

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, September 26, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same, and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Seventh Annual Report of the Manitoba Energy Authority for the year ended March 31, 1989.

Mr. Speaker: Notices of Motion—the Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, my apology. I would like to table an Annual Report—

Mr. Speaker: Under Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports?

Mr. Manness: —yes, the Annual Report of the Department of Finance.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Valley Gardens Junior High School, thirty-eight Grades 7, 8 and 9 students under the direction of Mr. Doug Nowicki. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer).

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

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

PCB Safety and Storage Theft

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

Mr. Speaker, it concerns the theft of five 205-litre drums containing PCBs. On Friday in this House the Minister said that all PCB storage sites complied with regulations and requirements, and that being the case, can he explain to the House how someone or some people got in, stole five of them and moved them?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Well, Mr. Speaker, obviously the people who chose to remove these light ballasts from the storage that they were in had to break into the building to do so. As a result they are, if they can be identified, subject to some prosecution under Dangerous Goods and Transportation and Handling. They broke into a building which was secured.

Obviously the question that needs to be asked here is whether or not there has been an aura created around PCBs, which in this case were contained in light ballasts, that makes people, the public, feel they have to do this sort of thing. What it does is endanger the methods that we have put in place to consolidate and identify all articles that contain PCBs so they can eventually be taken for destruction.

Site Security

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): But, for two Sessions we have asked the Department of Environment to put into place appropriate regulations guaranteeing the adequate protection. We have individuals taking the law into their own hands simply because they believe that this Government's attitude to PCBs is Progressive Conservative blarney.

Now, will this Government respond and ensure that there is adequate protected storage facilities for PCBs in this province?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about light ballasts that were taken out of schools. The Transcona-Springfield School Division took the appropriate action. They took out of service these light ballasts. They put them into storage that was secure. They put them into storage that was on a separate location. Now what we have is a situation where there has been an aura of distrust that is created around the storage of that material. We have indicated previously in response to the Workplace, Safety and Health Committee which Mr. Fox-Decent chaired, sent a letter to us earlier this summer indicating that there were certain sites that they felt were unsuitable.

These PCBs were to be removed in the very near future through the auspices of the Hazardous Waste Management Corporation and put into further secure storage. That is part of the ongoing process of removing light ballasts and any other materials that contain PCBs from service, from storage sites, and consolidate it further.

Regulation Amendments

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): I have a supplementary question to the Minister.

The aura of distrust has been created by that Government that cannot respond to crisis, whether it is foster parents, whether it is day care, or whether it is PCBs.

Will the Minister tell this House today if he is prepared to introduce tougher regulations so that individuals do not feel compelled to take the law into their own hands?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): The regulations regarding the storage of this material become progressively more restrictive in accordance with the concentration and volume of material that is being stored. There needs to be some smaller sites. Organizations, companies that wish to store the material themselves or wish to store it while it is awaiting destruction or awaiting consolidation into other more secure locations, they need an opportunity to store that. We cannot be sending a truck to a school every time they have a handful of ballasts that need to be taken to another location. This material was very quickly identified where it came from because the drums were identified.

* (1340)

We were fortunate inasmuch as the person who did this did not disturb the contents of the drum insofar as we can tell, but it drives home the importance of making sure that we have correct information out in the public so they understand this material is being consolidated so it can be destructed.

Prairie Militia Headquarters Relocation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): I have a new question to the First Minister.

The Wilson budget of April, 1989, announced major base closures in Manitoba. If the federal Government cannot be persuaded from this course of action, CFB Portage will be eliminated and the Princess Patricias will be transferred from Winnipeg to Edmonton. This will create a major gap historically and in real terms in Manitoba's proud history as a defence center in Canada.

Today we had it confirmed that further cuts are being made. The prairie militia area headquarters is moving from Winnipeg to Edmonton, slated for 1992. Can this First Minister (Mr. Filmon) tell this House when he learned of this further erosion of our military presence?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) changes her point of view virtually every day.

Last week, she was criticizing me for having met with the Prime Minister and raised as a major issue the need to ensure that in response to the cuts that were made in the military in Manitoba, that we sought other

economic initiatives, economic investment, job creation activities in this Province, specifically to backfill for those initiatives that were undertaken in the budget. I said to her that very shortly after we had the announcement of the rotary combine manufacturing facility and a couple of hundred jobs in Portage la Prairie, there were several other initiatives that were under way as a result of the federal Government going to take a look at this and to ensure that in response to those kinds of activities, Manitoba would get job creation investment in this province.

She did not want us to do that. She was opposed to my discussing that with the Prime Minister, wanted me to discuss other issues, Mr. Speaker, and now she is on to this issue again. She has to decide which side of the bench she is on.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is another example of the Premier not knowing about the issues, so it is impossible for him to lay them before the Prime Minister of the country.

Building Occupants

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): The supplementary question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), in that the building occupied by prairie militia has been declared obsolete and no further repairs will be done to it, what other information does he have that he can share with this House about other units presently stationed in that building?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice, and I will bring back complete information for the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

Military Personnel Transfers

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): The assault on our centre of defence continues by the cousins of this Government in Ottawa. Can this Government tell us what contacts they have had, if any, with the federal Minister of Defence, indicating just how many military personnel are to be cut from this province in the next five years?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I know that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) does not have a great recollection of the history of the reductions in defence that were made in this province under the Liberal Government led by her idol, Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

When Pierre Elliott Trudeau was the Prime Minister of this country, he closed the defence base at Rivers, he closed the defence base at Gimli, and he closed the overhaul and maintenance base of Air Canada here, getting rid of thousands and thousands of jobs, Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal Government.

* (1345)

I know she does not remember that because she was not in this province, but I say to her that the worst devastation to this province, in terms of defence spending, was made by the Liberal Government of Pierre Trudeau, and there will never be any Government that will equal those moves in terms of the defence establishment in Manitoba.

Day Care Workers Salaries

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (St. Johns): Today, Mr. Speaker, hundreds of children, child care professionals and parents visited the Minister of Family Services' (Mrs. Oleson) office to give her peanuts, to drive home the point to this Minister and the Government that the child care workers earning on average \$15,600 a year make peanuts.

By the way, some of those children wanted to make sure that the Minister and the Premier received their peanuts, and so I would like the Pages, if they could come up and actually—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis: If I could have a—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Beauchesne 5-333 is very explicit about exhibits in the Chamber.

The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I have a point of order. I do believe we have a precedent. A number of years ago, Wally McKenzie, a former Member of the Legislature, tabled a dead pigeon in this House and had it personally delivered to the Minister at that point in time. I do believe that this falls in the same spirit. I am not referring either to the strawberries, trees, and other shrubs and paraphernalia that have been placed in the House on other occasions. I do believe the intent of the Member was quite honest when he had this delivered, which was a request made by the delegation today. As I said, this is the dead pigeon precedent.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I point out that in my view it is inappropriate for the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) to comment or reflect on your previous comments respecting the behaviour of the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis).

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As far as I am concerned, a bad precedent does not constitute a function of this

House. Therefore, I have ruled that is an exhibit. They are out of order.

Mr. Speaker: Will the Honourable Member for St. Johns kindly put her question now, please?

Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis: Considering, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister remained holed up in her office and refused to meet with all but a few of those children, which I must say struck most of those children as quite impolite, I had hoped the Minister would accept those peanuts, and maybe she will after outside the House.

I would like to ask the Minister to tell this House how her Government can justify giving its political aids like Michael Bessey pay increases of \$13,447 over the last two weeks and tell child care professionals there is nothing for them?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to the Member who has raised the point that I spoke to only a few children. I was having a meeting with some people who had come from considerable distance to meet with me this morning, had an appointment several weeks ago, and I could not leave that meeting. When I was able to leave it I spoke to the children that were there. I am always happy to see children.

* (1350)

Day Care Workers Salaries

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Johns, with a supplementary question.

Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (St. Johns): It is clear, Mr. Speaker, that this Government is prepared to give caviar to the political staff in the Premier's Office and peanuts to the day—

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

Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis: My question to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is: can this Minister explain to this House where is the fairness in a situation where Michael Bessey, who handles the Premier, receives \$70,526; letter carriers handle the mail, receiving over \$27,000; clerks who handle groceries at Safeway receive over \$21,000; but this Government sees fit to pay individuals who require a two- to three-year community college diploma and look after children in this province, only \$15,600.00?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am really interested to hear the comments of the Member for St. Johns, because it is interesting to know that when she was in Government, when the NDP was starving day care workers, when they were creating the situation that currently prevails in terms of salaries to day care workers, during that same period of time her administration tripled the salary of the wife of the Leader of the NDP.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Filmon: Tripled the salary—in a space between 1982 and 1988, they tripled the salary. Her own salary during a period of less than two years, from 1982 to 1984, when she was a co-ordinator of the Premier's Secretariat that is the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). Her salary went up 23 percent in less than two years while she was starving day care workers, providing them with increases of less than 5 percent, but her own salary was raised by 23 percent in that year. I think it is shocking, shameful, and she ought to be embarrassed about those things.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I am sure all Honourable Members would like to proceed. Honourable Members who wish to carry on a private conversation, as it appears that they are trying to do, may do so outside the Chamber.

Day Care Workers Salaries

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Johns, with her final supplementary question.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Yes, Mr. Speaker, with my second last question. Maybe the Premier (Mr. Filmon) would like to put on the record that the salary of the co-ordinator and the Premier's secretary is double, double what I earned back those years ago—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: —and maybe he can explain that. Mr. Speaker, if the Premier is not prepared to hear the voices of day care workers, parents and children today by way of their illustration with peanuts, perhaps he is prepared to address the hundreds and hundreds of letters—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I have just finished warning the Honourable Member for St. Johns. Order. The Honourable Member for St. Johns, kindly put her question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for that. I only use that as an illustration of the seriousness of this current issue. My question back to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), since she is responsible for day care, is this: is the Minister now willing to enter into negotiations with child care professionals to reach the salary level recommended by an independent assessment and recommending that day care workers earn on average \$23,000, and is she prepared to commit herself today that she will negotiate that with day care workers for a three-year period?

* (1355)

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):

Mr. Speaker, I have always indicated, even the day that I made the announcement to the media and to the people of Manitoba, what the funding was for this year, the \$6 million increase in day care for this year. I indicated to them at that time that I was concerned about the salaries and would be working with the day care field to improve the salaries.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: But the Minister is not prepared to sit down with day care workers and begin negotiating a three-year settlement.

Mini-Skool Closure Replacement Centre

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): My final question to the Minister is this: what is this Minister prepared to do in the next three days to do something about the fact that Mini-Skool, a profit day care owned by Kinder-Care, an Alabama based company, shuts its doors on Friday, September 29, leaving children without care and at risk? What is this Minister going to do to respond to the request for parents wanting to set up their own co-op day care as a replacement to that day care? What is she going to do and will she—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: —solve this situation immediately?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):

As soon as the staff got word that this centre was proposing to close, the centre was provided with information on what spaces were available in the neighbourhood, in other day cares. Many people have found spaces. There has been a parent group write me a letter and my staff are working with them to see if they can set up another centre. All these things are being done. The Member thinks they have not got my attention. They have. I meet with these groups and the work is being done.

Conflict of Interest Municipal Act Amendments

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): I see the marriage of convenience is suffering some strains and some tension. I am sure they will work it out. My question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme).

Yesterday the Minister gave confused and muddled answers to direct questions on the issue of perceived conflict of interest among municipal councillors.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): Nothing compared to the confused and bumbled questions.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, the muddled Minister for Seniors (Mr. Downey) is mumbling from his chair.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, first he confuses the municipal—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge has the floor.

Mr. Carr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First the Minister confuses The Municipal Council Conflict of Interest Act with The City of Winnipeg Act, and then he tells us that all is well, the guidelines are sufficient, seeming to ask what is all the fuss about? Mr. Speaker, his lazy, hazing meanderings are not good enough for a skeptical public. Has the wave of public opinion washed over the Minister overnight, leaving a residue of sober second thought, and will he now admit to his mistake and announce changes to The Municipal Council Conflict of Interest Act, in order to safeguard the public interest?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, we thought that the Minister had good sense to reflect overnight but apparently he has not. Why does the Government apply a different set of criteria to Members of this Legislature as it does to municipal councillors?

Mr. Ducharme: In April of '83, everyone, through the municipalities, had all contributed to that part of the Act, and that is the legislation that governs all municipalities and city council.

Public Confidence

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): We are not doubting, Mr. Speaker, which Act prevails. We are talking about whether or not this Act is strong enough. Is the Minister satisfied that this laissez-faire approach on this issue will undermine public confidence in municipal politics in Manitoba, and what is he going to do about it?

* (1400)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, anyone writing legislation will know that it is unfortunate that perception is always out there no matter what you set as guidelines. And, as I say again, when they set the legislation review and they discussed the conflict guidelines throughout the province in 1983, when they set the legislation, it was set for all municipalities and the City of Winnipeg.

Land Development Proposal Calls

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I have a question for the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). In June of 1988, the Manitoba Home Builders Association circulated a memo informing its members that the Government was interested in hearing proposals on the development of three areas in the City of Winnipeg, those being south St. Boniface, Meadows West and the South Island Lakes. Mr. Speaker, given that Ladco had the successful proposal on the south St. Boniface land, which includes absolutely no commitment to non-

profit housing, can the Minister of Housing tell us today if he has received any other proposals regarding the other two pieces of property?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lamoureux: This is a supplementary question to the same Minister. Why did the Minister of Housing choose Ladco when we have since then learned that a consortium of companies put forward a proposal that would have seen Meadows West developed, along with the St. Boniface lands. This would have ensured low-end and non-profit housing. They, too, were forecasting a profit.

Mr. Ducharme: We sat down with the critic and explained. Not only did we get more for the St. Boniface lands but now we have, over and above that, about \$3 million and all of the Maples land to now derive the profits so that we can enter into other contracts. We made more in the St. Boniface lands than in the proposal that he submits and now have all the Maples lands as a result, and we will now be able to sell those lands.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is, could the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) please explain why he would enter into a high-risk deal with Ladco, a deal which includes no guarantee whatsoever of the development of non-profit or lower-ended housing while at the same time he rejected a proposal, that call that guaranteed a return of Government investment, a profit, and that is what the Government was trying to accomplish. They would have guaranteed a profit along with low-end housing. Are you giving up on Meadows West? Have you given up on South Island Lake? You have not received any proposal call.

Mr. Ducharme: I do not know how to explain to the individuals that we made more money on one piece of land than we would have on the two pieces and now, Mr. Speaker, we will take the \$10 million worth of profit and put it into proper housing right across the city and still have the Maples land to put into housing.

Ladco Land Development Deal Joint Venture Viability

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): My question, too, is to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). I ask him simply if he can indicate the status of the joint venture that he, as Minister of Housing, and his Government entered into with the private sector land developers, Ladco, to develop the south St. Boniface property for upscale housing. My specific request to him is, can he indicate if he is standing by his original assumptions as to the need for and the viability of the joint venture between his Government and Ladco?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, the committee that is responsible for it, my Deputy Minister and my Assistant Deputy Minister, along with two other people form the management committee,

they are now reviewing the proposal that they put through and they will now be applying to the City of Winnipeg for a subdivision in that area. My mind has not changed that it is a good arrangement for that area, and even with the market situation the way it is today, we had already put that into our proposal that it would be over the next 12 years.

Mr. Cowan: At the time the Minister announced the land deal with Ladco, he defended that deal by saying the bringing of this upscale housing project on the market would not glut the market because there was a need for new housing in the City of Winnipeg.

Housing Market Saturation

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): How does the Minister defend those statements he made a little over three months ago with his statement of September 15, 1989, in his letter to the city in which he states that the existing supply is adequate to meet the city's needs for approximately 20 years beyond the turn of the century? Similarly, there is a surplus of large lots in the City of Winnipeg that far exceeds any foreseeable demand. Does he still stand by his statements earlier that this will not glut the market when there is no need?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I was referring in that letter—if you would place the letter before the Assembly—about lots to be developed outside the urban limit line; and secondly, if he would also go back and look at the projections for the St. Boniface area even during the worst years, '81-82, that the house sales were down, that particular area always produced at least 120 to 150 homes a year and that is what we have set our projections on, at the lowest figure, in the lowest years.

Mr. Cowan: It is interesting that there are not enough houses on the market when the company wants to enter into a deal with private sector land developers and there are too many houses on the market a few months later.

Government Developing

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Can the Minister assure the Legislature that the fact his Government, the Conservative Government, has directly entered into the housing market as a developer is not causing the Government to reject new developments because of the impact of additional housing on the viability and profitability of their own deals with private sector land developers?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, definitely yes.

Ste. Anne, Manitoba Policing

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My question is for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). The police department

in Ste. Anne, Manitoba, has asked this Minister for help in dealing with its problems with the town's mayor and his family. There appears to be a high level of conflict and hostility between the police department and the mayor, and the police morale in Ste. Anne is no doubt suffering as a result. We have now learned that the chief constable, Constable Mantey, alleges that he has indirectly received very serious threats which may be related to these problems.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, given that the Minister has been aware of this problem for some time, what actions have he and his department taken to deal with them?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am aware, Mr. Speaker, of the difficulties referred to by the Honourable Member in the Town of Ste. Anne. I have received correspondence from various people in that area, including the chief of police, and my department and I have discussed this matter. We discussed the matter with Assistant Superintendent Henry of the RCMP as well. By letter of today's date, we are asking the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to conduct a complete investigation into the allegations and counter-allegations that are being made in the Town of Ste. Anne.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Minister has as well seen fit to meet with the mayor, yet, despite a specific request from the police constable, has not yet met with him to explore and investigate these allegations so that he can get both sides of the story, which I am sure he is very interested in getting, and deal with this matter swiftly and fairly. Will the Minister immediately make contact with the chief constable in order to hear his side and set up a meeting with him as he did with the mayor?

