Government.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Chairman, I am stimulated to rise and respond in some respects on behalf of the Government. Let me say that the Cabinet had little difficulty in showing that it was in the spirit of the Christmas mood when we considered this item not too long ago, because the decision at that time was to increase the rate of social allowances at the rate of 3.9 percent or 3.3 percent; 3.3 represented the basket of items that traditionally have been measured by Government as those that have been used and required by the class of social allowance recipients as identified by the Member opposite.

Indeed, the measure for that particular groupings of needs was around 3.3 percent, inflation measure. We

chose as a Government to move to 3.9 percent taking into account that although the former Government had done that in some instances, they certainly had not in every number of the years when they were considering what rate of inflations to take. We took the highest, recognizing that this was in support of those individuals in society who were disadvantaged. So let me say for the record that we have taken that into account.

Now the Member opposite talks about a lot of things. He says the inflation rate in Toronto was 5 percent and was reflected by the provincial Government there. That rate was reflected by increase.— (Interjection)— The Member claims that he heard the increase in rates to social allowance recipients was in the area of 5 percent.

I am surprised that in the City of Toronto in the Province of Ontario, where inflation is galloping, that indeed it may not even be higher than that. This has been a pretty stable economy in the Province of Manitoba and that is reflected by way of inflation rates that have been more or less stable. So I am not shocked that recipients in the Province of Ontario really would not be receiving a 5 percent increase, because I would dare say that they are probably poorer off relative to the social allowance recipients in the Province of Manitoba. Mr. Chairman, those increases are the true rate of inflation, will be reflected in next year's rate increases.

* (1650)

Secondly, the Member well knows that when one factors in a monthly increase of 5.2 percent, and one puts a weight against that into terms of 11, or 8, or 9, or 12 months, that is diluted. That would be diluted to a figure which again would be 3.9 percent plus a little bit, but still far in excess of 3.3 percent which used to be the formula that the former Government had in place for those baskets of items that were deemed appropriate. So let him not try and paint the picture that because one month's inflation increases at 5.5 percent that represents a year's increase, because of course it does not.

Thirdly, one would have to look very carefully at the basket of goods that go into making the 3.9 percent increase which we granted by the way. One would have to look at those and make a judgment, subjective I would admit, as to whether or not that is because of items, because of an increase in pricing of certain items that really have no bearing whatsoever on allowance recipients.

So let the Member recognize that we went through these discussions, we chose the higher figure, we chose so in the spirit of giving, in the spirit of compassion.— (Interjection)—

Mr. Chairman: Order. The Honourable Minister of Finance has the floor. I am having some difficulty in hearing him.— (Interjection)— Order.

Mr. Manness: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, just to finish my remarks, I say that the Cabinet took into account many of the considerations put on the record by the Member opposite, and that is why I have made

the decision to increase allowances at the rate of 3.9 percent.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I commend the Minister when he says, Mr. Chairman, that they chose, they had a choice, they could have taken the lower estimate, provided 3.3 or they could have taken the 3.9 percent which is the CPI base of inflation and they chose the higher. I commend him and the Government for that.

My point is, Mr. Chairman, that it is not only this month but the last three months—I am sorry I do not have the numbers with me or I would have quoted them—but the last several months there has been this rapid escalation, and indeed it would bring the 3.9 to a higher level. It might not bring it to 5.7, but it would bring it quite a bit higher than 3.9. I guess the problem that I have, and I am not suggesting and I am not criticizing that you used the technique that was used in other years, is why would we want to cut it off in August. If we did that in the past, it may have been because decisions had to be made earlier. Here we are in the latter part of the year and I, for the life of me, believe that you should not close your eyes to what is happening around us.

The fact is that inflation has escalated rapidly in the last few years, so it is reasonable to take another look at it and say, my golly, the 3.9, even though it looked pretty good in August, based on accumulation of August, surely does not apply today.

Rather than belabour this, I would like to simply ask the Minister (Mr. Manness), as Minister of Finance, whether his Government would be prepared at least to review this matter. It is unusual for us to be meeting at this time of the year and even discussing these matters here, but if he would be at least prepared to review the matter for some reconsideration early in the new year based on the data which is now available and may be available in the next month or two. At least would he be prepared to come in and review by his Government of this calculation to ensure and satisfy themselves that they are not short-changing, economically speaking, the poorest people among us?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that the Government will review the year-end figures of inflation and it will make a determination and that will be reflected in the next Budget.

Obviously, if we have missed the mark by taking into account only eight months, excluding the last four, at which time there may be weighted inflation that rises far above 4 percent, then obviously that will have to be reflected in the next base, in the base for the next year, that being calendar year '89 and fiscal '89-90. The answer to the question is definitely yes, certainly we will take that into account as far as taking into account in the months of January or February and then trying to make a retroactive adjustment back into the '88 calendar year. I do not know how one does that. I think it is probably more important that we look at the experience of 1988 as a whole, and if that is far in excess of inflation terms beyond 3.9, what we decided at this point should be, then that should be reflected in a new base for 1989. That is a fair way and that is what we will commit to, yes.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I am not going to belabour this. I just want to make the point that there is nothing written in stone that these adjustments have to take place once per year. We seriously looked at doing it twice a year, that it may have been more reasonable to adjust it, say, once January 1, another time in the year, July 1. That would have been a little fairer, it would have taken into account the more recent inflation experience. I am not going to belabour it, I just point out to the Minister that it is not written in stone or law that you must adjust these rates once per year. You can adjust them every month if you want. I am not recommending every month, but I am certainly suggesting that you could do it at least semi-annually.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Mr. Chairman, just to follow up on the remarks of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Would the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), in explaining the 3.9 percent increase in payments to social assistance recipients, care to compare that 3.9 percent increase with the average increase in wages in the province for the first nine months of this year?