Mr. McCrae: I met with Mayor Blanchette in his capacity as a private citizen of the Town of Ste. Anne by virtue of the fact that the mayor removed himself from discussion of issues relating to the police due to a perceived or real—I am not sure which—conflict on his part. I do not see any point taking sides in this House, one side or the other, as the Honourable Member seems to want to do. I prefer to leave the matter in the hands of the RCMP which, under The Police Act of Manitoba, is the appropriate thing to do when circumstances like this arise.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, quite the contrary, I am asking the Minister to meet with both sides. He has met with one thus far.

Mr. Speaker, again for the Minister, I appreciate that the Minister has referred this to the RCMP. However, the RCMP through their police activities have been referred many of the cases and, I would say, have in some respects become an interested party in this. Has the Minister considered referring this matter to the Police Commission pursuant to The Provincial Police Act, given that both the mayor and the chief constable have asked for a thorough inquiry and an impartial

inquiry, not to suggest that the RCMP would not give that. However, they have been involved with the constabulary in Ste. Anne. I would ask the Minister to consider whether or not the Police Commission would not be a better forum to look into this.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Mr. McCrae: We can always expect the Honourable Member to have an alternative approach, and I certainly do not fault him for that. I must also respond respecting meeting with both sides. Considering the correspondence that I received from both sides, considering the information I have coming out of the Law Enforcement Review Agency, I see no need, having referred the matter to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for meeting with anyone else personally about this. I can tell the Honourable Member that I have met with the executive director of the Manitoba Police Commission in coming to the decision that I have come to today.

Manitoba Data Services Divestiture

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Data Services Corporation (Mr. Manness). Manitobans are increasingly concerned over the Government's plan to sell control of confidential personal records stored in Government departments and agencies. They want to know why records of everything from their health records, tax information, credit records of farmers among others, should be stored on computer banks in private firms. They want to know what giveaway of this Government is planning, what this giveaway will cost taxpayers, and they want to know what excuse this Government will have to defend the privacy violations should the deal go through. Will the Minister today release the short list of the firms who are interested in purchasing this profitable and efficient Crown corporation?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I had trouble following the preamble. The Member was all over the map. I do not know whether the Member was wanting greater assurances with respect to secrecy, given the fact that any of the information to which he alludes is proprietary information owned by, in essence, the Government. Certainly I could give him those assurances over and over again. Hopefully he would accept them.

With respect to the number and the individual corporations that have come to the short list. At this point, I think it would serve no good purpose that I provide those; after all, we are in a very specific time in negotiating and, as in the past, we have chosen not to negotiate in public. That is also the case this time with the consideration of Manitoba Data Services.

Systemhouse Proposal

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Will the Minister at least confirm that the company known as Systemhouse is one of the firms on this short list?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, Systemhouse was one of the large number of firms that chose to put in a proposal.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). It is my understanding that Minister has awarded contracts to the same firm to do an analysis of their computer needs when this same firm is bidding to take over MDS. In other words, has the Minister permitted Systemhouse to be in a position where it could be recommending MDS for the department's future needs when Systemhouse itself is hoping to own MDS?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I wish the Member for Brandon East would state his case. Systemhouse has done contracting work for various Government departments, particularly Municipal Affairs and indeed many others for years, including the former Government.- (interjection)- So the Member says to me from his seat, so what? I say back to him, so what?

Rural Economic Development Infrastructure Costs

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), in response to a question taken as notice.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): On Friday last, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) asked a question about the cost sharing by municipalities with respect to infrastructure costs. He asserted that the former Government's policy was that they would fund 75 or 80 percent of the costs of infrastructure funding, Mr. Speaker. I would like—

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

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): The First Minister is abusing Question Period. He did not take this as notice. This was not taken as notice by that Minister. He went on ad nauseum about his policy and sat down. He thought he answered the question. This is abuse of Question Period to stand up.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister to finish his response.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from a news release of March 5, 1988, "Premier Howard

Pawley today announced that the re-elected NDP Government will establish a fund for rural development to improve the quality of roads, bridges, water and sewer systems in Manitoba towns and villages. Municipalities will be expected to provide 50 percent of the money for the project supported by the fund."

I further quote in response to a question by the Member for Arthur on May 25, 1987. Honourable John Bucklaschuk, then Minister of Municipal Development said, "Municipal officials have told us that if we were able to obtain funds from the federal Government, they would still like to go on a 50-50 cost share." That is what the Honourable John Bucklaschuk said. So I leave that on the record as their policy.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering, and perhaps if we can clarify this in the future, whether it is considered in order for Ministers to rise at a subsequent day when they did not take a question as a matter of notice. That has not been our standard practice in the House. I am wondering if you could advise Members of this House as to whether that is in fact in order.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Thompson. I will take that matter under advisement, and I will report back to the House.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Kildonan has time for one short question.

The Honourable Member for Dauphin, on a new point of order.

Mr. Plohma: I think it is appropriate that the First Minister apologize to this House for saying that our policy was: a hundred percent of those programs should be funded by municipalities. He misled this House and he should apologize today. Maybe that is why he stood up.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. As the Honourable Member for Dauphin is quite aware, a dispute over the facts is not a point of order. I have recognized the Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Health Care Underspending

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the head of Urology at Health Sciences is leaving Manitoba. As a result, patient care as well as teaching programs have suffered. The main reason for the departure is a lack of O.R. time. While the surgeons continue to compete for a limited O.R. time, the list for surgical procedures can begin to grow. My question is to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

How can he justify underspending \$29 million of last year's budget while the patients continue to wait for all surgical procedures, physicians are leaving Manitoba, and those surgeons are also leaving Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my honourable friend's question because it is very similar to the question he posed last Session about subspecialists at the Children's Hospital leaving the Province of Manitoba for career advancement and the successful re-recruitment that has taken place at Children's Hospital to replace those various subspecialists.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's premise to his question is absolutely false, because if my honourable friend took the time to analyze last year's budget funding, he would find that the hospitals spent not only what was budgeted in the defeated Budget, but an additional \$10 million budgeted by this Government, so that the budgets of hospitals were not underspent, and I wish my honourable friend would get his facts straight and stop his fearmongering.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Time for oral questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Department of Highways and Transportation; and the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture.

* (1420)

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY—HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer): Highways and Transportation Department, when we finished off yesterday, we were discussing item 3, Planning and Design and Land Surveys, section (a) Planning and Design: (1) Salaries and Wages \$1,824,500—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Chairman, just in terms of procedure, could I have your guidance as to when we could discuss the GST and its impact on transportation? I know there may have been some discussion yesterday. I am not sure whether this is the appropriate place. The other one is The Off-Road Vehicles Act under the Motor Vehicle Branch. Is that where the Minister would like to discuss that or where?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Regarding the GST, we had quite a discussion about it yesterday. I indicated what was happening within the department. I am instructing my deputy and it is in process right now to establish exactly what impact the GST would have on the whole transportation aspect of it. We do not have the figures available at this time. Once we have them we certainly are prepared to make them available.

I also indicated that at the meeting in Calgary the Council of Ministers, when they met, this was a decision that was made by all provinces that they would all be following that approach. So I just want to reiterate what I said yesterday that we are trying to establish the impact of what the GST would have on the Highways and Transportation Department generally. I indicated that relatively complex process. We are in the process right now and we will certainly try and move it along as fast as we can.

Mr. Plohman: I must thank the Liberal Critic for allowing my intervention here before he continues with his questions, but I wanted to know whether the Minister had set a timetable, a date when he could make information available on the GST's impact on the transportation sector in Manitoba and indeed its impact on all consumers, because rural and northern areas depend on transportation for all of their goods, obviously, and if he could give us a date.

Secondly, would he just confirm that the off-road vehicle issue would be discussed under the Driver and Vehicle Licensing or will it be discussed somewhere else?

* (1430)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the Member is asking for a specific timetable in terms of information on the GST. I just want to reassure him that it is of vital importance to myself and my department as to the impact, and certainly to the Government of the Day and the Department of Finance, but I cannot give him a definitive date on it. All I would like to indicate to him is that we will be very interested in the impact. I think time is of the essence, and we will move along as fast as we can. I give him that assurance without being able to put a specific time on it.

Most certainly if there are undue delays I would expect that the issue could be raised by the Members at any given time, either in the House or privately, and I will give them an update as to what the status is. Certainly there will not be any undue delay coming from my department in terms of trying to get that information forward. Regarding The Off-Road Vehicles Act, most certainly we are prepared to discuss that under the driver and vehicle licensing. I think that would be the most appropriate place unless there is a different desire. We can accommodate that at any time.

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): Mr. Chairperson, page 31 of your annual report, Mr. Minister, under Planning and Design, Rail Branchline Abandonment Study which was conducted by the Touche Ross people, could the

critics be provided with this study? Has it been completed and, if so, what impact is it going to have on rail line abandonment here in Manitoba?

I will just ask the Minister, are we going to be discussing branchline abandonment in this department or are we going to go into some other department to discuss rail line branch abandonment?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I might suggest to the Member, that comes under Transportation under item 5, Transportation Policy and Research. I will be having my respective staff here at that time, Mr. Wallace. If it is acceptable then I would like to try and get the information about the study to the Member beforehand and then we could discuss it under that item.

Mr. Mandrake: I do not have any objections to that, Mr. Chairperson. I would be more than pleased to discuss that particular issue in that department.

I have some other questions, here, Mr. Chairperson. I will try to be as fast as I possibly can so that we can get through Estimates as fast as we can. I am quite sure the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) wants that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: No rush.

Mr. Mandrake: If the Minister says no rush, then that is fine, so be it.

The tourism industry of Manitoba has asked for several resolutions to be attended. I will go over them one by one and ask the Minister for his response.

That is a full map of Manitoba which would include Churchill, and the suggestion is the reverse side of the map; Department of Highways to erect signage on major highways throughout the province that would indicate to the traveller that they are entering a specific tourist region; Department of Highways to identify the tourist region of Manitoba on the highway map; the main market road which extends four miles from PTH 12 to Buffalo Point to be hard surfaced to support the expansion of Buffalo Point. This is in the Minister's own constituency, so I am quite sure that he will take that as—

Mr. Plohman: Do we not know he is a strong advocate?

Mr. Mandrake: Oh he is, he truly is.

The other one, Mr. Chairperson, I drove out to Manipogo and drove by that beautiful beach that we have there. I was very, very much amazed that all we have is a small little green marking on the map saying this is Manipogo. I think if we are going to attract the tourist industry we are going to have to be a little bit more forceful in identifying these various areas. Wait, for example, I would suggest probably even down—

An Honourable Member: Where?

Mr. Mandrake: —Ste. Rose, whatever the case may be. Let us tell the public exactly where these areas are.

Mr. Plohman: There is a sign if the Member decided to see it.

Mr. Mandrake: Yes, but not a nice one. I am talking about it, okay? I will await the response of the Minister.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the Member raised a series of items. I hope I have covered them. I made notes of them to some degree as he was raising the questions.

Regarding the full map, we have had numerous requests about having a full-size map. Staff is reviewing that possibility right now. One of the reasons why the map was cut back was done for financial reasons. Some years ago I think the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that would be the Minister at that time when this was done—cost factor certainly has a lot to do with it. We are reviewing the possibility of coming up—I am expecting a report with various options from staff in the very near future because we have to do it relatively soon if we are going to make any changes. I am hoping that I will be able to look at some options without increasing the price dramatically of having the map.

One of the rationale for having the cutback, first of all, was the financial aspect of it and the fact that we have no roads further north than the ones that have been shown on the existing map. Once the report comes forward, I would like to consider looking at the options and, like I say, staff is working with that right now and we should be able to deal with that very shortly.

Regarding the signage request from the Department of Tourism, which is what I believe the Member made reference to, by regions, we are in dialogue with the Department of Tourism on a regular basis. My deputy and the deputy from Tourism have met to discuss the various promotions that could be undertaken jointly. We are talking of the tourist information booths, we are talking of rest stops, we are talking of various things to try and enhance the tourist industry within the province. We are in very close liaison and discussion with the Department of Tourism in terms of the things that we do that would enhance the aspect of tourism within the province.

I note what the Member has said and that will be also part of the discussion that is taking place. The resolution I believe that the Department of Tourism has forwarded to my department, of course, is under consideration.

When the Member makes reference to the main market road from No. 12 to Buffalo Point, he is correct, that is within my constituency. In fact, the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Ernst) and myself had the occasion to be down there last year. We are working together with the community, for the people involved, and part of the reason why it has not moved forward faster is one of the policies within the department has been that the Government does not undertake to build roads, especially provincial roads on reserve land. We feel the policy has been that we do not build on reserve land unless we have the right-of-way. Now, because this is reserve land, we are working together, my people have been working together with the federal Government, to try and resolve that aspect of it in terms of the right-of-way and the cost-sharing arrangement.

Certainly I can indicate that I am very supportive of the project. I have been involved with the Buffalo Point

people from the day that they basically almost started, and I think they have done a very tremendous job in terms of development out there. If anybody has an opportunity to get down there and have a look, they have done a tremendous job on the services that they are providing in terms of a marina. They have cottages moved in now, they are looking at setting up a lodge, plus the fact that there are two subdivisions in there where major lots are sold. There is a fair amount of activity in there.

I believe the department has been involved in doing the initial upgrading of the road; however, if we are looking at improving the road and putting on, let us say, base and AST, more work has to be done. We have done preliminary studies and estimates have been undertaken. Once we resolve the aspect of right-of-way, certainly I am going to be promoting the idea of proceeding with the project.

* (1440)

Mr. Mandrake: I have just two further questions, Mr. Chairperson. On page 15 of your new projects for 1989-90, Highway 366, and it refers to Woody River—and I have desperately searched the map for Woody River and nowhere could it be found—to PR268, 4.8 kilometres grade and gravel. I can appreciate his staff probably know where Woody River is, but could he possibly provide the critics with an appropriate type of map whereby if we look at this we can correlate it to the appropriate type of area that he is referring to so that we are not spending a lot of our precious time—we do not have the administrative staff that he has—to identify as to where this is going and where it is ending and where it is starting.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, to expedite things I have made a little circle exactly where it is on this map. It is in the Swan River area. There is a river there that swings along there and it crosses the 268. I have circled that roughly so the Member has an idea where the project is.

Mr. Mandrake: I apologize to the Minister. I would think that maybe we should use some other type of an identification mark as opposed to a river. That is neither here nor there.

Mr. Chairperson, I have one final question on this section. I have one other one on bicycle safety which I want to dwell on. I think I asked the Minister yesterday, the Dauphin by-pass, which was land of approximately 20 acres which was expropriated, could he provide me with the cost of this land which was expropriated?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not have that information available right here now. We certainly will provide that information to the Member. Possibly the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) could help me out. He was the one who did the expropriation. I know that we have the information available within the department and I will certainly bring it forward.

Mr. Mandrake: It is very, very unfair of Mr. Chairperson to be referring to the previous Minister to provide this

information. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is not the present Minister of Highways and I do not think it would be incumbent upon him to make such a statement. I would prefer to have it from the present Minister of Highways.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I accept that statement. I indicated to the Member that we would be getting that information. To expedite the information so that the Member had it right now, I asked the previous Minister whether he could recall, he having represented the area, but we will have it for him as soon as possible.

Mr. Mandrake: I take your statement, but all I am trying to say is that the previous Minister might be out by \$15,000 to \$20,000.00. If I was going to take it for his word I do not think that would be fair. I would never, ever expect the previous Minister to be asked. I know you said it in a joking manner, but I hope that we do not go into this type of a dialogue that we have to refer to the previous Minister.

Mr. Plohman: I am pleased to see the Liberal Critic standing up for my rights and seeing that I am not abused here and being asked unfair questions. I would feel no compulsion to answer in any event since it would not be my responsibility.

I can tell you insofar as this issue is concerned, last year the Member asked about a problem that occurred there. I think first of all I want to preface what I want to say about this by-pass question. I have some questions for the Minister. The Minister does not do the negotiations, does not get involved with the payout of the dollars for expropriation, and so the current Minister is fully aware of that. It is even unfair from that point of view. He does not normally know the exact figures of these things nor did I know.

I understand in this case there was a mistake made in the estimation by Government Services with regard to the amount, and subsequently they found out what their mistake was. They went back to an owner who happens to be a person that the Liberal Critic probably knows well, and without mentioning names and in that particular -(interjection)- well, the Minister says Rampton, who I believe is one of the individuals involved. Certainly there was an update given to us by the Minister last year indicating that there had been made an offer that was much higher than the value was subsequently determined to be.

I would like to ask the Minister just to follow up on the Member for Assiniboia's (Mr. Mandrake) question, whether that now has been settled; whether it is going to the courts; whether it has been finalized, in fact there has been a settlement between the individual, a Mr. Rampton, and the Departments of Government Services and Highways, since Highways is involved with this as well; and whether in fact the owner is still insisting on the original offer. I would like a status report on that from the Minister as soon as possible, if not today.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, staff indicates that they believe it is settled, but I do not want to leave a

vague innuendo on the record. I am going to get specific information because that does not come under this department here, it comes under my Land Acquisition Branch in the Government Services. We will get an updated report, a full report, on it and get back to both Members hopefully the next time we meet.

Mr. Plohman: Also, I would like to make a comment, very briefly, on the highways map. It is not a tourism map, it is meant to show highways. I think the reason for the reduced format was so that we could get competitive bids in Manitoba for the printing of this map because it was a little larger than most printers had the capacity for, and therefore the cost was much higher. Just by reducing it slightly the cost was reduced significantly.

However, that made it necessary to set it up at a scale that did not allow for the far northern part of the province to be shown on the same side and the roads that were necessary to show were shown in an insert, the Churchill area. Otherwise, as the Minister said, there were no additional roads there that needed to be shown and since this is a highways map it would seem that this was appropriate or suitable.

Although the Member, the Liberal Critic (Mr. Mandrake), has raised it as an issue, at the time I did not get a lot of criticism for this. The previous format had the rest of the map, I believe, on the back side but there is so much information to put on the map. Because it is in a bilingual format, there was no room to include that any longer and also include all the other information. A lot of this information would then have to be left off the map. That is some of the background on why that map was reduced in size, for cost factors.

I wanted to ask the Minister about the situation at Buffalo Point. He said that he is going to be bringing forward—once he is able to work out some details with the federal Government perhaps, or purchase of the right-of-way to rebuild the road, to reconstruct and perhaps pave through the reserve at Buffalo Point. As I understand it, although it was not finalized, I believe the policy that was being developed was that the federal Government should pay the full cost of construction of any road that is destined for a reserve. In this case that is the case. There is no other, at least as I understand it, provincial development on the other side of the reserve. I believe the reserve goes right up to the water and so, therefore, there is really no other destination but the reserve itself. If that is the case, is he changing the policy to fit this particular instance, and will that then be applied on all reserves in the future on a case-by-case basis, based on that policy?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, first I will make reference to the fact that the Member made reference to the map. We are looking at the possibility of again adding that top portion in a condensed form on the back so that the people would still get a full view of the province. That is one of the options that I am looking at without trying to increase the cost. We are working on that aspect of it and I think that was done once before.

But coming back to the Buffalo Point, part of the negotiations that staff is having with the federal

Government at the present time is dealing with areas other than just Buffalo Point. As well, I believe we are looking at addressing this on a provincial basis so we do not necessarily set a precedent because we have other cases where a road leads up to a reserve with certain services. If we can come to an understanding so that the feds are prepared to take and pay a portion of it, whatever we can negotiate with them on the reserve property, providing we get the right-of-way, we might have to look at changing the policy. At the present time I think our policy does not necessarily make provision for that kind of a thing without some changes.

* (1450)

Mr. Chairman, one of the things that we are looking at is the fact that specifically in Buffalo Point it does not just go to the reserve, it goes to a service that is provided, a public service at the marina where various services are being provided, albeit they be on reserve property, but we are looking at the possibility of using that as a rationale for maybe working out a program that would accommodate them.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, Mr. Chairman, then the Minister is admitting that this would be a change in policy for this situation, because the policy that I believe we were following or that was being developed was that, as I said earlier, the federal Government would pay the construction costs 100 percent for roads that led into a reserve with the reserve as the destination, not through a reserve, but ended in a reserve. The Minister is now saying that perhaps where there are services for the public at large, even though they are on reserve property, then there would be an exception negotiated with the federal Government perhaps to get them to cost share a portion of it, but that the Government would definitely be prepared to pay at least, say, 50 percent or 75 percent of the cost of construction of that road. Is that a fair summary of what the Minister is considering here?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I believe it was the previous administration at the time when a proposal was forwarded to the federal Government for some kind of a cost-sharing arrangement and when that was forwarded—I do not know whether we have received a response back from them specifically on that. That is the format that we are using right now in terms of our negotiations with them. However, we have not completed those negotiations but nothing has changed in terms of the format that is being used in terms of trying to get them to come to an agreement with us.

Mr. Plohman: Just to tie this up, this issue then, it seems though that the Minister would be putting forward a subtle alteration, variation to the Manitoba position to include Buffalo Point in those negotiations, that situation. That is what I am asking the Minister.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would want to be very cautious how I answer that. I do not think that we would be embarking on a project of this nature whereby we set a precedent, because we have many other cases where the same thing would apply. That is why we are trying to work out something that could

be addressed on a broader basis than just to accommodate the one community. I know that sounds vague enough but I have nothing definite to give at this stage of the game other than that we are in a negotiating mode with the federal Government and hopefully we can come up with some kind of a cost-sharing arrangement that would be able to be applied in more cases than just the Buffalo Point situation.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, the Minister just said that the proposals the previous Government put forward were the basis for the negotiations. Those proposals were the Manitoba position. He said we have not changed that position but now he is coming forward with a situation that does not fit that particular policy as I recall it, because that proposal required the federal Government, or proposed to the federal Government that they would fund 100 percent of the construction costs of roads that terminate in reserves. This one terminates in a reserve. That is why I am asking the Minister if he is changing his policy and therefore his position that he is taking with the federal Government saying oh, under certain circumstances we will be willing to participate in the construction, especially when there are services offered there for the public at large. We are going to use that as a rationale for changing our position. That is legitimate perhaps. We did not take that position but perhaps the Minister is now taking that position. If he is, it is just a simple matter of saying yes, that is so.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am not necessarily taking any position in that regard. What I suggested, and I repeat, is that we are negotiating with the federal Government on the general cost-sharing arrangement. The proposal that was forwarded to them previously, we used the same format in our negotiations at this stage of the game. Mr. Chairman, my staff tells me that the situation in Buffalo Point is unique; however, we cannot really make any indication what we are going to do until we see how our negotiations with the federal Government flow. Once we have that reaction, then we will be able to indicate exactly how we are going to deal with that. It might involve a policy change, I do not know.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, it is just that Buffalo Point may be unique now but it may not be unique very long. Other reserves where provincial roads lead to the reserve and where we insist that the federal Government pay for the remainder of the road because it terminates in a reserve may develop tourism destinations and facilities for the public at large, such as marinas, lodges and whatever. That may happen. As a matter of fact it probably will happen, because Native groups, bands, need some type of economic development and tourism is one good potential for them. If the Minister is now indicating that under those circumstances the province would be willing to pay a portion of the construction costs of a road, then that would be the outcome and he should be aware of that of proceeding in this fashion I think with Buffalo Point. He is establishing a new policy area.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I might indicate to the Member that I am aware of that situation and that is why we

have not developed any scenario at this stage of the game. Hopefully, once we know where we stand with the federal Government, then we would have to access in terms of how we apply the program.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, the Minister said that he intends to put this on the program once he can get the right-of-way and that he is prepared to therefore commit funding for it. I think he has already stated that he is prepared to commit funding and therefore change the policy and that will obviously, I would think, be something that the feds will become aware of and the Minister will not have a very strong negotiating position under those circumstances.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, I am just going to go back a few steps here. I appreciate the comments made by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), but I omitted to ask the Minister last night, it is on Route 90. I appreciate everything has to go through Urban Affairs, so I would ask him whether or not he would lobby the Urban Affairs Department and that is to probably upgrade Route 90 from Inkster Boulevard to the Perimeter. If this is in the planning stage, when would he anticipate the completion of that particular road?

Mr. Albert Driedger: My staff are in negotiations with the city right now. Dialogue is taking place and it is our understanding or impression that the city would be contemplating to do work on 90 within a reasonable period of time, dovetailing it to some degree with activities which we plan to undertake at that juncture.

Mr. Mandrake: The Minister was very careful in his words, "within a reasonable period of time." Within a reasonable period of time, Mr. Minister, when you had the first budgets on Highway 75, you were so elaborate that you were going to be doing it from both ends, and within a reasonable period of time. I would like to know, is it going to happen within two years, five years, or 10 years? Could you give me an approximate number? I will never hold you to it, but give me at least some kind of years.

* (1500)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that the city, I cannot account for exactly what they will do because they have their portion that they will have to do. It is our hope that we can dovetail the project from the city aspect of it together with ours. In terms of being more specific between two and 10 years, I would anticipate it would be sooner than that, but it depends on the negotiations. Once we have the negotiations completed, then the necessary survey work has to be done by them as well as ourselves, and ultimately the funding has to be put in place, so it could be four or five years. I am just guessing, it could be even longer, I guess.

Mr. Mandrake: I am sorry, I overheard the Deputy Minister say something—four or five years until you have completed your work or what? Or I was not supposed to hear this?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we do not have any secrets here. Whatever we discuss is very public,

and we want to put on the record that it was me who said four or five years, and my Deputy indicated that it could be a shorter period of time.

An Honourable Member: It will come back to haunt you in five years.

Mr. Mandrake: No, it will not. No, we do not operate that way.

Mr. Chairperson, between PR276 and 269 you have slated some construction on 490. I saw the sign there and it was supposed to have been done by a John Strilkiwski. Could you be so kind as to elaborate on this as to what work is to be done on that piece of road, and just tell me what is going to be done on that road first, okay?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the Member will have to have a little patience with me. We have so many signs all over the province that I have lost track a little bit. It is just like billboards all over the place, but we will try and establish exactly which project and what we are doing on this one.

I wonder, while we are waiting for the information, whether the Member would care to make a comment about the kind of signs that we have out there. We have two different kinds of signs. We have the ones in the PTHs which are the nice blue and white ones, then we have the older ones because we are trying to be economical, and the green ones that we use on the PR system, so if the Member wants to applaud the Government at this time, I will accept that.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, I notice the Minister constantly patting himself on the back as to how well he is doing within his department. We will soon take him to task on the capital projects. We will show him exactly how much money he has put into highways and capital projects, which amounts to \$1,752,000.00. Mr. Minister, although I appreciate your signs and I appreciate seeing your name underneath there, let us not get into dull things like that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, maybe I can give the information on Highway 269 now from PR490 up to PR276, which happens to be in district 8, in fact, in the Member for Dauphin's constituency where we have a 10.9-kilometre piece of road which we are doing base and asphalt surface treatment which was awarded to Strilkiwski in August. It has been let; they are working on it.

Mr. Mandrake: That is what I thought, Mr. Chairperson. Thank you very much. My next question is this. I know John Strilkiwski very well. His business has been primarily in the gravel business. How are these contracts being let out to people who probably do not have the equipment to perform these types of tasks? I drove past Mr. Strilkiwski's place of business and I had not seen any type of equipment, an asphalt laying machine there, anything like that. Please explain, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will try and explain to the Member. First of all, on this portion of road it

is not asphalt that is being laid, it is base and AST, and this company basically has the contract for doing the crushing and the laying of the gravel. It is our department that actually does the application of the base and the AST, asphalt surface. The contract that this contractor has is doing the crushing and the laying of the gravel and our department does the balance.

Mr. Mandrake: I appreciate that, Mr. Chairperson. I was hoping that John did not get this contract because he was the local person, even though he did not have the capabilities of doing it, but seeing that your department is doing the laying of the asphalt I will gladly pass on that.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, just before we move on, I know that the people up in the Meadow Portage, Waterhen area are very pleased to see the remaining short distance being completed on 269.

I know that even the Member for Ste. Rose is probably pleased to see that happening, although it is not in his constituency. I was rather surprised that the Minister was aware that it was in my constituency. I thought that would not make any difference to him. In any event, I was going to ask him about a couple of other projects. No. 1 was the Treesbank ferry. Can the Minister indicate to me whether the bridge has been completed and now operational, and whether the old ferry has been disposed of, and how and at what price and so on?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to give the answer to this question because the Treesbank bridge has been completed. In fact, this coming Friday we are going to have the official opening of the Treesbank bridge. I might also indicate that I think my deputy and myself were the first people to drive across that bridge before it was even quite completed. We had a good look at the situation. We are pleased with the project.

The transaction with the ferry to the municipality, I think that was an agreement that was struck before and we have completed that agreement with them. They will be taking possession of the ferry at the end of this year and moving it to Stockton.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to hear that has been completed, too. I do not know whether the Minister is going to be inviting critics to the ceremony but certainly I feel somewhat responsible for the work that started on that project after many years of consecutive Governments delaying it, both Conservative and NDP Governments over the years. It was nice to get that thing moving and it is good to see it is completed. No, I do not expect an invitation but I just thought I would mention it.

I wondered about this disposal of the—

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, if I could interrupt for just a moment.

I would certainly not want to leave the impression here that the critics would not be invited. Certainly I would extend an open invitation to attend the official opening of the Treesbank bridge which will take place

on Friday at four o'clock. I might add that I think the program has been established and I do not know whether we want to make provision and extend the program at this stage of the game, but certainly if the critics want to appear there, for my part of it I would even introduce them as critics of their various Parties. The invitation is open.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Minister's kind invitation. We will have to see. He called my bluff whether I can be there. In any event, I want him to perhaps extend on my behalf, whether I am there or not, the kind wishes to the people in the area for having this received and their perseverance in making this a reality, because they certainly worked hard in an organized way to pressure the Government to have this project completed.

* (1510)

I am concerned—just about the ferry. The Treesbank Ferry was rebuilt a few years ago, and there was an agreement with the municipality. I believe it was something like 10,000 or 20,000 a year for three years or something, that they would provide—there was some agreement. But I saw an Order-in-Council that seems to indicate that the total price is \$20,000 and it has just been turned over for \$20,000.00. It seems to me that was not the price we agreed to. I wonder whether the Minister could just clarify that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that there have been no changes of the initial agreement that were set up and the municipality did not contribute this \$20,000; it was contributions to the extent of \$30,000 previously. The total contribution would be in the area of \$50,000 which is basically half the price of what the ferry is worth. The agreement, the way it was initially formulated, has been gone ahead with.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear that, because I did notice the \$20,000 figure and I thought it was low from what we had agreed to because it had to be rebuilt and it was only going to be in use for a short time before the bridge would be in place. We had at that time tried to get the best price for it in agreement with the municipality there. It is good to see that has been carried out.

I wanted to ask also about Highway 44, and perhaps it was asked yesterday when I was not able to be here. I wanted to know what the plans are for Highway 44, the twinning. It seems to be on very much of a slow track. The attention all seems to be on Highway 75, and undertook the construction of the extra lanes to Garson, I believe, and then the paving took place on the new lanes and the old lanes, but there has been nothing happening on the section towards Beausejour which is in bad shape. It seems to me that the purchase of the land could have been going on last year for the by-pass and so on that was necessary, so that there could have been some construction this year. I think the Minister has been dragging his feet on this project a little bit. Can he indicate what the long-term plan is for that, even the short- to medium-term plan to complete that work, not long term?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I almost feel hurt a little bit when the Member indicates that we would be slowing down a highway project in this province. That is certainly not the case. We are trying to escalate every project that we possibly can. Specifically on Highway 44, the Member is well aware of the heavy financial implications of buying the right-of-way, because we have the Tyndall and Garson communities. We are in the process of buying that right-of-way. Hopefully we can have it completed possibly by the spring of next year, and we could possibly be looking at getting a major grading job into that area, maybe by next year.

The inference is made that we have slowed the project down. I think the Member should be well aware, and I think is aware, of the fact that the problems with buying a right-of-way in that general area. I do not have any total costs of that available right here now, but it is quite substantial, and it is an ongoing process. We have not stopped the program.

Mr. Plohman: Inferences of slowing it down are all relative. There could have been a more aggressive pursuit of the land last year, I would think, and there could have been a grading project this year. I just ask the Minister whether in fact it was a lower priority in favour of, say, Highway 75 over the last year, and that, no, the Minister is not cancelling the project, but he is not putting it on the fast track as he is doing with Highway 75. I think that is obvious to people there. What is the three-year plan, or four, what will it take to finish that now and how does he see it being staged?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the Member representing Lac du Bonnet would be very upset if he got the impression that there was a slow down, because he is constantly in my office to remind me of the project that has been started, and it is certainly our intention to complete that project.

As indicated before, we are in the process of completing the acquisition right-of-way. Once that is done, we will have a waiting job. The Member well knows that is up to west of the junction of No. 12 and from there on down to the Brokenhead River. Depending, of course, whether we have a Government that puts a priority on highways, it will be faster. If we have a Government that does not put a high priority on highways, then of course it could take longer. I would anticipate that it is probably going to be on the faster track because -(interjection)-

Mr. Plohman: The Minister is answering in circles here instead of giving a direct answer. It is not a question of whether the Government puts a priority on highways, it is a matter of whether that Highway is given a priority or not. I am just asking whether it is going to be done in a four- or five-year plan to complete it, or does the Minister see it taking longer than that? What are his plans now, what are the department plans to have that completed? Do they see it happening in three years? Are there two grading jobs left or three? Then the paving that takes place there, how long is it going to take?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would only venture to guess, if I did, at best you know how long it would

take. First of all, the Member was well aware that the next step is a major grading job that would take it to the west of No. 12.