Mr. Manness: I am unable to do that. I do not have those figures in my possession at this time.

Mr. Kozak: It is my impression that a 3.9 percent increase in fact does represent a fairly good match with wage increases experienced in the province through the first portion of this year. Is the Minister contending that our inflation rate in Manitoba is changeable from month to month to the alarming degree that we would possibly have to look at changes in increases to social assistance recipients more than once a year?

Mr. Manness: I think in the realm of speculation, I would think if we had inflation move into double digit figures that, yes, Government would very definitely have to look at changing these rates, certainly more frequently than on a single-time-a-year basis. To me, a 4 percent range represents a relative stable rate of inflationary growth. If it hit 6 percent, that all of a sudden is not stable. I think it begins to move into an area of instability and once you hit 10 percent, then you have a situation where I believe you have to address it certainly more than once a year, and I daresay maybe more than twice.

So I guess that would be my reaction to not only your question, but also to the former questioner, the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

Mr. Kozak: My impression is that a 3.9 percent increase is fully consistent with some years of inflation experience in Manitoba. I accept the Minister of Finance's point, that Canada is not yet a banana republic with inflation rates of 100 percent or 200 percent. I would agree with him in disputing that adjustments should be made on a month-to-month or quarterly basis until such time as we do have a radical change in our inflation rate. The stability we have experienced in our economy to date does permit us, I believe, the luxury of an annual review of these matters.

* (1700)

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): I have questions for the Honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery). I would like the Minister to comment upon the ability of his department to respond to emergencies like that of the recent explosions in Winnipeg sewers. The reason I am asking that is that the department was not able to obtain samples of the toxic, flammable material that was in the sewers. Has the Minister taken action so that there is capability in that department, or other provincial agencies, so that we will be able to get samples and get an analysis done of what those materials are on an ASAP basis?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health): There is an emergency number to be called if there is an emergency. We have a team that responds very quickly. There is a protocol for responding to emergencies. But I am sure that the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), as he well knows, these were manholes that were exploding and I would not ask any of my employees to go down into those manholes at that point to be taking samples. They did take samples as they went into the river. I was not going to ask any employee to go down into a manhole that was exploding, but there is a protocol for handling these situations.

Mr. Taylor: The question is not of sending staff into exploding manholes, the issue is, after the explosive substance is passed, if sampling equipment cannot be lowered into the hole and the sample taken as is a normal practice in other parts of the world, in fact, in parts of Canada and I believe even the city has some of the equipment. It is not a case of exposing staff to danger, it is a case of extracting mechanically samples that can be analyzed right away and not wait a day and a half.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Chairman, there is not much point in taking a sample after the material has gone by. Like, it has already gone by. It is while it is exploding, that is the time we want to take a sample. We took the sample at the river after it had gone through, where people would not be exposed to a hazard of going down into a manhole that could explode.

Mr. Taylor: I will try again. The issue is that you can get residue samples in the sewer waters of what that material was that went by. It can be extracted safely after the facts without any danger to staff whatsoever, if the staff is set up to take samples in that fashion. That is the issue. In what fashion are they trained and equipped so that sampling can be done safely but on an ASAP basis, as opposed to waiting till that explosive material went all the way down through the whole system and emptied in the river a day and a half later, or whenever it was they got those samples.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Chairman, they got the samples ASAP, as soon as it was beyond a hazard to the employees. I fail to comprehend the Member's reasoning. Once the material has gone through, there is no use taking a sample. After it left the sewer system, we took a sample and they tested it. It was not that high, but there was a hazard of doing it while it was in the sewer system.

Mr. Taylor: Obviously, the Minister will have to have some training on the sampling methods available and I hope his department will be on top of that, but I will move on to another subject here.

The Minister has made comment, the Minister - (Interjection)- Could we have order, please? The Honourable Health Minister (Mr. Orchard) seems to have a lot of things to say here on this. Yes, somebody said the Minister is disturbed. I will not make comment on that.

The question I have is on the soft drink return policy of this Government. The Minister, at a recent opening of a facility for the recycling of the plastics from soft drink containers, made a statement to the effect that he thought this was a step in the right direction and that he wished to see the operation continue and that he would be monitoring to see if it was successful. That operation, although officially opened very recently, has been in operation for some time and the best success rate so far is 30 percent. The thought amongst environmentalists is that it will not be much better than that, even with additional publicity. Does the Minister feel that a 30 percent return rate on plastic soft drink containers is satisfactory for Manitoba?

Mr. Connery: When it gets into recycling of plastics and aluminum, we have a very major concern. We also are looking at glass and the Liquor Commission. So there is a whole host of things that we can look at. As the Member well knows, there is a cost to putting in a deposit system and what I have done, I have asked the company to—and our department keeps track of the figures, so we are not worried that we are not going to get accurate figures as far as percentages. If we can do it without putting in legislation, then it is cheaper to the consumer. If we have to put in legislation and a deposit, there is a cost and, if that is what is required and if we do not get the right numbers being recycled, then we are prepared to put in legislation, but we are going to let the industry give it a chance first. If they cannot do it, then we will take further steps.