Subsequent to that, we still have not even completed the survey design aspect of it to the Brokenhead River. I think four and five years is unrealistic to expect it to be done in that period of time because just the implications of all the things that have to be done. Even giving a high priority on Highway 75, we are looking at six and seven years before that could be completed.

The Member sat there as Minister long enough and knows that he has so many dollars to spend and he tries to spread it around as reasonably as he can to try and accommodate most of these situations throughout the province. That is what this Minister is undertaking right now, as the previous Minister did as well.

I am not in a position at this stage of the game to make a commitment and say that project will be done within four or five years. I can indicate to him that we are going to continue with the project. There will not be a stoppage of the project, we will continue with it.

Certainly he does not have to encourage me any more than the Member from Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) is doing on a daily basis. I fail to see where he would want to pin that down. We certainly made that commitment that the project will be ongoing and would adhere to that.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, maybe the Minister resents that I would be asking about a project in a constituency that one of his colleagues represents. I do not think that means I should not be concerned or interested in it.

It is a project that we started in Government and that I would like to see completed, and take a great deal of pride in seeing progress on it. I have not seen any progress for a couple of years, other than the asphalt being laid on the other lanes. I just asked the Minister if he has a plan.

I want to ask him also about the eastern access at Brandon too. Does he have a plan of construction, a three-year or four-year plan on those?

I am not saying we had a plan when we did these projects, but I think we should have a plan, at least in the foreseeable future, in every case. The Members have said you cannot plan necessarily 10 years ahead and be exactly on, on every construction project. I just wonder whether the Minister has a projected completion date for that project or whether he is going to take it on a slow track where he does construction of a small section one year and then the next year he goes ahead and buys a few more properties up, or is he going to be buying that property while he is doing the other work so he is ready to go with the next construction project the next year? Is it being done that way or is it being done in a very slow way, you complete what you started and then you start on the next section from scratch again?

* (1520)

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) that there has been a change in attitude within the department in terms of how we work on highway programs. The previous administration had a tendency to try and give the impression that they would do three or four miles somewhere just to give the impression that they were doing major jobs. That was the way you had your priorities set.

We have changed that; we do more major jobs. We get better bang for our buck in that aspect of it. The Member is indicating that on Highway 44 nothing has happened there. There was asphalt being laid there last year and we started the acquisition of rights-of-way, which I have indicated we are continuing. If we want to talk about the Brandon eastern access, I can also indicate to him that we are moving on that in spite of the comments made by the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) when he said that we were doing nothing. We are moving on that project to the point where we have made a commitment that we will be having dirt flying within a reasonable period of time.

If the Member is trying to give me a bit of a dig here about the progress that is happening in Highways, I am very defensive about that because we have a record that we can be proud of compared to what he had when he was there, not blaming him himself, but obviously his Government did not put a priority on highways. We ended up with an all-time low with \$83 million being spent in '87. We are up to \$102 million now. If the Member wants to be critical of it I will debate this for the next two days with him about who has put priorities on highways and where, and I will defend the highways that we have built throughout the province as well, because he has some in his area as well as every Member in the Legislature who is in the rural area, they have highways in their areas.

Mr. Chairman, while I am at this, I might as well keep on going. I asked all Members of the Legislature to bring forward their requests and I have tried to deal with them as fairly as possible, and certainly I think I have addressed most of the concerns that were brought forward to some degree. We pay particular attention, we have spent a lot of hours making sure that we were trying to be fair in terms of how we did that. I do not want to have the inference left on the record that we are playing politics with our road system, and that we are slowing down projects, speeding up projects. I am very proud of the work that we have done to date with the highways program and hope to continue that way.

Mr. Plohman: We really got an earful from a very sensitive Minister. He got into areas that I was not accusing him of wrongdoing at all in. Certainly it seems to me that he is very sensitive about where he has been putting the bulk of his projects. I have not said to him that most of them are going into his constituencies or those represented by his colleagues. I have not said that.

He has indicated that he is going with larger projects. Certainly the economies of scale are there. It is more efficient if you can do that under certain circumstances.

On the other hand, with the dollars that you have available you also try to spread it around as much as

possible. You can do more projects if you do smaller projects. So naturally that is not there in a sinister way to manipulate the public process. What is intended is that there is some progress made for as many people as possible. The Minister knows there are demands all over the place and that you have to try to balance those out.

Just because the Minister sent a request—which I congratulate him on doing—to all the Members of the Legislature, asking them what their priorities are, does not mean that he will indeed make a great deal of progress on those priorities. For example, I gave him a few priorities and indicated I would have a lot more once we got through those. He indicated that—well, I have seen the results, one project in the constituency of any significance. We just talked about it, on 269.

It is nice to do that, but if it is just a public relations gesture then of course it does not mean that much, but if we see results as a result of that request then it is more meaningful. I congratulate the Minister even more so under those circumstances. We did not see a great deal of results, so I am not prepared to do that at this present time.

Just to get on to this other issue, in terms of whether there has been a change in thinking and so on, I think it is important that the Minister indicates to the Opposition Critics what his plans are and that is what we have asked for. He has not been able to give us a plan for Highway 44. It seems clear that he is just going to play it by ear and decide on the basis of the pressure he gets as to whether he should move quicker or slower on it. It does not seem to be a very high priority as compared to, say, Highway 75 for the Minister.

One other question for the Minister (Mr. Albert Driedger) is with regard to Highway 59. Has he received his report on the feasibility or the necessity of twinning Highway 59 south? He talked about that right after he was appointed Minister, that he is a homer and proud of it, and he wanted to twin Highway 59. I just left that alone for a period of time. I knew that the Minister would come to regret that statement later on because he is there for all of Manitoba, as he tried to say to us just a few moments ago, to try to meet the needs of Manitobans throughout the province.

But he felt a need to do a study on Highway 59 even while 44 is being twinned, be it slowly, Highway 75, Highway No. 1 east and west, massive outlays of money even with the small increase in the budget that he is talking about. You cannot just do everything in the world with another 10 million or \$5 million. It makes a difference but it is not so much that it makes a huge difference. I would just ask him then, is he still intent on twinning Highway 59 and has he received his report on the feasibility and whatever else was asked for on this project?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to go back. Before I finish my reply, I want to bring the current status of the Brandon eastern access. However, I want to indicate that if this Minister and his Government had been more concerned about highways during the last six-and-a-half years, instead of having

a budget at the present time of 102 million, if we just use the normal rate of inflation my Department would now be spending anywhere around 120 million, \$125 million which would have addressed a lot of the concerns that he is putting forward in terms—

An Honourable Member: We did not have the windfall from the federal Government that you have now.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Well, windfall or not, the Highways budget, Mr. Chairman, was a carry-over budget from the Sterling Lyon years in 1982. The capital budget was 100 million and then subsequently each year dropped down until finally in '87 it was down to \$83 million. The Member says there has been very little increase. I will tell you something, it is sure working in the right way for a change. Heaven forbid, we could have had this Government in longer. We probably would have ended up spending \$50 million a year on the capital program.

Addressing the Highway 59 as indicated, I certainly have no qualms about asking that the study is in place right now. I do not have the report on it yet and most certainly when the time comes that the city comes forward, I would certainly—based on the information that goes with it in terms of the amount of traffic on it—I can justify that with any other project we are undertaking. If the Member has any qualms about that, he can ask for the figures as to what kind of traffic we want there and we will give it to him. Certainly it is one of the higher travelled roads. The fact that we have done a study on it, the Member full well knows that it is a long way from actual work being undertaken, just like they did with the Brandon eastern access which they have flogged to death for years and then it never moved anywhere at all. I would like to now give you the current status of that highway -(interjection)- Well, it did not, and I find it ironic that the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) jumps up and down and says oh, we did this, we did this. You did basically nothing, you know.

But the current status, I would like to put that on the record. This project is currently in the design and right-of-way acquisition phase. More specifically, the current works include the following: the detailed design for the CPR underpass structure by consultants I.D. Engineering is well underway. It is estimated that this detailed structural design will be completed this fall. Another design study by consultants DS-Lea Consultants Ltd. has completed the functional and structural design of the traffic interchange at the Trans Canada Highway and the Brandon eastern industrial route. Landowner interviews have been completed. A total of 19 landowners were involved. Acquisition of rights-of-way are now in progress and scheduled to be completed by spring of 1990. Subject to the completion of the rights-of-way acquisition, the construction phase of this project should start as early as 1990-1991. Construction of this industrial route is tentatively staged as follows:

* (1530)

Stage 1, Construction of the CPR underpass, the realignment of PR457, and the grading of the industrial

route between the CPR underpass and the Assiniboine River. This stage of work will be preceded by the construction of our railway detour which we hope to have in our next year's program.

Stage 2, Construction of the Assiniboine River bridge and the grading of the route southerly to connect with PR344 which is basically Richmond Avenue extension.

Stage 3, Completion of the industrial route between CPR underpass and the Trans Canada Highway, including a traffic interchange at Trans Canada Highway. It is presently estimated that the construction will cost in excess of \$16 million and will likely take at least five years to complete.

Mr. Plohman: I will pass for now.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, I sat here with great anticipation hoping that the Minister, instead of reciting that whole poetry to us, that he would have tabled that document in lieu of going through this long dissertation of what they are doing. He has made a few very, very valid points and I would never take that away from him. Maybe to promote the speed of our Estimates we should try to refrain from these long, long dissertations about two words probably would be more than sufficient. So I would probably suggest using what had been told to me in the services, keep it simple, stupid. So I am going to try to advance our Estimates in such a manner where maybe we could terminate it in a very short period of time. I do not know how long this is going to take.

I would just like to ask the Minister, on page 38 of his annual report, he makes mention of bicycle safety, and cyclists' fatalities -(interjection)-

Mr. Chairman: The Member for Dauphin, on a point of order.

Mr. Plohman: I do not want to make this difficult in any way, but the Member says he wants to expedite things and then he goes into an area that I do not think is covered under Planning and Design. In terms of bicycle safety, it comes under the Motor Vehicle Branch. So I just ask if this is proper, because I would like to move along. I have a couple of other questions on highway projects that are planned, and then move into the Motor Vehicle Branch as it comes up in the department. Perhaps the Member for Assiniboia has another rationale for this.

Mr. Chairman: The Member does not have a point of order. The Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, on your annual report of 1987-88, the bicycle study was under this particular section. So therefore this is why I am asking the question in this section.

In the report it states bicycle safety, cyclist fatalities rose by 40 percent between 1986 and '87. This was on top of a 67 percent increase between '85 and '86. What have we done or what has your department done to make, or in conjunction with MPIC, because they are the educational wing of bicycle safety, to have this

type of fatality brought down or to a level? I would prefer to see that nil, but I know it is going to be almost impossible.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I do not know whether I should be concerned or not with the implication that we want to move fast through the Estimates. I find this a very educational experience, and I have as much time as the Members have. So whatever time you want to spend on these things, I am certainly going to be accommodating.

I would just like to indicate on the bicycle study that this was an internal study that was done by the department, a three-year study. I believe it is completed now or should be completed very shortly, and the findings will be presented to myself within the next six to eight weeks. That study that was undertaken involved the RCMP, it involved the cycling associations, the safety organizations, and I look forward to getting the results of this study and hopefully we can make some recommendations and adjust according to what the study is suggesting.

Cycling is a very popular sport at this stage of the game and the safety aspect of it, of course, is a major concern all the time. Where possible that we could take and actually we probably cannot do it, but it would be nice if we could, especially some routes that are more popular for cycling that we could pave the shoulders aspect of it or bicycle trails, but certainly we will be able to address that a little better once we have the results of the study that is going to be presented to myself.

Mr. Mandrake: I do appreciate the Minister's answer, Mr. Chairperson, but if I can be allowed some suggestions that could possibly make bicycle, the cyclist, bicycle safety a little bit better. The following is what I will make attention to him, is that carriers, the people presently carrying their little children in the back of their bicycles in a bucket type of a seat without no protection for their feet, I would strongly suggest to the Minister that he lobby the manufacturers of these seats, whereby they would construct it in such a way where the child's foot would be restrained and it would have a high back seat with a cross strap and, of course, CSA approved.

The other thing too, Mr. Chairperson, is helmets. I think it is almost, and I would not want to be put on record saying that I think it would be mandatory, but I would strongly suggest the use of helmets, particularly for young children who are the cyclists and have them CSA approved.

I realize it is not within the privy of the Minister to implement this within his—but would he lobby on behalf of his Government to the various manufacturers to make sure that this type of equipment is brought up-to-date and so we do not lose another child and we do not have another fatality and if we do, maybe we can prevent at least some, or curtail some of the injuries.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we will take note of the comments made by the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake). I would anticipate that possibly some

of these things will certainly be addressed and the report when it comes forward. If not that, we will take and use part of this as our overview of the cycling industry.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, you told me I did not have a point of order. I thought that safety comes under No. (c) in Driver and Vehicle Licensing and, if that is not the case, then I wish the Chairman would make himself aware before he rules that I did not have. In any event, if we are going to talk about bicycle safety under Planning and Design, I am prepared to do that.

Mr. Chairman: We have allowed a good deal of latitude for the critics to bring in some information on different areas, and I think the Minister had the information available.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, maybe I could clarify that. Normally I believe it would be under the Driver and Vehicle Licensing, Safety aspect of it. However, because the study was commissioned, I understand that in the report because it was part of the planning aspect of it, they had put in the report under this category. So there has been some confusion over that.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, just on the report, I believe that there was a report that was done for the Highway Traffic Safety Committee that was in place a few years ago that reported to the Minister of Highways and Transportation, the Minister responsible for MPIC, the Attorney General and perhaps other Ministers. At that time, there was a subcommittee set up of that ministerial Traffic Safety Committee that had made recommendations on bicycle safety. Is the Minister aware of that? I believe the Registrar of Motor Vehicles was sitting on that committee as well, Dan Coyle. I wonder if that committee is still operating, whether in fact the Minister has seen those recommendations.

* (1540)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am informed that those people who were sitting on that committee are the same ones who have been involved in doing the study on cycling on this report that is being brought forward.

Mr. Plohman: Perhaps I will wait, Mr. Chairman, until the Registrar of Motor Vehicles is here to comment more on what was done at that time because I believe there was a study that was completed and it was to the Minister already in 1986—or 1987, I believe, for action. I just wonder whether we are doing more studies on something that already had reached the recommendation stage.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am informed that part of the reason why this is under the planning aspect of it, the part of the study we have been looking at, the physical aspect of it in terms of bicycle paths, the planning of highways to accommodate this so—how should I explain this—that this was the same group but because of the planning that is involved and how we do the physical aspect of it is why it ended up in

here. But the same people who basically were involved in the other committee that you made reference to—which I do not know of—basically have been the ones who have been doing this study here as advisers.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, Mr. Chairman, obviously it would have to come from ideas on safety, to the physical accommodations for bicycles and whether they are sufficient at the present time or whether there has to be change in the design, the way we think about the operation of bicycles, whether they have their own paths, as the Minister said, or whether they are operating on our roads throughout the province, or in cities and towns, and so on. So I can see the link and I think it is a good step if the planning people are involved in following through.

I would be interested though in getting the information from the Minister as to whether he has followed up on that initial study and has put in place any provisions or is planning to put in place any provisions to enhance bicycle safety at the present time, or is he waiting now for this subsequent report before any action is taken?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate that I am not aware of the previous study. I am waiting for the report of what will come forward now, which will be basically I believe addressing certainly the safety aspect of it, as well as the physical part, because the safety thing, especially in cycling, is a very, and rightfully so, emotional issue at the present time. A lot of people are concerned about it.

But as far as any physical undertaking or direction, I do not think I would be in a position to give direction as to what we would be doing until I have that completed study presented to myself within the next, as I understand, six to eight weeks. Certainly at that time I anticipate there would be various options and recommendations that would be looked at and certainly, if at all feasible, we would want to address those that we can, based on the financial limitations.

If one of the recommendations was to take and have paved shoulders on every road to accommodate bicycles, of course that would not be possible to undertake, but certainly I anticipate there are certain aspects of recommendations that would come forward that we could implement with a reasonable amount of expenditure. So I am talking in a vacuum because I do not have any of these things. Certainly when they come forward I am prepared to take a look at implementing whatever is feasible to be done.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I had just written a letter within the last month or so to the Minister, I believe, or copied him. It was to the I think—and I have to check on my files, I do not have it with me—Cycling Association of Manitoba or something. They have been pushing bicycle safety and they want meetings with the Minister and so on. They referenced this study that had been completed a couple of years ago that they understood had gone to the Minister. I am surprised then that the Minister said that he never heard of that study, because I believe there was a study that was completed and had gone to the Minister.

I am just wondering if he could just give us the status of that study, whether it is forming the basis for the work that is being done now; whether his officials have reviewed it and made any recommendations; and whether in fact he could provide us with a copy of that study and its status?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I have to indicate that I am not aware of this study. I am informed that possibly the Registrar has that report. I will try and avail myself of that report and see whether copies can be made available. It has not been drawn to my attention, and I will check it out. Certainly if we do have a report of that nature, I will make it available to the Critics.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for that. I am prepared to see us move on to other areas of the department.

Mr. Chairman: Item 3.(a)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$1,824,500—pass; 3.(a)(2) Other Expenditures, \$336,500—pass; 3.(b) Land Surveys, 3.(b)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$1,251,200—pass. 3.(b)(2), Other Expenditures \$249,500—pass.

Resolution No. 74: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,661,700 for Highways and Transportation, Planning and Design and Land Surveys, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass.

Item 4. Engineering and Technical Services, \$11,288,000. Provides program management and specialized functional support services to departmental programs. Provides for the operation and maintenance of northern airports and a ferry service in northern Manitoba for freight, passenger and vehicle service. Operates the Manitoba Government Air Service, installs and maintains communications systems for governmental departments and agencies.

Item 4.(a) Management Services, 4.(a)(1), Salaries, \$122,100—pass.

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): I just have some questions here dealing with Northern Airports.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, again on a point of order. We will be down to that in about three lines.

Mr. Herold Driedger: Oh, I am sorry. I was watching how you were moving around in the section before. I am sorry. If that is how it is going to be, why, I have no problem with that.

Mr. Chairman: I am sorry. I cannot hear you.

Mr. Herold Driedger: I was simply following along by the previous lack of order, as opposed to the orderly fashion we are now being asked to proceed in. So consequently since that is where I wish to ask my question and we are not at that point, I have no problem with passing this on a line-by-line basis.

Mr. Chairman: Does the item pass?

Mr. Herold Driedger: Which line are we on now before I say pass?

* (1550)

Mr. Chairman: That is 4.(a)(1) Salaries, \$122,100—pass; 4.(a)(2) Other Expenditures, \$18,700—pass; 4.(b) Mechanical Equipment Services, 4.(b)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$8,353,400—pass; 4.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$10,857,600—pass; 4.(b)(3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$21,977,000—pass; 4.(c) Warehouse Stores: 4.(c)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$429,700—pass.

4.(2) Other Expenditures, \$138,900—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: I have just one question, Mr. Chairman, on this. Do we still have warehouse stores in all of the districts? In which ones are they now?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We have storage spaces in the same places where we used to have them before, storage facilities in Winnipeg, Brandon, Dauphin, Swan River, The Pas, and Beausejour.

Mr. Plohman: Are there any plans by the department to consolidate any of those at the present time?

Mr. Albert Driedger: No.

Mr. Chairman: 4.(2) Other Expenditures, \$138,900—pass; 4.(c)(3) Purchases, \$6,700,000—pass; 4.(c)(4) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$6,700,000—pass.

4.(d) Northern Airports: 4.(d)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$2,795,500—the Member for Niakwa.

Mr. Herold Driedger: I have no questions on Salaries and Wages.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(d)(1) Salaries and Wages, \$2,795,500—pass.

4.(d)(2) Other Expenditures, \$1,445,000—The Member for Niakwa.

Mr. Herold Driedger: I have a few questions in this section dealing largely with some of the types of other expenditures. I am particularly referring to the airport at Berens River. I understand that it was necessary to build a chain-link fence around this airport. My information indicates that this was to prevent horses from straying on to the runway.

Could the Minister comment with respect to whether this is a very serious problem at that point or at that particular airport?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The Member is correct. There was a problem with horses getting onto the runway. It was a serious problem because these animals do not necessarily always adhere to the traffic regulations that go on at an airport. However, it was fenced off and the situation I understand has been corrected. There are no further problems there.

Mr. Herold Driedger: Are there any other airports in these remote locations that suffer similar kind of problems with respect to animals crossing runways?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we do not have any other problems related to livestock per se. I guess the odd moose trots across one of these runways from time to time. However, that is not a matter of major concern at this stage of the game. However, we do have some problems with where we have airports close to communities and where we do not have good security that people move across the runways and that is a matter of concern and we are certainly trying to address that.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

Mr. Herold Driedger: The Minister references people and we are talking remote areas. I am sure people normally are able to hear airplanes when they are approaching but perhaps I am wrong in giving it in this—how severe a problem is this? I just became aware of the fact that there might have been a problem when I heard about the fence being built around the airport at Berens River just to keep out horses. I have spent some time in the North and I have spent some time waiting for airplanes at these airports and actually it is—they are in the middle of, some of them, fairly remote, very limited services available at the airport terminal or at the building which serves as the airport terminal, sometimes basically not manned at all. I guess what I am looking for is an indication from the Minister as to how significant the problem actually is. I understand that with the horses it could have been quite significant because he does talk about livestock around communities that may end up straying, but what is the actual problem with people doing the same thing? I mean, how severe is the security problem?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, there is a matter of concern, I do not know whether a major concern, but I have to indicate, for example, we have cases where vehicles are on the runways, unauthorized vehicles, so we have an ongoing program where we are going to continue the fencing program to create that kind of security. Each airport is a little different, depending on the location, as I indicated before, close to the community or the kind of security that we have and the amount of activity that takes place in the airport. We have a sheet here that shows the amount of flights that go in and out of the various airports. There is heavy activity on, others there is very limited activity on, so we are monitoring these things in terms of the security aspect of it and I believe we have an ongoing fencing program that we have in place. So it is not something that is a burning issue, but certainly we are concerned about that aspect of it.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): The Member for Niakwa, did you have another question?

Mr. Herold Driedger: Just briefly. You were referring that you have an ongoing program with fencing and with making these airports secure. There was, I guess, last year, the year before, some concern about the Gods River airport because it was at one time a private

airport, now having been handed over to the Gods River Band. Is this within the purview of Highways and Transportation as it stands now, or is this still an airport that is under separate jurisdiction?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, the airport at Gods River Narrows still belongs to the band.

Mr. Herold Driedger: What role does Highways and Transportation play in either determining the safety of this airport, referencing again the previous comments that you made, perhaps not so much if we are talking now about vehicles on the road but now let us take a look at from the position of aircraft using that airport. Do you license it? Have you any role in maintaining it? Do you have any role in providing security for it?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, we have no jurisdiction at that airport at all. It is strictly their jurisdiction. We have no involvement there other than an option that to sometime in the future, I assume, if the Government so desires to enter into an agreement with the people from that reserve.

Mr. Mandrake: There are several questions: one for the northern airport, and that is Tadoule Lake. That airport, last year, if my memory serves me right, there was apparently a lawsuit being lodged against the provincial Government. Has this been settled, and if it has been settled, what was the problem? If he does not have the information today, could he table that information for both critics?

* (1600)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, it is my understanding that the contractor who was involved in the construction of the airport, there was some difficulty and he is in the process of suing the provincial Government. Because it is before the courts, I do not intend to give any further information on it.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Acting Chairperson, in your Air Services, I have several questions, and I will then bow to the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: I just wanted to get back to God's Lake Airport for a moment. The Minister said that he has no responsibility for it. Of course a couple of years ago the airport was purchased for the band along with the old Ruminski Lodge. I believe there was some commitment to upgrade that airstrip to meet certain standards. There has been some recent controversy about it, I believe, that I heard in the press from the chief there. I also am aware that recently there was a disturbance there and the RCMP had flown up and they could not land because there were no lights on the strip and they had to leave.

I guess I am wondering what the Government's plans are to upgrade that airstrip at the present time, at least a minimal upgrading. I know there was a problem all the time with that airstrip because Ruminski who used to own it constantly came forward and said, look, we need some help to upgrade this strip because it is low

and it is unsafe and so on. So now that it has been turned over and there was some agreement, either formal or informal—I am not sure, the Minister would probably know—to upgrade it. Is there a plan to upgrade that airstrip? Is it planned for next year? Is it being done now, or is it not even being considered. I know the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) was asked about it recently as well and said there is a plan to do this work. Is it under his budget or is it under this budget?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, first of all, let me address the comment that was made halfway through the Member's statement or question regarding the latest issue at Gods River Airport—not God's Lake—where there were some problems with youngsters shooting windows out of schools, et cetera, and the RCMP had indicated that they could not land, or the chief had indicated that the RCMP could not land. I would have to indicate that the community has been supplied with flare pots. However, apparently they could not find them or whatever the case may be. So that created a bit of a problem there. I would like to indicate now in the more general basis that there is an agreement that was struck with the band or with the reserve initially when the purchase was made by the federal and provincial Government that at a time when Government saw fit that they could then enter into an agreement and buy the airport for a dollar. We have made that offer. In fact, we have been negotiating with the chief and his council over a period of time and we have not reached an agreement at this stage of the game in terms of maintenance, et cetera. So we are still negotiating at the present time.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, I understand, I think, from what the Minister said, that the purchase price is not at issue here in terms of negotiation, it is the terms of upgrading and maintenance later on being negotiated at the present time. Is that correct?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to maybe correct that. The upgrading and the maintenance of the airport, if we would take it over, is not the issue here. The issue is basically the cost of the maintenance which the band has supposedly undertaken from the time that they bought the airport until now that it is under negotiation and the compensation for various things that happened in between times.

Mr. Plohman: Okay, Mr. Acting Chairman, then we are getting back into the evacuation of the people from Gods River a couple of years ago and the cost that they incurred in evacuating and then bringing in supplies on ice, keeping an ice strip, too, and so on, all of these things that were surrounding it. That has not been settled as yet?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, we had, at one stage of the game, almost reached agreement and then the thing fell apart again. We then renegotiated, had almost reached agreement, and it has sort of fallen apart again. We are in a negotiating mode right now. I do not know whether we want to get into the details of it.

If the Member wants, I am prepared to sit down with him and explain exactly the circumstances; not that it is a confidential thing, it just has been a very difficult emotional thing for some people involved at this stage of the game and we are still trying.

Mr. Plohman: I will not pursue that any further now. I know it is very sensitive, I recall being involved in that old issue before. In terms of the upgrading, is the Minister saying that they will not do any upgrading until this is settled, in other words, until the department owns that airstrip before any upgrading and major work will be done there?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is right. We have no intentions of putting any money into that until we have an agreement whereby we take over the airport, because once we put money into it then we are responsible. If we are going to be responsible, then we want to deal with it in such a manner as we prescribe through the department and through the regulations that are there if we feel there is another way to do it.

Mr. Plohman: As long as the band is insisting that these other items be settled as part of the package, then there will be a delay in any improvements to that airstrip, until an overall settlement can be negotiated?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is correct.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): Item 4.(d)—pass; (e) Marine Services: (1) Salaries and wages, \$565,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$405,900—pass.

(f) Materials and Research: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$1,337,300—the Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Chairman. I have before me a letter written by a Mr. Mayer from the Grand Rapids Indian Band dated June 21, 1989, and I will read the letter and ask for the Minister's response. "In late December '88 my council and I met with you and several officials to discuss the issue of the Grand Rapids Burrow Pits." It goes on to say that they laid a plan for further discussions as of June 21, 1989. The band has yet to hear from Mr. Mayer. Could he be so kind as to advise the critics as to what happened?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, we are not quite sure as to whether that is the Highways Department or whether that would be Crown lands. I will get the information. Staff is going to check into it and try and get an answer back to the critic on that.

Mr. Mandrake: Under page 57, paragraph 3: Performance models were developed for Manitoba pavement surfaces to assist highway impact analysis for various Off-Track Elevator Options. Could the Minister be so kind as to explain to me what does this really mean?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I apologize. I wonder if the Member would give me the indulgence to repeat that.

* (1610)

Mr. Mandrake: It is under page 57, under materials and research in my annual report. I am sorry. I shall recite it again to you, Mr. Minister. It is under materials and research, page 57 of your annual report. Performance models were developed for Manitoba pavement surfaces to assist highway impact analysis for various Off-Track Elevator Options. Now, could he explain that to me in greater length, please?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am having great difficulty explaining that. I not trying to be facetious. The information I have is that this refers to the study that was undertaken where rail line, where abandonment or elevators were closed, and the impact it would have on the roads in terms of the change in transportation from the rail to highways, and the impact it would have on municipal roads, provincial roads, the pavement aspect. I believe that is what they—this particular group were the soils and pavement experts that were basically involved in studying that kind of an impact.

Mr. Mandrake: I suspected that was what it was, Mr. Acting Chairperson. The Minister says he has a study. Number one, would he please provide the critics with that study, and No. 2, which off-track elevators has he conducted a study on in our rural areas? As far as I can remember, I think there is only one at the present time that is being supported by the federal Government in the—I think somewhere around Gimli area if I am not badly mistaken. I forget the name, but that is the only one that I know of which at the present time the federal Government is doing a cost-sharing on the off-track. What other elevators have they done a study on? Provide that study to the critics so that we can analyze it and say okay, which avenue you people are taking.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, it is my understanding from staff that there have been various studies and reports done over a period of years on these things. I think the latest one was one done by Touche Ross or something like that. I will undertake to find out exactly what studies we have that would impact on this area here, and will try and get them forward to the critics. Obviously there is information there and we will try and get it.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, Mr. Acting Chairman, it seems to me that we are dealing with one at Fisher Branch, and there was a monitoring committee made of federal and provincial officials that was monitoring the feasibility and the efficiency, and so on, and the impact that this kind of an off-track elevator would have.

That was being done, I imagine, and the officials from the materials and research were involved in monitoring the impact on the roads. I guess that is part of the report that would have been prepared. Has that been completed? If it has, then we would like to get a copy. I would concur with the critic from the Opposition that we should have that study. Is that for a federal study then, or has it been released?

Mr. Albert Driedger: As I indicated before, we would have to go back and see exactly what we have, but

anything we have in terms of reports along these lines, we will try and make that available for the benefit of the critics, as well as myself. We will get that information and forward it to the Members.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, Mr. Acting Chairman, if it deals with refuting a study that was done by the federal Government or whether it was just part of the monitoring of this specific off-track experiment, it is quite a different thing. If it was dealing with the off-track experiment, I certainly would like to get that information.

If we are referring in this annual report to something that happened before that, which is what the Deputy Minister was referring to—the ADI study that was done a few years ago—which showed that in their findings there was virtually no impact, no cost to the province of abandoning rail lines and having that traffic revert to the highway system. It was subsequently refuted through another study that we did. If this is the one we are talking about, then that information, I do not think, is as critical from my point of view, because I have that information. I think anything new since then is extremely important, if developments are taking place since then.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, we will check into it and if there is that information, because possibly the Liberal critic does not have that information, we will get what information we have, including updated information and forward it.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): Shall the item pass—the Honourable Minister.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am sorry, before we pass that under this area here, I just want to make reference to a program we have in place right now. That is the Gravel Pit Rehabilitation Program.

I want to put on the record that this is, we think, a very important program. It is working well. We do not have that much money in there. It is a matter of \$50,000 that we were expended to rehabilitate approximately 15 pits throughout the province. This is an ongoing program now. It started last year, and we think it is very beneficial because all of you who have seen the gravel pits know that some of them are dangerous. So we are very proud that we have this program in place and we feel that it is working well.

I just wanted to indicate that we have a great deal of pride in having made a significant contribution in terms of the environment through the rehabilitation of these pits, as well as the perception, making them look better and safer. I just wanted to put on the record that we have this program in place. It is doing well and we are pleased with it.

We have a report here, because if Members want, it will show some of the work that is being done here. The Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) passed me so many pictures yesterday, maybe I can pass them back and have an idea exactly what is undertaken. Thank you, Mr. Acting Chairman.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am very pleased to hear about this success of the last year of this

program and the continuation, but I do not want the Member to think that he invented the wheel here. I recall that I felt very strongly about this as Minister, that we should be doing something with the many unsightly gravel pits that had been left in such a mess, in many cases very visibly, along our highways. One case that comes to mind is between Ashville and Ethelbert on Highway No. 10.

It is just terrible that was left like that and of course that would not happen nowadays with the requirements for contractors to restore—I believe the requirements that they have to restore the environment—the landscape back to an aesthetic type of setting.

We had worked on this program. I do not know whether it was cancelled or not at the last minute, but I thought it was in place a couple of years ago. We had it in place at least during the Estimates process and whether it actually made it to the end or whether there was a reason why we did not expend those monies, perhaps the Minister could consult his staff as to whether in fact this program was in place previous to last year but was not flowed, dollars were not flowed because there was a problem getting it off the ground for whatever reason. It seemed to me there was something like that, but I just wanted to refresh my memory briefly on that if that is the case. I know it was seriously considered before and I thought it had been concluded.

* (1620)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, that is the difference between talking about things and making things happen and doing them. We talk about all kinds of things and we made it happen. I have to say that apparently it was in the planning stages prior to it, but we implemented the program and it is working well.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, you reap what you sow and the planning takes place and then the programs come off. The Minister cannot take any special credit for that, but if he likes to that is fine. What I was more interested in—and I wish he would have consulted with his staff to find out to determine in fact whether not only was it in the planning stage but that the monies had been put in the budget prior to that but were not flowed because there was not a priority listing.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, this is our first report on it, but we will check if the Member feels a little self-conscious about the performance of his Government in terms of making some of these cuts and not implementing them, I can understand that. If there is credit coming to him, I will give him credit. I am not shy about that. We will get the information and see whether the money was put there, not expended or whether it was cut before it ever got to that stage.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am not feeling self-conscious, but I think that if the Minister is sincere when he says he will give credit where credit is due that he would do that up front rather than waiting to have to be confronted on it. I wonder whether he is as sincere as he says.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, we can go around the mulberry bush a few more times. As I indicated to the Member before, the program has come forward. The main thing is it is a good working program at this stage of the game. I indicated that we implemented it the first year last year and we are doing it again, and if the Member feels some kind of sensitivity to get some recognition out of it, we will check. If there is some coming, we will give it. If it is not coming we are not going to pat the Member on the back for something that he does not deserve. If there is something that he deserves, we will do it.