Mr. Taylor: I thank the Minister for that answer. Continuing on in that fashion, can the Minister then state, in time frames, how long he would be prepared to watch, monitor the operation before he would say I am satisfied or I am not satisfied? Has he set a time frame for himself on that?

Mr. Connery: I would think a year from now, if we do not have satisfactory results, that we would be prepared to look at alternative ways of doing it, because we are not mildly concerned, we are very concerned about not only plastics, not only aluminum, we are concerned about all recycling. Our department is undertaking a major review and, as the Member knows, when I spoke to the Manitoba Environment Council, one of my major concerns was recycling. The Member was there. We invited MLAs to have an opportunity to see what the council is doing, and so he knows very well that recycling is a major concern, a major component of our work in our department.

Mr. Taylor: I wanted to ask a question in regard to the Manitoba Environmental Council. That budget is

almost fixed compared to what it was last year, almost a no-growth budget. Given the expanding role of the Environment Department under the new Act, the greater degree of awareness of environmental issues by the public, the greater demands it will be on his department and the need for more sound advice, can the Minister explain why there was not an improvement in the funding situation for the Environmental Council in that there has been requested increases over the last few years of which there has never been a positive response?

* (1710)

Mr. Connery: We recognize the importance of the Manitoba Environmental Council. As the Member knows, it is a voluntary group. We do have one staff person that is seconded to them to do whatever recording and secretarial work they require. I think the young fellow that we have, Mr. Dewar, is a very capable and very energetic person.

Nevertheless, we recognize the importance of funding. As every other Minister would like to have, we would like to have unlimited opportunity to fund. We are cognizant of the fact that they want more money. There are a lot of groups out there that would like funding. The Manitoba Environment Network would like funding for their concerns. The Manitoba Environmentalists incorporated would like funding. We are looking at those concerns and at some point in time maybe we can give some positive direction to the Member.

Mr. Taylor: Does the Minister see any increase in the numbers of members on the council? I asked this question during the Estimates process. I understand there were some 50 or 60 now confirmed compared to the 100 previously. Does he see a change in that?

Mr. Connery: As the Member knows, it is not always numbers that lead to an effective organization. I think the Member would agree with that. He would also agree that one of my concerns that I raised at that particular meeting that he was at was the lack of adequate representation from the various groups that make up the mosaic of Manitoba. We do not have enough women on the council.—(Interjection)- We have Northerners on it, but maybe we should have more. The funding, of course, of getting Northerners into Winnipeg is expensive. We do not have large numbers from the visible minorities. We did not see anybody from the physically handicapped. So my concern is not necessarily with the numbers—50 or 60 can do the job adequately—but I think we need to have a better breakdown of the people that are representing Manitoba on that council, and that will be one of my efforts, to get a better representation of Manitobans.

Mr. Taylor: I appreciate the comments about having a more representative council. I think that is a step in the right direction. I am concerned though about the capability as more issues come up, as issues become more complex. These volunteer advisors can be used to better advantage. Maybe the Minister's comment as to the 50 or 60 can do the job where 100 did it before is akin to what is going on in his own department.

We have had the Minister admit, we have had the Deputy Minister admit, both in public meetings, to the effect that this department is not well-staffed in the sense of numbers, that it is one of the most poorly funded departments of the environment on a proportional basis in all of Canada.

I am curious that given the large windfall of monies that came into this Government early in its tenure here that it chose not to take some of that money and put it to an enhancement of the Environment Department. From a budget viewpoint, things may not be so easy next time around or the time after that if they are still here. So I would ask the Minister why he did not put forward to his colleagues that the Environment Department has to be more responsive. It does not want to get another lowest rating in all of Canada as the Minister has rightfully brought out in this House. What is he doing about improving the capabilities of that department by putting better programming funding in place and better staff levels?

Mr. Connelly: The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) is right that Manitoba at this point is spending less per capita than any other province in Canada. We are 10th out of 10 provinces.

We recognize the concerns of the environment. We recognize that the previous Government let the Department of Environment go down, down, down, even though they tried to tell the people in the last federal election that they were environmentally responsible. The efforts and the response of the previous Government show that the New Democratic Party are not an environmentally concerned group of people. Not only was it from a dollar perspective but it was from an action perspective.

There are many, many things that should have been done and could have been done without any great spending of dollars but they did nothing. As the Member knows, up at Manfor the problem they have with the spills, it is a mess up there, but this Government did nothing to direct -(Interjection)- During your term is when it happened. It happened over a period of years. But anyways, we -(Interjection)- I hit a sensitive nerve of the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) because they were environmentally irresponsible not only from legislation but from the fact that they just were not able or not willing to act in the areas where it required decision making. They just did not have the capability.

Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), I guess all I can say is that when we are able to make announcements on changes, then we will make those announcements. I am not going to speculate as to what we might be doing, although the Member would like to know that. As these things are brought forward and we are able to announce them, we will.

As the Member well knows, we have a round table in place and we think that it is going to assist us in making decisions. It is going to help us in sustainable development, which the previous Government really had not much opportunity or did not really comprehend what it was.

I enjoy working with the Member for Wolseley even though we do a bit of sparring, and that is fine. I think

that he is concerned about the environment as well as I am. As we have announcements to make, we will make them and let the Member know what they are.

Mr. Taylor: The point is on the table. We have brought it up. We know we have an understaffed and underfunded Environment Department that did not get action in this Budget Estimates process, much to the disappointment of myself and most of the population concerned about environmental issues. We will continue to pressure from this side to see improvements in the capability of this Environment Department. I do not like seeing a situation where Manitoba rates 10th out of 10 in environmental capability and response and, hopefully, there will be more leadership shown next time around.

The next question I have for the Minister concerns the new Environment Act. Does the Minister see any need for changes to that Act? There have been comments made to the effect that a good step in the right direction; however, it did not go far enough or it is not clear enough. I would like his general comments on that.

I also would like him to make a specific comment. The interpretation that I have had from a couple of sources on the Act is that when it comes to Class 3 licences for major developments, the largest developments, there still remains in the Act, as now written, ministerial discretion, if he chooses, as to whether there will be environmental impact assessments done or not, and whether the Minister is prepared to change that particular section so that for all Class 3 licences there is always an environmental impact assessment conducted.

Mr. Connelly: I guess as far as the new legislation goes, it is going to take a little bit of time to work through some of the things. As you know, it has only been in place since March 31 that it was proclaimed. There are some areas that I think we need to address.

One of them is that we do not have the right to close a dump. We can fine the municipality or the city. We would not close a dump unless there was an alternate source, but if they do have an alternate source of disposal and choose not to go, all we can do is fine. That is one area I think we need to look at.

As far as the Class 3 projects, as you know, the previous Government was not going to have Clean Environment hearings for the Russell potash development and, of course, we initiated those hearings so that people would have an input into them.

If changes to the legislation are required, it would take a little bit of time, I would think, to ascertain what changes are required and how is it working. A year from now, I think I would have a little better opportunity to really comment on what changes are required. Some of them, we are getting into the first time we are doing it and it takes a little opportunity to work through it to really see if there are flaws. I am sure there are going to be flaws in it. It was a very major piece of legislation, very comprehensive, and I am sure that there were things that were missed, but it is going to take a little time to determine what those errors were.

Mr. Taylor: Major projects have project review post facto. How well did a project go? How well was it implemented? Where were the good spots that can be taken from and learned and applied again? Where were the fall downs? Where do things need to be done differently in the future? Taking that sort of philosophy, will the Minister implement a new Environment Act review, in other words, a formalized management process whereby a year from now, for example, a year and a half after the Act is in place, he will be able to look at a snapshot of that Act and how it has performed, first of all, from the viewpoint of the officials and, secondly, from the viewpoint of the general public?

Mr. Connery: I do not think I would want to say today what I am going to do in a year from now until we have seen what has transpired but, if it is obvious that there are serious flaws in the legislation and there is need to do a review, I have no worries about making such a review if it is required. To say today that I am going to have a review in a year from now if everything is working well, I do not think that would be responsible, but I would be prepared to entertain the Member for Wolesey's (Mr. Taylor) comments a year from now if he perceives it not to be working well, if he has ideas, and to listen to other people to see if a review of the legislation is required. If it is required, then we would be more than happy to comply with that.

Mr. Taylor: I wanted to see if there was going to be a pro-active review process that would provide a snapshot to decide whether you needed to amend the legislation and to what degree, but I guess we are going to have a little more of an ad hocry here.

I would like to ask the—

An Honourable Member: Ad hocry?

Mr. Taylor: Ad hocry.

An Honourable Member: . . . I will have to write that one down.

Mr. Taylor: You like that one? You can use it.

An Honourable Member: I think it is parliamentary too.

Mr. Taylor: Yes. It is not a dirty word, to the Honourable Government House Leader. He can use it.

An Honourable Member: It has nothing to do with mistletoe.

* (1720)

Mr. Taylor: No, and that was not parliamentary.

I have a question for the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) on the recently announced soil and water conservation strategy. I did question the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) on that in his Estimates process.

I want a confirmation here in the House that there will be an environmental impact assessment done for

each and every one of the projects undertaken in that conservation strategy. I am particularly concerned, given that from these two Ministers we certainly have not had the support for any environmental impact assessment whatsoever on Rafferty-Alameda. I would like, and I am sure other Manitobans would like, the reassurance of what will happen as the conservation strategy is put in place.

Mr. Connery: We are not going to do environmental studies until we have a proposal. We have done a resume of things that we think maybe should be done, and the Minister of Natural Resources has, I think, worked very hard and diligently to come forth with some strategies. He is a proponent of doing many things. When there is an environmental impact study required, then our department will do that impact study.

Mr. Taylor: I would like at this time to ask the Minister which way he is going to hop on the issue of the departmental liaison officer and whether that position is truly a ministerial position staffed at political discretion—it is an add-on to the two that the Minister mentioned, his executive assistant and special assistant—or whether he views it as a departmental position, but a departmental position staffed in breach of the Civil Service regulations?

Mr. Connery: Well, Mr. Chairman, we were keeping the discussion, I thought, productive and in good taste. The position was a line position and was filled through the Civil Service properly. It was done through the Deputy Minister and was filled through the requirements of the Civil Service.

Mr. Taylor: Is it not true, Mr. Minister, that position was staffed without notice and without any consideration of any internal staffing process whatsoever, and was presented as a fait accompli to the new Deputy Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) and said that this is what is. I guess he had to also speak to the head of the Civil Service Commission which also organization reports to the same Minister and put them into the embarrassing position of having to make good on something the Minister had done on his own without following due process.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Chairman, nobody was embarrassed over what happened. This is a term position. Term positions are not bulletined and it was done within the Civil Service and through the Civil Service regulations. If the Member wants to call anybody in the Civil Service to see if it was done appropriately, that Member has the freedom to do so and I welcome him to call the Civil Service and to see if we acted inappropriately.