Mr. Mandrake: I do not think it is necessary to berate anybody. If a person starts something, that person should receive some kind of recognition for what he has done.

In your book here, Mr. Minister, I notice on the northeast 3-10-19W you are putting, I think it is, pile foundations or something—you are burying products in there. Now, are they environmentally safe?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, my staff advises me that whatever we do is done with the consent and support of the environmental people. So I want to say, as I did before already, the department is very conscientious of anything that affects the environment basically because we have a lot to do with it. So we follow the procedures and we do not take any shortcuts in that regard.

Mr. Herold Driedger: Just a quick question, I could not help but overhear some of the conversations here with respect to what appears to be gravel pits. Has the Minister or the Minister's department done any kind of analysis as to the kind of effect that will be experienced by quarries that are now existent when the new regulations under The Mining Act come into effect? I believe that the new regulations are calling for a different, I guess, a much larger uninterrupted edge between quarry site and edge of property which to some extent may actually mean that the quarry will provide less materials than might have originally been anticipated according to the standard estimate of contents.

I know that the regulations have not come down, but I have seen some of the things that were discussed with respect to them. I was wondering if you could make any comment just as to what impact this might have on the existing quarries?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am not trying to defer an answer on this, but I think that possibly the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) would be the one that could probably clarify that a little better. We just know what we have to basically adhere to. Staff undertaking these projects check with the environmental department as well as I suppose with the department of lands people, to determine how we do that. That would be about the extent that we would be involved with that kind of legislation.

Mr. Herold Driedger: I just made the comment because I know it will impact if you have quarries that are

Government quarries that you, yourself, operate and that are on Crown lands. That is all. I was just wondering if you had been made aware or were able to comment on them, and I will follow this up with the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld).

Mr. Plohman: I just wanted to make a comment about this. I think this is very impressive and working it in with this rehabilitation of these gravel pits is really super. It is good to see and I am very pleased that the Minister and the staff have provided us with an opportunity to look at these photos of the work before and after it has taken place. Even using the trainees on the job to cut the cost, because the training has to take place anyway as operators, is an excellent idea. I just want to add my words of congratulations to the staff of the Deputy Minister in his memo to the Director of Engineering and Technical Services with regard to this program. It looks super and I am glad to see it happening and I hope it continues and expands.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): On item 4.(f)(1) Materials and Research, Salaries and Wages, \$1,337,300—pass; 4.(f)(2) Other Expenditures, \$223,900—pass.

4.(g)(1) Traffic Operations, Salaries and Wages \$675,300—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I touched on this previously in Planning and Design, but illumination falls under 59. The Minister should have told me to wait until now and then we would have addressed it here, but seeing that I have been given the opportunity again to address it I certainly will. The signs that we have constructed by our by-passes and coming into the City of Winnipeg at the present time are very, very difficult to see. If there is any illumination on it, it is very, very dull. Would the Minister consider illuminating these signs and bringing them further back away from the by-passes and providing a little bit more ample room for the motoring public to see the sign a little bit more vividly, as opposed to the way it is right now.

Mr. Albert Driedger: First of all, Mr. Acting Chairman, the Member requested the report of the areas where we have improved the lighting. My staff tells me they are working on it right now. I should have that report forward hopefully by the end of the week. It is a matter of going through all the places where we have done that.

I just want to indicate that we have an ongoing program of upgrading the signs. The Member is probably aware that a certain amount of weathering takes place on the signs over a period of time, so we have an upgrading program that is in place. Certainly, we are very cognizant of the fact that signs play a very important role in terms of giving direction to our travelling public. We certainly are trying to keep them in as good a shape as possible, and as conspicuous as possible. It is a safety factor as well, so we are working on it.

* (1630)

Mr. Mandrake: I am quite confident the Minister will be providing me with the answers in due course.

There is one other place that—and again it is in my constituency and it is along the Perimeter Highway to Headingley. That area just has virtually no illumination whatsoever. Now I am talking about the safety aspect of the motoring public. If we put up a few lights along that route maybe it would improve the safety aspect of the motoring public in that area, particularly when it is dark. When it gets very, very dark out there it is treacherous. You have to know the area, and I would just not want to see one accident happen because of poor illumination.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Obviously staff have looked at that aspect of it. They indicate to me that the lighting aspect of it is a very, very expensive project, so this is being viewed in conjunction with what we are going to do with that road generally. We had some discussion yesterday about the possibility of a Headingley by-pass. All these things are sort of up in the air at the present time, and once a decision is made we probably will be in a position to address the lighting as well. We feel that it would be irresponsible if we dealt with the situation of the highway, Trans-Canada, from the Perimeter to Headingley on an ad hoc basis, to address the lighting and not do the road, or would we want to make a major change on the road. The feeling is that we would like to do that in an organized way so that we have long-term effects from it.

Mr. Mandrake: I appreciate what the Minister said, and I appreciate what he told me yesterday about the by-pass. Now again I would like to go back to 1983 when the plan for the by-pass was imposed upon the residents of Headingley. We have now waited seven years. In other words, the Minister is telling me that he will wait another seven years. He is going to see the deterioration of that highway, probably increase in accidents because we are going to get increased traffic flow, and in northeast sector we are going to get that increased traffic flow. All I am doing is pleading to this Minister for a few dollars. Maybe illuminating that section of land, or that section of highway, could prevent one accident, and if that is what it takes to prevent that one accident, I would strongly suggest to the Minister that maybe that would be an appropriate avenue to take.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we will note the request of the Member and I will have staff look at that, and also look at the cost factors. The Member makes reference to a few dollars. I do not know what the dollars are. We will have a look and if we have some figures that can substantiate some of this thing, I will get back to the Member and let him know what the cost would be and what we are prepared to undertake.

Mr. Mandrake: I have also gone through the accident statistics that were provided to me in last year's report and this year's report. I am noticing that there is a significant amount of increase by type of vehicles and I will relate to one, school buses. We have seen a .6 percent increase where we have four school buses in an accident. Now, were these school buses that were

transporting children, or were these school buses that were used by private individuals who would probably transport, I do not know, but it is not registered as a school bus, per se?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Member could indicate which report he is reading from, is it the '87-88 report?

Mr. Mandrake: That is right.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Because that is, by and large, a year old. I guess because our statistics basically show that we have an improvement in the last year. Apparently I have approved the publishing of those statistics, I do not think it is in the process right now. As soon as we have that we will certainly make that information available to the Member, as well, both Members for that matter.

Mr. Mandrake: I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister could provide me with the accident data.

The one I am very much concerned with is item No. 5, and item No. 8 Bus, Other. Does that mean buses that are worse school buses but now have been converted to other means of transportation?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, staff advise me that they cannot be a converted bus. They either are a bus and being used as a bus, or else they would be classified as Other, whatever classification it is, but you cannot say that it is a converted bus.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, what I meant by "converted" is either used as a mobile home, or is it used for—and I would give you an example—Arrow Transport uses one of the school buses, in fact, with the same colour as the school buses are painted, to transport people who are, I think, disabled or in wheelchairs.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, staff advise me that it is very specific. School buses are only school buses and then you have other buses, whatever, but school buses nothing else fits into that category. Whether they then get taken out as a school bus, get renovated for whatever reason to be used for whatever purpose, but we are talking school buses in the report only to those units that are used as school buses.

Mr. Mandrake: In other words, under Bus, Other, No. 8. So, therefore, that what I had just made mention of would fall under that area, am I right?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes.

Mr. Mandrake: Okay. Mr. Chairperson, in 1986-87 we have seen rear-end collisions are seeming to always constantly escalate, '86-87 we had rear-end collisions of 743, and the present Annual Report we have 779. Something has gone wrong. I mean, if we are going to be constantly seeing this type of an accident problem, first of all, we are going to see increases in Autopac payments, not only Autopac but injuries, whiplash, et

cetera, et cetera. We had better start addressing that issue or else, and I do not know how to propose any kind of suggestion to this Honourable Minister. So you drive down here in the city and people are constantly driving right on the tail end of your car. Now, how we address that issue, I do not know. I would suggest to the Minister possibly that speak to the RCMP and the City Police, to start enforcing the rule as it is supposed to be enforced, that you are supposed to have X number of feet behind another vehicle, because it might get into epidemic proportion and I would not want to see that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, let me first of all indicate to the Member that the increase from 743 to 779, in view of the total amount of accidents and amount of vehicles that are travelling in Manitoba, that I think in itself is not significant enough. I hate to see any figures go up but however I think we have to look at it over a period of years to see whether a trend develops. You could have a specific year where you have a lot of snow conditions which would automatically change that, so you cannot take just two years and say, well, there is a trend. You have to look at it over a longer period of time in establishing it.

However, my concern has to be, I do not want to see any figures go up, I want to see them go down. But based on the report, the federal report of accidents and fatalities in Manitoba, that we rated the second best in Canada in terms of the overall statistics—if statistics mean anything. Not that that is total comfort. I think we always have to look at improving it and certainly I think the two aspects of it that were stressed at the Ministers' Conference was the use of seat belts, and the drinking and driving laws that are in place. Those two, I think both to some degree have significant impact on some of these things in terms of injuries and fatalities, maybe not necessarily that much in terms of accidents, but I think it would also have an impact there.

* (1640)

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, he did not address the issue. In my opinion, when we see an increase of 30-some-odd accidents because of rear-end collisions, I think that to me is significant enough. I am just looking at the possibility of the injuries that are caused by rear-end collisions, and the back injuries that can be caused by rear-end collisions, neck injuries that are caused by rear-end collisions, so we are not just talking about a very small aspect of injuries here. This is a very severe problem and, again, if it is a head-on collision, we know what is going to happen there. But from a rear-end collision, and I bet you if the Minister would take some time and speak to the Minister in charge of MPIC, they would probably try to eradicate that problem. I really do not honestly know how to address it.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I want to repeat. I think that when we talk of 36 more rear-end accidents in one year, given the right circumstances, one snowstorm, one icy condition, you could have that many accidents in an hour itself, so weather plays a certain factor in this thing obviously. If we have a couple of

bad storms, you are rear ending. You watch the first snowfall that is going to come. I shudder to think of how many rear-end accidents there will be just in that one day. So it is not adequate enough at least for us to be concerned; yes, always concern, but I do not think that that in itself is that significant.

Certainly, one of the onuses within the Department of Highways and Transportation has always been the safety aspect of it. When we build our roads, anything that we do, whether it is under the National Safety Code, the safety aspect of it is always a matter of major concern. That does not mean that things—(interjection)—That is a very nice thing to say. It is a matter of major concern, safety.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Minister, I appreciate you using that word "safety." I only wish you were with me the day when I buried my car on 373. I would have shown you safety. You know, I mean he smirks at that. Had I been going 25 or 30, I would have flipped my car. You talk about safety. Sure, we can talk about—(interjection)—No, all he had to do is possibly have somebody down there levelling that road on a very, very regular basis, because of the fact that you have got a lot of traffic on that road. So safety is paramount, not only in my mind and in the third Party's mind. We can talk about safety as much as we want, but if we do not do something about it, nothing will be done.

The other question is: could the Minister please explain to me what is meant by off-road right and off-road left, in accidents?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is the direction that the vehicle left the road.

Mr. Mandrake: I would not belittle the Minister for increasing the speeds on the various highways to 100 kilometres an hour, by no such imagination, but we have statistics in front of us that accidents by speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour have increased dramatically to the tune of 31.58 percent. Could the Minister please explain to me—we have seen an increase in '86-87, in '88-89, could he explain that, or offer me some kind of possible solution to this?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Is the Member referring to accidents?

Mr. Mandrake: Yes.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I do not have an explanation. I want to indicate to the Member, though, that last year what we had was a sort of an ad hoc speed limit policy throughout the province. We had some PTHs that had been escalated to 100; we had others that were at 90. I think it was creating a lot of confusion. We thought, because almost half the roads possibly were at the 100 kms an hour already on the PTH system, that we would develop a uniform system where the PTHs, with a few exceptions where we felt safety was a hazard, would have them uniform across the province at 100 kms an hour, and on the PRs that we would be having a uniform speed limit of 90 kms per hour.

It is felt, generally, that our PTH, provincial trunk highway, system is better than the PR system. We have

many requests already coming from municipalities and communities saying that we should escalate the speed on the PR system to 100, but again we would create that inconsistency. So we feel that we have established a system where a certain type of highway, basically our PTH system, as indicated before, is supposed to be a better quality highway, that we will allow the speed limit to be 100 kms, and on the PR system that it is uniform at night.

Now, whether that has contributed to any degree in accidents, we certainly cannot substantiate that. I would have to see some proof that that has contributed to more accidents.

Mr. Mandrake: Are you going to be conducting any kind of studies with relation to the increase in accidents on 100 kilometres an hour from the date of the inception of the new regulation that you set on PTHs? If we were to come back to Estimates next year, would you be able to tell us that we have had an increase on the PTHs of accidents because of the increase in miles?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will try and establish—the staff tells me it would take more than just a year. We will have the statistics of the accidents that take place as we have right now and that after a few years would possibly establish whether there was a trend of more accidents. We would have to weigh that with the various other things. So it is very hard to take and do this on a year-to-year basis. You have to see whether there is a trend developing and what contributes to it, whether it is necessarily the escalation of the speed on the PTHs, I am not sure, but we will try and monitor it somewhere along the line and see whether we can establish certain trends.

* (1650)

Mr. Mandrake: I would never expect the Minister to provide me with a comprehensive study over a period of a year. This takes a period of several years, but I am just hoping that he would be kept abreast of all of the problems that might be existing in that area. If he finds out that the accidents are increasing in a certain PTH, maybe we should then look at it so that we can reduce it or doing something so that we do not have a loss of human beings.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that we keep statistics and rates of what happens in terms of the miles travelled, the amount of accidents, other factors enter into it. We are promoting the idea of having lights on when you drive during the course of a day. In fact, the new automobiles that are being manufactured now have running lights that automatically come on, as the car does that I have right now, which is a Government car. That was one of the programs that was initiated earlier in terms of "light up for safety."

I certainly agree with their program. I am on the highway quite a bit, and I think it is beneficial if people would all have their lights on. You can see some things you cannot from a distance, necessarily gage whether a car is coming or going unless you have the lights.

I am saying there are so many factors that play a role in this. We try to, along with everybody else, promote safety features, things that will make it a little safer, that will bring down the accident rate and certainly on the highway aspect of it, the speed end of it, if we see certain trends develop, I think then decisions will be made at that stage of the game once we can contribute it or attribute it to certain aspects of how these things happen.

Mr. Chairman: 4.(g)(2) Other Expenditures \$4,650,000—pass; 4.(g)(3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$950,000—pass. 4.(h) Government Air and Radio Services: (l) Salaries \$3,654,300—pass.

4.(h)(2) Other Expenditures \$5,693,300—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I want to get an idea if there are any changes in the air fleet, Government Air.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the aircraft of . . . Air service consists of five Candair CL-215 water bombers, two Cessna Citation jets, which of course includes the Medi-vac and the other one, one Piper Navaho Chieftain and three de Havilland DHC-3 Otters.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, is there any plan at this time to add to this complement either on the water bomber side or in any of the others needed for evacuation or for Government travel?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, no, there are no intended changes at the present time.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I guess we saw this last summer with the terrible forest fire season, the merits of purchasing additional water bombers. We had an agreement a number of years ago, on a two for one, where we purchased one, and I believe the Government of Canada paid for the second one for I.or something. In any event, I believe that has all been paid now and the second water bomber was received last spring. Was this the first season for the fifth water bomber?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, this is the second season for the last water bomber. It was used the first time in 1988.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, just one question on this. Since there are no definite plans to buy additional aircraft at this time, is there any discussion with the Natural Resources Department as to whether it would be feasible or economical to have additional water bombers, because this was a rather unusual, perhaps it is a start of a trend, who knows. We may be losing large amounts of our forest to fires if dry weather continues over a long period of time. Is there a consideration to look at additional purchases, or was there enough available to lease or rent, or to have from other provinces brought in, to take care of our needs overall? What is the thinking on that? Is that being reviewed?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, this is my understanding, that Natural Resources are reviewing their requirements right now. However, we have no indication, and I do not believe that there is any intention of purchasing any additional water bombers at this stage of the game, after the unprecedented fire situation that we experienced this last summer. We were fortunate in the respect that we had other provinces—I believe there is a committee set up, through the Department of Natural Resources, Mutual Air Resources Sharing Agreement, which allows the sharing of units across Canada. We had units here from the Northwest Territories, we had units here from the Yukon, we also had units here from Newfoundland, we had units from all across the country and that Mutual Air Resources Sharing Agreement is something that I think helps from having to make the capital expenditure higher than we want at this stage of the game.

Like I say, my understanding is Natural Resources is reviewing their requirement at this stage of the game and we have not had any report from them. I would be hesitant to proceed to look at buying another water bomber at the present time.

Mr. Plohman: Just on another issue dealing with the Government jet. Could the Minister provide us with a breakdown of the department by department use of the Government jet for air travel, both by Ministers and by departments? Is that available?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, my staff advise me we will try and get it by department as soon as possible.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, if the Minister wants to go back and conclude a number of years before and later, I just want to get an idea of the amount of travel and generally which planes are being used and where, any out of province, or is it basically within the province and so on.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we will try and get that information to the Members.