Mr. Taylor: Yes, I think the kafuffle that it caused in the Minister's own office is known and is on the record.

I would like to ask the Minister a question about the Waste Management Corporation's facility up at Gimli. The question is, is that facility now fully upgraded to standards as it was not before and yet it was being used by the Government for the storing of hazardous waste?

The second part is, what is the long-term plan for that facility? Is it to be continued in use by the corporation? Will it have a phase out and, if it has a phase out, when might that be?

Mr. Connery: Well, I believe the long-term plans for the Gimli site is to phase it out.

There were two holding tanks there, one has been completely emptied. The other, they are working on disposing of it through the department. It is not creating a problem, but also it is not the kind of site that we want to have. We want to just get rid of that site and, as we get a new site for our Hazardous Waste Corporation or whether a private firm sets up some system of transferring, collecting, or whatever of hazardous waste, this site will be eventually cleaned up and not be a site for hazardous waste in the future.

The exact timing, Mr. Chairman, I cannot give that exact comment because we are not sure just how long it will take to clean it up.

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Chairperson, when this Minister inherited the site, the site at Gimli was substandard and I cannot fault the Minister for that. That is what he inherited. The question is though specifically, is it up to standard? Does it meet all standards right now today? And the other part of that is, what is being stored at the Gimli Hazardous Waste Storage Facility?

Mr. Connery: Mr. Chairman, it is unfortunate, he should have asked those questions in Estimates. There is some detail there that I do not have at my fingertips, but I would be very glad to ask the department to answer that question and get back to the Member with all of the details that he is asking. The questions are good questions and we will get the answers for him.

Mr. Taylor: The Minister makes a very good point. I would have preferred asking these questions in Estimates. I think we both agree that number of hours given for this important department was far too little. Hopefully, there will be better time management in the future by all three parties in this House.

Mr. Manness: It has nothing to do with us.

Mr. Taylor: I think it has. The Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says it has nothing to do with us. Well, I am afraid it does have something to do with the Government side. It has to do with wordy, verbose unduly long answers on the part of certain Ministers to consume time. I think that is the role that has to be played by the Ministers. The question—

An Honourable Member: Name one.

Mr. Taylor: Name one? I would have to name most of the benches.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Taylor: The question I wish to ask the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) has to do with how he sees the round table process working. So far, I see more

of us in this House going around the mulberry bush as opposed as to just in hearing the expression "Round Table on Sustainable Development." From a process viewpoint in Manitoba, what does this Minister see round tables in general doing? Could he comment, please?

Mr. Connery: The Member should well know that a round table is to give advice to the Government of the province and in Canada, to the Government of Canada—he knows full well.

He knows that we have got a very excellent round table in the Province of Manitoba and so do we have federally. In many provinces, we have excellent round tables. The goal is that of sustainable development. We can have many arguments over what is the full rationale of sustainable development. But the process of the round table is to look at issues, the bigger issues, not the little issues, but the bigger overall umbrella issues of environmental sustainable development.

* (1730)

But when the Member says we did not have enough time in Estimates, Mr. Chairman, let us put it directly on the record that the amount of time allocated to questioning of various departments is the responsibility of the Opposition. I can assure you that we saw a lot of irresponsibility on the part of the Opposition in question, and the fact that they spent a lot of time in some departments, and I listened to some of the railings of Members opposite. They were not questioning, they were babbling, sometimes incoherently, and they did not do the right questions that they were supposed to do, that they were brought here to do. So what happened, they got to the end and they ran out of time and they had to pass, as the Minister of Health said, \$1.4 billion, I think it was, in 30 minutes. Do not blame us for your foolishness and your inability to do your job.

Mr. Taylor: I heard that little round of applause and a few hoots from the Government side but I can tell you, having to listen to some of those from verbose answers, it was not much of a hoot. It was rather tiresome and sleep producing, I will have to say.

The Minister also took the opportunity to mention the supposed half hour on the Health Service Commission Estimates. It is very interesting that late, late on the Monday night, when Health Services Commission was being dealt with, that is when the amended capital booklet was produced by that Minister and tabled. I do not think that is responsible at all. In fact, that is quite the opposite; that is totally irresponsible. Those sort of scale of changes, the scope of changes, should very much have been put forward a couple of weeks ahead of time, in the fashion that our other booklets were done on Estimates. For the Minister to pull a stunt like that in the latter part of the Estimates when there are time pressures and late in the evening is very, very irresponsible.

I am looking for what the Minister sees the round table being producing, the one that the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) is now chairing. What does the Minister

think is going to come out of that? It was originally set up to be a—or mentioned to be a Round Table on Natural Resources. At least that was what was mentioned, I recall quite well in the Throne Speech. When we saw the announcement here in the House, that round table was rather unspecific. It was a round table.

What is it on? What is it doing? What do we expect to see happen and within what sort of time frame? Could we have some specifics, please?

Mr. Connery: Well, actually the table we sit at, Mr. Chairman, I must apologize, is not a round table. It is rectangular, but we all sit around it.

Obviously, the Member does not understand what round tables are and he does not understand what sustainable development is. So, Mr. Chairman, I could stand up here and tell him for an hour and he would still be asking, well, what is a round table? What is going to come out of it?

We believe there is going to be an awful lot of good things come out of that round table, and it is going to be advice to the Government on sustainable development on many, many factors. But I am not going to be telling the round table what they are going to be telling the Government. That is why we have a round table. It is for all of those good quality expert people who are going to be advising the Government and, at that point in time, the Member will be very pleased to hear some excellent advice coming to the Government. He will be aware of it, and be apprised of it.

Mr. Taylor: Yes, I am rather incredulous, Mr. Chairperson, that the Minister cannot even tell us what subject matter this round table is going to be working on. Even the general thing of Natural Resources would be an answer. But it is going to be good stuff and we have got experts.

What is the subject matter of this, or is it everything in the universe? I hope not. I hope there is a little more focus than that. I think we can expect that of the Government. They can at least give a title to it, a subject matter that this round table is going to be working on. After all, there was a selection, if I recall, at least 11 or 13 different people supposedly with certain expertises in certain areas. What are you trying to elicit from those people?

Could we have the areas that they at least are going to be working in? And will they be reporting in a preliminary fashion in six months or a year? Certainly, there must be some sort of time frames at least in those gross scale of things. Can you not share that with us?

Mr. Connery: The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) just rattles on again as he normally does. He does not understand the process. The round table, as we were appointed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to give advice to the Premier on sustainable development, when the round table has come forth with those areas, you will be made aware of, to do with the air, to do with water, to do with land, or in many areas.—(Interjection)—The

Member says that I am not on the round table. Is that what the Member from Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) said, that I am not in the round table? That shows the stupidity of the Member for Wolseley. He does not even know the makeup of the round table.—(Interjection)—I would suggest maybe that the Member for Wolseley should go home and change a few more diapers. That is what he is more adept at probably these days. You will find out in an appropriate time what the round table will suggest.

Mr. Taylor: It might be unfortunate if a certain Minister had need of a diaper himself but, in any case, it is quite clear from the answer that the Minister does not know what this round table is about and I am well aware of the concept, the process of what a round table is. I think I have quite a good idea of what sustainable development means. I was trying to elicit back from the Minister responsible in a very important portfolio. I did not get that. All we got instead was that we are going to be dealing with good things in the economy, maybe, I do not know. He did not even address the subject matter, so I will leave this questioning and will ask a similar question of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) on that very, very point.

In the Throne Speech, it was talked about that the round table was going to be specifically on natural resources and when the announcement came from the Premier it did not specifically say that. Can the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) tell us if this round table of eminent persons with the Premier's participation will be providing advice to the Government on areas of concern in natural resources, or is it working in some other areas and could he specify?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): The advice given by the round table to Government, I suppose, will be fairly broad-based advice, including advice on issues dealing with natural resources as well as development opportunities which will include industry, the development of our natural resource base. I think we have to recognize that we have a tremendous potential in this province for the development, the sustained development of industries. It includes not only advice that might normally be given by some people that have expertise in a given area, but it becomes so broad based when you consider the impacts of whatever we do, whether it is on the land, whether it is on water, or whether it is in developing industries such as the mining sector or others, and what we eject out of those industries, whether they be a tractor running in the field taking care of their crops, whether it is a farmer seeding or in preparation for seeding, whether it is an industry that is expanding, all those decisions and all those issues will come before the round table.

That is why we have appointed people with such a broad base of intelligence and experience who will be able to provide this Government with the kind of advice we will need to indicate to future generations as to what direction we should take immediately to resolve some of the main issues that face us today, such as rising temperatures, such as the deterioration of our ozone layer, all those kinds of things. I would suspect,

Sir, that the impact that you are going to see the research being done in this new Sustainable Centre that is going to be developed in Winnipeg will be so broad based that we will all be benefactors of the initiative that will be generated by the round table.

Mr. Taylor: As overwhelmed as I am by the profundity of the last answer and the answer of the previous Minister, I almost dare not ask this Minister for any specifics, but I will dare to tread. Could you give us a little more, and are there time frames and are there specific tasks that have been given to the round table that you are aware of, that you can share with the House? —(Interjection)— No, that was bafflegab.

* (1740)

Mr. Penner: I think that one could be as specific as you would want one to be. However, at the risk of giving you inaccurate information at this time, I think I have been as accurate as I want to be at this time because we have only met once formally at the round table. We will meet again early on in the new year as the round table, and I would suspect that a lot of the issues, as you will—and we will hear from the round table as to what they might feel, the individuals might feel, their input into the decision-making process will be. I think there are a lot of things that need to be worked out, as I think you can appreciate when a new initiative is taken. That is where we are now.

So I think for me to stand here and profess to be knowledgeable in this whole area as to how we will deal with every issue from now on, and what the exact issue will be, would be somewhat remiss on my part.

Mr. Taylor: It is only becoming very, very slightly clear what is going on. It would appear we may have a context—and I am in all seriousness asking this, that there is a first round table from which other round tables will be spun off? Is that what I am hearing? Because normally, there is a bound to what a round table will work on and hence the chance of success that it will offer something constructive out of its group, that is useable for Government, is useable for industry, is useable by non-Government groups.

Now, if we have a first round table from which others are to be spun off, then maybe the Minister would care to say that. But to have a round table with no bounds whatsoever, with no direction, with no specific subject matter is a little astonishing.