Mr. Mandrake: I am very, very curious about this aircraft usage. I appreciate the Member for Dauphin bringing the point up of the journeys that the people take. On the jet, what would it cost—and if the Minister does not have that figure in front of him he could provide it for me at a later time—but what does it cost per hour to fly, let us say, from here to the International Peace Gardens?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the cost of the Cessna, I understand, is in the vicinity of \$800 an hour.

Mr. Mandrake: I am sorry, Mr. Chairperson, I am not talking about a Cessna, I am talking about the jet.

An Honourable Member: That is what you are talking about, that is what he is talking about.

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is what we have, Mr. Chairman, that is the jet.

Mr. Mandrake: Okay, well I must have got mixed up here. I thought—okay, okay, that is great.

Last year, Mr. Chairperson, they sold a Cessna. Was it replaced, and what price did they receive for it?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we did not sell our Cessna last year.

What happened last year, we sold three Beavers and we traded one of the three for an Otter.

Mr. Mandrake: I will get off that subject. When it comes to airplanes, being an ex-army person, I do not know which one is a Cessna and which one is an Otter or anything. Please excuse my ignorance.—(interjection)—no, I am a paratrooper. That is a little bit different.

During the forest fires, Mr. Chairperson, I was in Thompson when I saw about four water bombers sitting on a tarmac until about one o'clock in the afternoon, and probably rightly so, because the pilots were fatigued and they put in too many hours.

My question to the Minister is this: if we have another reoccurrence of a forest fire of the magnitude which we had this year, why does he not approach the Minister of National Defence? We have an air force base situated right over here and it would gladly go and fly those water bombers. They are more than equipped to fly them. I am talking from personal experience. I have seen their capabilities, and of course we would not have to then probably go into the situation where we have the water bomber sitting on the tarmac. We can bring in military pilots, fly them, and the water bombers could be in use almost on a constant basis.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, let me first of all advise the Member that if he saw four water bombers sitting on the tarmac, it would certainly in my view, according to my knowledge, not be because the crews have run up enough hours. Our co-ordinator, Mr. Vic Bantle, was co-ordinating the crews in such a way that that was not a problem necessarily. So if they were sitting on the tarmac, it was because the Department of Natural Resources commands the firefighting with the water bombers.

My department just does the maintenance on them and has the crews going, and I must say I want to pay a special tribute to the pilots of the water bombers in this last year. They are the gutsiest guys that I have ever seen, to fly under the conditions that they did, under extreme stress. I will tell you something, they did a fantastic job. Our co-ordinator made very sure that nobody was running—you know, they were clocked too long in terms of time or that the bombers were not operating. There was a good rotation going on.

The Member is suggesting that we bring in pilots from somewhere else that would be capable of flying the water bomber. I would have to suggest to him that is a very specialized field in terms of taking those big units down there and filling them up. I think not just any pilot just because he is a pilot could qualify to fly those things. I feel that the operation went very well. I want to compliment once again the crew and co-ordinators of how the process went, and I would be

rather sensitive to hear criticism about how the operation proceeded.

Mr. Mandrake: No way would I be insulting the pilots or anything like that. All I am saying is the suggestion to the Minister that in the future if we do need to augment our present pilots in any way, would he consider going to the air force and possibly getting some of their most experienced pilots to fly those aircraft.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I felt that the process, especially under a hectic year like this, worked well. If need be, I will check with my director of the crews and see whether he has any suggestions to make, and I would certainly adhere to some of his recommendations.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairman: The hour being five o'clock, it is time for the Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

* (1430)

SUPPLY—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): I call this committee to order. We will be dealing with item No. 4. on page 11, Agricultural Development and Marketing Division—the Honourable Mr. Minister.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Chairman, I would like to make just a few introductory comments to the section. We have in front of me the Deputy Minister, Mr. Lacomby, and Assistant Deputy Minister, Mr. Tom Pringle.

Mr. Chairman, this section deals with division of program activities and the Animal Industry Branch, Veterinary Services Branch, Technical Services Training Branch, and Soils and Crops Branch, and the Marketing Branch. The department is involved in a number of specific strategies to enhance family farms and the agriculture industry of the province, and they relate around strategies involved with human resource management, including farm management, home economics and 4-H, beef and sowing section, crop section, forage section, soil conservation and water management section.

Just a few highlights of some of the things which have taken place which we can talk about through the course of the Estimates is an improvement in the milk recording programs to be established in the Manitoba Milk Recording Committee. We are close to implementation of bonding and licensing regulations for the red meat buyers. We have increased financial support for the veterinary districts in place. We have signed the Canada-Manitoba Soil and Water Accord and the soils agreement that goes with that accord. We have been involved extensively in consultations on farm practices legislation, in other words, right-to-farm legislation. We have increased the grants to the weed districts for two years in a row and we have given a substantial one-time grant to Manitoba honey producers totalling roughly some \$750,000.00.

This past summer, a group of 15 very lucky Manitoba 4-H members had an all expense paid tour to Japan, paid for by York Benimaru Corporation, and it was a fast whirlwind trip for those 15 Manitoba students and they enjoyed themselves immensely as did the opportunity we had to entertain some 26 Japanese youth who came to Manitoba shortly thereafter.

We certainly recognize the marketing opportunities and programs that we need to have in place and I am moving towards improved marketing activities, particularly with the southeast Asia market of which Japan is the major player.

So with those few comments, Mr. Chairman, I invite questions from whomever.

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Chairperson, I appreciate the comments from the Minister. There are a couple of issues that I would like to deal with that tend to be relatively general, but I think with the fact that he has his Deputy and Assistant Deputy with him, this may be as appropriate a time as any to touch on them.

One relates to the announcement that the Minister made on the 29th of May regarding the appointment of an Agricultural Advisory Council. I would like the Minister to indicate whether this council has in fact met, and whether there has been any recommendations or any comments coming from the council regarding the major issues that they have outlined. The one that I am most concerned about is whether there have been any recommendations as to the province's stand on any changes to the Crow benefit.

* (1440)

Mr. Findlay: In answer to the Member's question, I have gone over the membership and I think the membership of that Advisory Council is in that news release that he is looking at there. The question was whether it has met. It has met many times, I guess I would have to say five or six times thereabouts. The Deputy Minister sits on that committee for me, and they have engaged a consultant, Deloitte Haskins and Sells, to develop information to put us in a position to answer that question or develop a Manitoba position for that question of whether we should, or what nature we would promote changes in any method of payment of the Crow benefit.

The committee has commissioned four different studies, if I am not mistaken, and they are close to having the information all brought forward. I can assure the Member that the question they are looking at is extremely complex in terms of the "what ifs" or "what happens here, if something happens there" sort of situation. I think the committee is impressed with the complexity and the nature of the impacts that any decision, the change of any nature, will have on the total agricultural industry and the economy in the Province of Manitoba. At the same time, when there is a challenging question that has to be addressed, there are many opportunities that may well be opened up by those kinds of changes.

So they are not in a position to report yet, they have not reported to me yet. I would anticipate that they

will be ready to report at some time before Christmas. If I was to project what might happen, I can see us going to the public in some fashion not too far down the road. I can assure the Member that we have not had the question put to us by any other jurisdiction, particularly the federal jurisdiction, as to what parameters of change they are prepared to discuss. They have indicated in a general sense, verbally, that they are going to look at it or they are looking at it but with no specific directives. We do not even know what questions we are going to respond to; it is their Act.

We may see something that, as a province, we would want to see done through the course of the study and the analysis is being done by the advisory committee. We are just part way through the process—I guess I should not say “we”—they are part way through the process. As soon as the process is completed, it will be imperative that they get out and talk to various groups and the public at large so that everybody understands what it is we are proposing and how we will respond as a province relative to whatever questions are asked.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Well, the Minister's response concerns me. It concerns me in the same view that I mentioned to him earlier, and that is, we have obviously the jurisdictional problem in the sense that agriculture is provincial but it is also a major federal department. Mr. Mazankowski already has in place what I assume will result in a White Paper perhaps within the next month or two, if I understand the papers correctly, that he is going to have something as early as October.

Now, this is all sometimes referred to as Mazankowski's “freedom to grow” policy. I guess what I infer from the Minister's comment is that once again Manitoba is going to react rather than pro-act. It would seem to me that there is enough information already as to what Mr. Mazankowski is looking at, that Manitoba should take the initiative and make sure that its voice is heard, not waiting to be asked to be heard, because we have as a trademark of the federal Conservative Government, a failure to consult.

In other words, everything that federal Government does, is done, and then we know about it afterwards and we have to react to it. Certainly this Crow benefit is one of the major things that Mazankowski has identified in his freedom to grow. I think it is time that Manitoba put their viewpoint on the record with Mazankowski rather than waiting for him to ask for it because the necessity is to be pro-active rather than reactive with this current federal Government. We are getting sucked in every time by them -(interjection)- Just drop the rent and go find out.

Mr. Findlay: What was that headline in the Brandon Sun that we saw?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I guess I am just a little disappointed in that response because the old adage applies, “a little bit of information is awful dangerous.”

I say that with some emotion because, as I already told the Member, the situation is extremely complex and at least we have identified that much. We are not going to come out with some knee-jerk reaction on a political response to a very important economic question for the future of the Province of Manitoba. When we do come out, we will be in position with facts and figures we can defend our position and sell our case.

If you ask why that was not prepared before now, I will say, I have only been in this office for 16 months and it is not an easy issue. I will tell you, if you want to blow the issue out of proportion and destroy our opportunity to develop initiatives, carry on with what you are doing.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, I will just remind the Minister that Alberta and Saskatchewan have already put forward their stand on this issue. Once again, they are going to be the ones who are going to lead this and they are going to lead Manitoba into it if we are not very careful. So I am just suggesting to the Minister that probably, one is going to have to react a little faster than has been norm here in Manitoba.

I appreciate the fact that the Minister has only been in his position for 16 or 15 months, whatever it happens to be, but I think that the speed at which Mazankowski tends to move on occasion is such that we could be left in his wake if we are not careful. I do not think the plan that Alberta has particularly is one that would be appropriate for Manitoba, and so that is all I am suggesting.

The Minister, Mr. Chairman, has also mentioned the fact that there is, in all likelihood, going to be a discussion paper regarding the right to farm legislation, and this is another one that I would wonder just what stage it is at. A discussion paper, I would assume, would be an opportunity for various groups within the province to have some input into it. What is the time frame that the Minister is looking at as far as this discussion paper is concerned?

Mr. Findlay: The department staff have been trying to develop something that meets the need in this particular area and they have put together some basic principles and been to the UMM, to the CAP, and they are back again relooking at it. They are going back to those two organizations again. We expect, after this second go around with them, that we will be in a position to put together a White Paper, or a discussion paper for broader discussion through the rural and urban communities of Manitoba. So it is a process of development with CAP and UMM so that we can try to put in place something that does not go beyond the bounds of what we can do regarding present legislation, The Environment Act, The Health Act, to name a couple, but still try to meet the need of the farm community and the rural municipalities in all of Manitoba.

So, the process has been ongoing in the development stage step by step and will be in a discussion paper, I would hope, in and around about Christmastime and, hopefully, before.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Is it safe to infer from that then, Mr. Minister, that legislation to that effect will not be brought to this House in this Session?

In the same vein, going back to some of the news services that were provided, the Minister has established a task force to uncover decentralization options. I am wondering whether the Minister can comment on the time frame that he is looking at in terms of that and perhaps enlighten us as to what he is really looking at, as far as the magnitude of decentralization within the Department of Agriculture might be.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, it has been a commitment of this Government that we will, as much as possible, decentralize Government jobs into rural Manitoba where a lot of the services are delivered and, particularly, our department where a lot of services are delivered. I think, if I am not mistaken, the percentage distribution between urban and rural for jobs in our department is 51 percent outside the Perimeter and 49 percent inside, so it is pretty much 50-50. I think there is a justifiable case to say that we should be able to have more of those jobs located outside the city where the service is actually delivered and where the presence of jobs and people in communities is a very important asset to regional development, regional stabilization in rural Manitoba.

The department has been looking at various ways and means of meeting that objective, putting options forward and discussing them, and there is a Government committee that is looking at all departments. Those proposals are being analyzed, lots of community interest, most naturally in having jobs located in their areas, lots of submissions, high level of interest. When some proposals are ready for public discussion or information, it will come forward at that time, but right now the only thing that we have done in the department is located the 10 jobs of the tripartite unit in Portage. That was really the first specific location, but there were new jobs in a new unit and any movement of existing units, any further information will be forthcoming not too far down the road.

* (1450)

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the Minister is considering further attempts to decentralize, although recognizing that it is not always easy in terms of existing opportunities to deal with that question. My hope is that any discussions that are going on about decentralization are basically put on the table ahead of time with staff where the considerations are there. Although that may increase some anxiety in terms of transfers and job opportunities, nevertheless it is better to put your cards on the table, at least what you are thinking, ahead of time and lessen that impact.

I know that there are discussions going on with MACC about moving the entire corporation out of the City of Winnipeg, and I think those kinds of moves, lock, stock and barrel, are probably easier to make than trying to piecemeal one's technical services which are tied to the university and other specialty areas inside of Winnipeg. That makes it much harder. However, nevertheless, regardless of the type of moves that can be accommodated, advance notice and ample discussion should take place.

I want to indicate that any move to decentralize services, especially in a province like Manitoba where more than half of our population is right within the Perimeter, is welcome. There is certainly enough of, what I would call a jaundiced attitude, by rural residents of Government having perimeter vision, and having everything centralized in a large urban setting that any moves that can be accommodated will be viewed positively.

Although I must admit that there is always fierce competition between rural small communities for even one position that may be moved from one community to another in a case of efficiency. I remember the Minnedosa situation so vividly with crop insurance and the like, and so I certainly recognize even the movement that goes on outside of the city is very sensitive to rural communities.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister in terms of programming, he indicated that there has been an increase. I guess we are going through the entire section without going through to everyone particularly. There was an increase in support to veterinary districts. Can the Minister outline the nature of that support and what it, in fact, entails, and how is it to be applied?

Mr. Findlay: The level of support previously for the vet testing was \$10,000 basic grant plus \$5,000 for second vet, plus \$2,500 which made \$17,500.00. What we have now is \$15,000 basic, plus \$5,000 for second vet, making a total of \$20,000 of support, as opposed to \$17,500 total before, so it is really an increase of \$2,500 and that is maximized on the second vet.

Mr. Uruski: Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, and I do not know if the Minister is going to be calling some of the staff that is specific to there, then I will hold my questions on the Vet Services and the Animal Industry Branch or are you not bringing other staff in, just the two of you?

With respect to the Animal Industry Branch, I asked the Minister what has transpired in terms of the recording system that there were discussions with the federal Government. There is milk recording and there is also the ROP work and those areas. What has transpired in this last year? Has everything been swung over now to the associations? What has happened in those areas?

Mr. Findlay: Beef, sheep and swine ROP is handled now under the Manitoba Livestock Performance Testing Board. They receive a federal grant plus whatever fees they collect, and we supply them with office space and supplies, so it is off and running. We are just playing our traditional extension role with regard to staff. I presume they would hire their own. They have their own staff to carry out their functions.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Well, we seem to be moving around a little bit within this particular category, which is quite all right with me, Mr. Chairman.

I believe the Minister is in receipt of a letter from the veterinary students at the University of Saskatchewan expressing some concern I believe in

two areas. One was that there appears to be some lack of competitiveness as far as the summer jobs are concerned in Manitoba with the result that some Manitoba students are in fact finding it to their benefit to actually take summer employment. The letter goes on, as I recall, to state that there is some concern that was expressed by the students that the job situation in Manitoba was again apparently not competitive with those in the other two provinces. Can the Minister confirm that he has in fact received that letter or is it something that came to the Opposition? I think it was addressed to the Honourable Minister, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of that letter and the staff do not recall receiving that letter unless it has come recently or it is in the process somewhere. I am surprised that kind of comment would come forward because really this year the Veterinary Services Branch is very pleased with the kind of response we have had in terms of vets coming back, particularly the large animal practice. We have had 19 new registrants as vets in the Province of Manitoba, and 14 out of those 19 are entering farm animal practice. We do not have any position that is open right now. All the vet positions are filled. It is almost the best position they have been in for some time. We have had no reduction in the number of summer students. The support to the students going to Saskatoon has been the same as it has been. We are really pleased at the number coming back, particularly in the farm animal practice.

The feeling of the staff in Veterinary Services is that our programs have worked well and worked better than the programs in Saskatchewan and Alberta in terms of getting veterinarians into the rural districts. What you have just indicated is totally contrary to what we understand to be the situation. If you have a copy and we do not have it, could you get us a copy and we could respond to them, so everybody knows what the facts are?

Mr. Laurie Evans: We will certainly get a copy of the letter for the Minister. I think the Minister is right. There did not seem to be a lot of dissatisfaction with the way the province was dealing with the support for the students or the placement. In fact, as I recall the letter, they were very thankful to—Dr. Meek is it?—who was responsible for the student placement in the summer that they did indicate and as I recall it was signed by all those students who were Manitobans. I will make sure that the Minister gets a copy of that letter. I do not have it with me this afternoon.