Mr. Penner: I guess the Honourable Member opposite is a bit hard of hearing, or he hears things that others might not hear. I do not think that I had indicated in my remarks at all that the round table had no responsibility or had no direction. I think the responsibility and direction, as I indicated in my opening remarks, is very clear. It will consider developmental issues that come before it. It will consider all the initiatives that have or will have an impact on the development, whether they be industry, whether they be natural resource related, whether they will be sustainable resource development related. Those kinds of issues will come before and some round table

members will bring to the table—that is why I think you have all aspects of the province involved in the round table. I think that is why Government must sit there, that is why industry must sit there, that is why the primary industries must sit there, so they can bring all aspects to it.

I think we must be very, very concerned that in future developments, whether they be industries and the emissions that they put into our atmosphere or the water, that they emit into our rivers and streams, whether it is the landfill sites and all those concerns, how we do business from now on will be directed to some extent by this round table. I do not think there should be any misconception that there might in fact not be at times an expansion of the round table, and there might be committees formed that will deal with specific issues that will gather information for consideration of the round table, that those are all possibilities.

I think, however, the much broader issue here is that the federal Government has taken a major leadership role in the world in indicating very clearly to the world that we will build in Manitoba a centre which, I suspect, will be a research centre, which will do research on many issues. It might be research done on a forestry project in the Amazon; it might be research done on the San Andreas Fault; it might be research done on our very soils that the farmers of Manitoba farm on, or impacts on water and air. All of those kinds of things, I would suspect, would take place in this centre that we are so excited about.

The round table will direct the affairs related to that and consider developmental possibilities in Manitoba because it is a provincial round table, and all the provinces, we hope, will in the very near future have a similar structure that will consider and give credence to sustainable development in the very near future.

Mr. Taylor: I think we are starting to get a bit of a handle now of what the Government does mean about the round table. I am appreciative of that.

If I could just paraphrase for a moment, I think I have got this grasped, it is viewed upon as a group of eminent people who will look at various projects, developments and analyze them and give advice back to the Government as to their impacts, as to their degree of sustainability, their degree of compatibility with the environment. If I understand him, that is good. However, will there be any aspect in the sense that is reactive to the proposal, is there considered to be any work for this round table dealing instead in a pro-active sense, a forward-reaching effect, as to look at problematic areas today in Manitoba and deal with them before a specific development comes and provide advice to the Government in a front-end context? Is that viewed upon as part of the work or not of this round table?

Mr. Penner: I think that goes without saying that one of the responsibilities of the round table will be to take a look at future developments, to take a look at what might—and they might very well muse at times and try and assess what the future might bring and make recommendations based on some of the findings that

research will provide them with information for. So, yes, I think that the round table will serve that function as it should.

Mr. Kozak: I was absolutely stunned earlier this afternoon when the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) stood in his place and repeated his Party's call for an increase in the motive fuel tax.

I thought I had adequately demonstrated to the Second Opposition Party, the 2,000 railway workers in my riding are desperately concerned that their jobs not be taxed away from under them. I would ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) this afternoon to provide me with assurance that I can pass on to my constituents that he is not contemplating a significant upward revision or any revision upward at all in the motive fuel tax.

Mr. Manness: I am caught somewhat unaware with respect to the question. It seems to me that the difference right now is 13.6 versus 15.6 cents a litre, 15.6 being what is in effect in Saskatchewan.

Let me make it clear at this time, certainly there is no contemplation whatsoever to increasing the motive fuel tax. Of course, Government, depending on the state of circumstances revolving around the economy and the pressures related to expenditures of Government for services provided to the people of this province, always has to have all options open to it. At this point in time, certainly there is no contemplation of increasing the motive fuel tax.

* (1750)

Mr. Kozak: I would like to thank the Minister for that assurance and once again implore my colleagues in the Second Opposition Party to cease and desist from raising the matter of supposed tax breaks for the CPR. In fact, many thousand railway workers in this province do depend on a competitive environment for the railway industry in this province. Our province's economy depends on a healthy environment for the railway industry in this province. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Chairman, at points, the Minister of Urban Affairs seems always tongue-tied, does not seem to come up with answers. They are repetitious like a broken record and on numbers of occasions he gets a real joy in saying, where were you on city council when this happened and that happened. I asked him the other day, where was he during the MTX affair and all sorts of things if we want to go back in history.

I guess I can stand here for just about ever and ask this Minister who used to be—you people do not know it, you would not even believe this, that fellow you saw giving those answer—maybe you are used to it now, maybe you are even immune to it—used to be the chairman of EPC on City Council.

It just shows you why the problems that I developed when I got on City Council, and including their friends on Winnipeg Enterprises, which is a sham, and the deals they tried to pull north of the high line that only

I objected to, and I was the only city councillor who stood up against the bridge in Charleswood and none of their buddies ever would. So, I ask him where he was when all those deals were hatched?

Mr. Chairman, I have in front of me a copy of the Delcan Report and if the Minister of Seniors (Mr. Neufeld) and the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) would like a copy I could supply one for him, because I am sure they have never seen it before, not from the answers we have been getting.

I would like to ask a couple of questions of the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). There is a report on page 6 of the Delcan Report which is referring to studies across Canada: Edmonton, Calgary, Hamilton, Ottawa, Toronto, etc. It says that the service provided by Winnipeg Handi-Transit is much more restricted than in most other communities, as other communities provide service for ridership three to four times the level of ridership. Where was he in his position, his vaunted position when he allowed this sort of situation to deteriorate and even when he gets into this Legislature and has some responsibility to the people of Winnipeg, what does he do? He torpedoes, scuttles, and spits in the face of one of the best services in Canada and we will come on to that in the next question.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Order.

The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

Mr. Ducharme: I will gladly answer where I was during the MTX. We were, during the MTX, we were the ones who exposed the MTX scandal. We started it. It was started in 1982 or something, if the Member would like to recall, that is when I was on City Hall, so I am sorry but I can not take the responsibility of being here. I was not here in 1982.

Also the Member relates to the Handi-Transit and, yes, I was chairman of Executive Policy Committee. At least downtown I was chairman of something as a councillor, and the person before me was very, very capable also, and so I am proud to share the benches with that particular individual and was able to carry on the reins for the couple years as EPC chairman.

To get the record straight, the extended transit system as outlined earlier today, the extended transit system that has been put in place as of July 1, we are watching that flow. We have not scuttled any particular STS, we are the last ones to have put money on the record for 1988. We have done that and we will continue with our cooperation with the City of Winnipeg on handling the transit service for seniors right across Winnipeg, and the extended transit for the handicapped people of Winnipeg. (Interjection)

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, you know it is a long time passed and where was he? I remember the Minister and his brother trying to create a dynasty in St. Vital along with some of their other colleagues. I wonder where that dynasty is now. Where is the whiner, for instance? Where is all this dynasty?

I will tell you one thing, the people in south Winnipeg and any one of you—I do not want to call you what you really are, because mostly you are pretty nice people really, but you are just uneducated as far as procedure to run a province and, in his case, a city. But I will tell you one thing, I would invite any one of you to come out to St. Vital over the holidays and ask the people what changes have taken place since the two ex-city councillors out there, one of them for over 21 years, was ousted. Ask them about it, if you are ever in St. Vital or in other parts of Winnipeg.

But I want to, Mr. Chairman, ask the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme)—because I know that he will hear this or see it for the first time because he has not read the Delcan Report—what are we referring to here when it says Handi-Transit services which cost approximately \$22 per passenger and “blank”? Now that is the guessing game. Services which cost approximately \$12 per passenger, \$10 less, and he scuttles them.

It also goes on to say here that the cost difference is generally in line with experience elsewhere with the municipally-operated services compared to contract commercial services.

I will give you another guess. On page 12 of the Delcan, these trips among operators including “blank,” was identified as the preferred option. I hope he is getting warm. On page 13, it says that one of the advantages of the study is to maintain the potential to maintain “blank” organization. On page 16, it says if an expanded policy is established, “blank” could be used as an effective service provider under the brokerage system. It goes on to say “blank” in other parts of the city. In other words, they are talking about did you encourage the establishment of other community-based services provided, such as “blank,” in other parts of the city to encourage greater community involvement—is what I talked about earlier this afternoon—and maintain the benefits to the community volunteer services. I wonder if the Minister has yet been able to guess what that deceased “blank” is by now.

I will give him some more hints, because he obviously has not read any of these reports or has been at all concerned with the problem because it is over his head. It goes on in this same report to say that a number of other systems, talking about across Canada, and it cites specifically Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa and Hamilton, have privatized. In other words, they have found it better, and I find it absolutely appalling, Mr. Chairman, that these people on the other side who are supposed to be free enterprisers have to stand up here and get a lecture from me about private enterprise.

They go on to say—(Interjection)—You should be so lucky. I saw you on television today, by the way, it was pretty funny. There are other quotes in here too that says the most—and I hope that the Minister of Seniors (Mr. Neufeld) now could absorb this because he could do well to do a little reading too, and listening too. If he does not understand this, he can read it in Hansard.

“The most cost-effective means of providing an expanded”—and this is Delcan, paid for by the city

and the province to make this report—“service to better accommodate lower priority demands”—have you heard this before, Minister of Industry, Tourism and whatever?—“would be to utilize the private industry to provide a larger extent. This strategy has been successfully employed in many other Canadian cities.”

These are just some of the excerpts, Mr. Chairman, from the Delcan Report that I am sure, I am virtually certain, not one Member of the Cabinet has ever read, and the person who was the ex-chairman of EPC and supposedly knows something about city, I wondered if the Minister could respond if he has ever seen these quotes and why he ignored them in his cruel and callous action yesterday.

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Chairman, can I have leave to respond, just a quick response? I do not think I have to apologize for my father and my brother and myself who have been re-elected, I think, 10 times in the St. Vital riding. I talk about 10 times, 10 different elections, and wait a minute, and one who makes these type of remarks across the floor, who has never been re-elected to anything.

As I have told the Member—and I guess my father would say to you, Gerry, do not get involved with fighting with a fool because then you look like a fool. But, however, Mr. Chairman, I will say to you that I said that I will look and carry on working with the City of Winnipeg for the benefit of the seniors, for the total City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Agriculture be amended as follows: Orchard (Minister of Health) for Enns (Lakeside); and that the composition of the Standing Committee on Statutory Regulations and Orders be amended as follows: Burrell (Swan River) for Penner (Minister of Natural Resources).

* (1800)

Mr. Jay Cowan (Second Opposition House Leader): I would like also to make a few changes. I move, seconded by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) that the composition of the Standing Committee on Statutory Regulations and Orders be amended as follows: Concordia (Mr. Doer) for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak); and Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) for Logan (Ms. Hemphill).

I move, seconded by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Agriculture be amended as follows: The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Mark Minenko (Chairman of the Committee of Supply): The Committee of Supply has been considering the Concurrence Motion and directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

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

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.