While we are jumping all over here and we are on the Animal Industry Branch, I wonder whether the Minister could comment on just what has taken place in terms of recommendations coming from the Red Meat Forum that was formed by the Minister some time ago and dated the 10th of May as far as the announcement is concerned. Has that forum reported to him and made any specific recommendations that he can set before us today?

Mr. Findlay: They have met two or three times, at minimum, maybe more than that, but they have not

reported specifically to me yet. They have looked at their need to understand where they are competitive and what ways they maybe are not competitive. They have put an application in to WDO to be funded to do a study on overall competitiveness in the red meat industry, in terms of right through production and slaughter and processing. I understand the proposal is quite good and it stands a good chance of being funded. They will be able to get some work done to work together to see if they can strengthen their opportunities in the overall industry.

So what is going on there seems to be good. There is representation from sheep, hogs, beef, from all the major packers. I understand it is a good discussion forum to bring the different sides together, instead of one accusing the other of not doing their job and I think they have an opportunity to look at opportunities. I hope that those discussions actually lead to a better attitude and a more collective approach to, I say, taking the opportunities that exist and maximizing them.

* (1500)

I think, particularly niche markets are some areas that when identified can be a way in which we can be competitive in that meat industry. It is tough to compete with a large multinational like Cargill who have certain efficiencies of size but they cannot meet the niche markets. They are just a large mass slaughter and production system. The niche market thing, if we can identify the right ones and where there are economic opportunities, maybe direct existing plants and processors, or show opportunities for new ones to get into, it will be successful in that respect.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Can the Minister indicate the status of the development of the Japanese firm, I guess Minebea is it, that is setting up the breeding farms in Manitoba, just how far they have progressed?

Mr. Findlay: The Minebea, or Northern Manitoba Breeders they are called, are in the process of construction at their site. We expect that they will have an opening sometime later this fall.

An Honourable Member: The rafters are up.

Mr. Findlay: The rafters are up, that is how current the information is. As far as I know they are using Manitoba equipment, they are using Manitoba personnel to do the construction, and they will be putting Manitoba breeding stock into the operation. My understanding is it will be about a 600 sow unit when it is up and running, and where they go with future plans beyond that first unit is in their hands. Initial indications were that they would have up to five of those locations with the idea of producing breeding stock which they would export back into southeast Asia.

I can assure the Member that their presence here has stimulated a tremendous interest from that part of the world in swine breeding stock in this province. There has been numerous delegations come through here, in fact, one of the companies that is in the business of trying to sell swine and breeding stock say that there

is really none to be had in rural Manitoba right now. There has been so many delegations through and they are buying swine breeding stock. I mean, our good quality stock is the same now as it was a year ago but, suddenly, their presence here has created a higher level of interest and somebody thinks that they know something that they do not know. I think the attitude in the swine breeding industry is extremely positive right now.

I guess I could also comment a little further in that respect that the Swine Breeders Association has come to us and asked for a herd health program. I have instructed the staff to work out a herd health program, in consultation with them, that would give them some degree of certificate that would help them when selling beyond our borders, in particular. I understand that a program has been put together with three levels of health standard in it. It is probably going to meet the need of the swine breeders and help them do what they have to do in terms of guaranteeing certain health factors with regard to the stock that they are exporting, or selling outside the province. I think it will also help them in selling their stock inside the province because fairly large commercial operators, many of them have been buying their basic breeding stock from outside the province for exactly that reason.

We hope that an overall attitudinal development plus herd health program and whatnot will stimulate the swine breeding industry in this province substantially.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I am pleased to hear the progress that is being made. Can the Minister indicate whether the company is still planning to go, as I understand it, a step further at a later date which may even go to the point of a slaughtering and processing facility in due course if everything else moves well. I think that was the original suggestion that was made by them.

Mr. Findlay: I can tell them that when we were in Japan and we met with the chairman of the board, he indicated that was a potential further degree of activity on their behalf in this province. They are exploring it and to the best of my knowledge they are still exploring it. They will make their decision because it is their money. That is the one thing I will say about northern Manitoba breeders, they came here, they selected us for reasons, whatever reasons they used to make the decision, they did not use one public dollar, other than expertise in the department which is available to everybody. I give them high marks for coming in under that situation, and never requested any public dollars, never requested any.

They are here doing the right thing for all the right reasons and if they move further into slaughter or processing it will be a decision they will make with the same parameters. We are not speeding them up, or if they want to make a decision, they want to move in that direction, they will.

As the Member may or may not know, the chairman of the board passed away about a month after we got back, I think approximately in April or May, so it probably has created some delay with the change of personnel at the leadership position. We await whatever

decisions they will make but we will continue to work with Dr. Nagamitso here in Manitoba to see if we can stimulate further investments that are positive to our province.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I guess it is safe to infer, Mr. Chairperson, that they have not looked at or made any proposals regarding the Neepawa plant.

Mr. Findlay: I think it is safe to say that numerous people have looked at the Neepawa plant and put various kinds of proposals forward, some which were accepted and some which have not been accepted. I am not aware that they are an active participant at this time, but they had looked at it.

Mr. Chairman: 4.(a)(1)—pass; 4.(a)(2)—pass.

4.(b)(1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

* (1510)

Mr. Laurie Evans: I would just like to have the Minister comment on the level of activity at the feed lab out on the campus if my recollection is correct, that there was some indication that it may not be operable. It was not being utilized to the full capacity that it could be. Has that improved over the last 12 months?

Mr. Findlay: In general, looking back over the early '80s up to '85, roughly 20,000 to 25,000 analyses done per year. In '86-87 it went up to almost 30,000 and '87-88 up to 51,000 and that is the last figure that we have here at this time, but our feeling is that the levels of activity have been around the 50,000 analyses per year. It has come up as far back as '87 and is staying up.

A lot has to do with the analyses being done for the livestock feed security program. There are quality analyses being done for the Livestock Feed Security Program. It is quality analysis being done now in association with the monitoring. There is a lot of activity there, and I cannot segregate out how many are from that source as opposed to how many from farmers in general in rural Manitoba. We do not have any information here to indicate the numbers are off substantially. In fact, they may well be up, but they are up due to the Livestock Feed Security Program.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I am inferring correctly then that when you say analyses, these are multi-analysis on a single sample because it indicates in here that they are getting about 7,000 samples, so I assume what you are referring to is protein and various other things being done on the same sample.

Mr. Chairman: 4.(b)(1)—pass; 4.(b)(2)—pass.

4.(c)(1)—the Honourable Member for Interlake.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister, getting back to the Veterinary Services Branch, in the changes in funding, whether consideration was given by the commission. I know there was considerable discussion on the question, in some districts, of mileage

and whether there was a way of trying to come up with some arrangements or formulas to assist districts in dealing with the question of mileage. I think in fact there was considerable discussion in the Erickson area at one point in time.

There was difficulty in terms of municipalities who are being serviced. Every municipality would like to have the clinic, of course, in their home area. Whether that issue in terms of interest at the municipal level has waned somewhat or whether this assistance really in terms of additional assistance would have offset some of the considerations that were being discussed at that time, and secondly, whether all clinics now that are in place are in fact receiving the base level because not all clinics are two-vet practices, but the base level of \$1,500.00.

Mr. Findlay: Just to go back to my comments on the levels of funding, of course, as you well remember, it is a matching grant and the local board has to match it. In order to get the maximum even, if they do not match it, they do not get to the maximum. Some are below the maximum, but many are up there at the top.

With regard to the transportation, the issue is still the same as it always was. This is set up to try to offset some of that cost of additional distance. The Member may be aware that there are some municipalities trying to overcome that by setting up a satellite operation. Municipalities are prepared to supply a building or whatever. I think Rosburn is one example. They have set up a satellite, another one in southern Manitoba, to Deloraine. Deloraine is considering a satellite, but a municipality or an interest group does that in conjunction with an existing vet clinic where they can attract a vet to come and locate at that position for a day or two, a week, or half a day, every day, or something like that, some arrangement that they make.

Our position has been that satellites are not to receive any additional funding; the funding goes to the basic clinic. If they are prepared to fund some other arrangement, we are not going to interfere with it provided it meets all the standards of veterinary practice. It is in a growing stage. As to whether it succeeds or not and meeting the needs of the citizens in that satellite community area remains to be seen. I think the vets that have been approached to do that have been fairly co-operative in trying to handle the producer concerns with distance and availability.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister indicate whether there are any new clinics being considered or that have been opened in the past year? I know the last one that was open. I do not believe any new ones have been but maybe I have missed some. The last one was Fisher Branch that came on stream right about at the transition time.

Mr. Findlay: Basically the answer is no, but Fisher Branch, yes. It has been in that district for some time, but just within the last year, year and a half, maybe two years, they have attracted a vet. They have requested and we have funded the basic grant to them and they have matched the basic \$15,000.00. In terms

of new, that is as new as there is. It is an old district and now it is up and running with the vet.

As I said earlier, we are fairly pleased with the ability to have vets servicing all the clinics in all the areas where vets are needed in rural Manitoba at this time. I look forward to that letter that the Member from Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) has, and we will see if we can clear up—obviously there has to be a bit of a misunderstanding in some fashion, because the success rate is here.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, has the Vet Services Branch system of accounting and inventory been computerized, and is it on stream and operating fully at this time?

I note in the capital budget that there is an increase of approximately \$600,000 in the capital. I am assuming that is primarily all for both semen and drug purchases. Has the annual expansion of the budget in that area—have the sales matched the expansion in the budget year over year, as there continues to be an annual increase? I believe that if the sales are there it should warrant it.

It is certainly an operation that is slowly coming to pay its own way, not totally yet in terms of the cost of the buildings, but certainly all other costs associated with that operation are near self-sufficient. I am assuming that the department—and the Minister can confirm it—is on track in moving those operations to, at least the Vet Services Branch, a self-sustaining basis, not counting of course any interest costs that might be on the capital required for purchases.

* (1520)

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the drug centre is completely computerized and the semen centre is not completely computerized at this time, but proceeding towards it. The diagnostics lab is computerized to some extent, but they have fax facilities so that they can transmit information on samples to most clinics by fax now, most but not all.

The semen and drug centres are both on a cost-recovery basis. The semen sales have more or less levelled off but the drug centre total sales continue to rise to about \$600,000 a year or something in that order. So, yes, they are moving towards full computerization and certainly the diagnostic lab, the facility of having the fax is a very rapid way to get information back so that the vet can help to use the information in a diagnostic sense in treating an animal. I think a vet who I talked to this summer is very pleased with the turnaround time that is available now and how it helps him. This happens to be a young guy who is relatively new, and he leans very heavily on that service to help him treat animals where the cases are out of the norm.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(c)(1)—pass; 4.(c)(2)—pass.

Item 4.(d)(1)—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I think this falls more under the—not under the Salaries of the Soils and Crops Branch,

but the question I would have is relating particularly to the Dutch elm disease. Are all of the Dutch elm disease analyses in the province conducted by the Soils and Crops Branch, or does the city itself undertake some of this separately from the Soils and Crops Branch of the MDA?

Mr. Findlay: The program is really under Natural Resources and the City of Winnipeg, but the plant pathology lab does the diagnostic work.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, has the department discontinued its weather forecasting service to rural farmers?

Mr. Findlay: The answer is no. It has not been discontinued, but the pilot project that had been started some time ago really was not funded. It was a pilot project and somebody was to fund it further on down the road, and as the Minister responsible for Telephones, I am on both sides of the issue. They were paying—they were not being reimbursed for the use of their facilities. This spring we did an analysis of where the calls were coming from for the use of the service in Brandon, and it turned out that 85 percent to 90 percent of the calls are coming out of the City of Brandon, not from rural areas outside of Brandon. So the question was raised, well, are farmers really using the service if the majority of the calls are coming from city people? If that is the case, should Agriculture fund it?

So we requested if there was anybody prepared to sponsor it. If the service was needed who would sponsor it, or would somebody co-sponsor it and save us some cost? It was Environmental Services, I guess, federally, have opted to pay for it. So the service continues. It is strange that the majority of calls to that toll-free line are city calls. I think it is really the radio stations and the whatnot, the people who give the information out that found it was a very helpful service. It was all compiled in there, nice easy access. I guess in an indirect sense it was getting to the farm community, but now we have a sponsor that is paying for it, and the service continues.

I guess I would have to say in a general sense, in terms of weather information, I wish we had better weather information available to us in western Canada and Manitoba. I often wonder when I see the way weather is reported in the States, you know the kinds of maps they put forward, and the predictions and the probabilities, that it seems so much more advanced than the kind of weather information we get here.

I would just like to see improvements because the farm community depends heavily on our knowledge of the weather 12 and 24 hours ahead. Major decisions are made on that basis. I know I have talked with different farmers who have satellite TV systems, and they get their information that way. It is really American information that they think is better than what is available here. So we need to have some improvements, no question in that way. But the services, as was, are still there and funded by Environmental Services.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister commented on Brandon. Was the department involved at all in providing that type of service in the Dauphin area?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, you know, I talked just about Brandon, but the tapes are available in the Dauphin, Brandon and Winnipeg areas the same as they were when the pilot project was set up—so the tapes are available in all three centres.

Mr. Uruski: Just let me understand it. Then Environment Canada will be continuing that service or those tapes will be available at all the centres in Dauphin—as far as the department knows. The departmental funding for that was discontinued—it ended. The department finally ended the pilot. It went on for, I guess, a number of years.

Could the Minister indicate what costs were involved in those pilots, and whether, in fact—because I have had a number of calls from the Dauphin area in which farmers from the Swan River Valley were calling Dauphin and the service this fall was no longer available. I wanted to tell the Minister where the concern came from, and I wanted to ascertain—because I recall that we were involved in funding a number of years back—and whether that service, now that it has been taken up, whether it will be in fact continued, as the Minister indicated, by Environment Canada?

Mr. Findlay: It is our understanding that Environmental Services will continue to make the tapes available as they were set up. You made mention paying for a pilot project. As I indicated earlier, somebody was not paying along the way, so a decision had to be made, because the costs were being absorbed by MTS, so now they are being absorbed by Environmental Services and the department is not paying and MTS is getting their bills paid. So everything is corrected now, and to the best of our knowledge the intention is that those tapes will continue to be made available. We will follow up to see that that is the case, or what their proposals are beyond this year end.

* (1530)

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I would ask the Minister to follow up on that matter and advise me so that I can advise some of the people who raised this matter with me as to what the prognosis for continued services are.

I understand now, that basically, the idea was good. MTS, in fact, got sucked into the process, and now they are saying, "hey, it is time that somebody covered the costs, and it should not be the carrier of the equipment that should bear the cost," and I certainly do not disagree with their position. However, clearly, I do not know the extent that that service was used, but I imagine the people who contacted me were regular users of that service, and they found that once those tapes were not available they were missing out on a valuable service. Clearly, this year, the Swan Valley is one of those areas.

The whole northwestern region, I am certain, were sitting on pins and needles in terms of trying to see whether the harvesting was going to get going, or whether they were going to be turning grey, and scratching their head as to whether another day passes and the crop deteriorates.

Mr. Laurie Evans: It is a topic that I am reluctant to raise, but I would like the Minister to comment as to whether there is any further initiatives being taken by his department relative to the stubble burning problem that we were faced with this spring?

Now the Minister for the Environment (Mr. Cummings) answered the questions a little while ago on this, but I think that here is another one of these cases where it is a joint jurisdiction. While I think we all agree with the Minister about the need for caution, et cetera, there is no doubt that there were a few mornings here in this city this last month or so where it was a major problem, and I would certainly appreciate the Minister's comments on it.

Mr. Findlay: The issue is certainly—I knew it was going to come up and I would like to comment on it, because I guess I am disappointed in the amount of burning that was done this year. The problem did not exist in 1988 because there was not much crop. I guess we had hoped that maybe the educational process of trying to convince producers that it was not a good idea to burn, there were good merits in working the stubble and the straw into the ground, that we had achieved our objective, that there would be a vast reduction again this year. We put out press releases, myself and the department, giving some guidelines. If you do feel that it is a management practice you must use, burn in the daytime when it will clear and there will be less smoke, and it will go up instead of possibly hitting an air inversion and staying close to the ground, and consider wind direction and where the population of people are, even though the percentage of burning that occurred in certain municipalities around here where some monitoring was done did decrease this year.

The area where there was no decrease in burning was inside the City of Winnipeg itself. The City of Winnipeg has a no-burning by-law. So the area where there is so-called regulation, that is where the majority of the burning—I say the majority—that is where the burning did not decrease. So my position is that I am not happy that people still burn. I think when the crop was taken off in early August there was ample opportunity to work that stubble and straw in without having problems the next seeding time. The majority of burning that caused the smoke was not flax straw, because the flax crop was not off yet. I see the majority of the flax straw is getting baled. They have obviously sold it to the various flax straw processors.

So we have taken a position in the department, and I have instructed the department that we are going to have to get much more aggressive in the educational process for this coming year—aggressive immediately, in terms of going one on one with the people that still continue to burn. We can find out who those people are through the municipalities or through other producers, and try to find a way to convince them to use that practice as little as possible. We all know if the harvest is late September or the beginning of October there will be a problem working the straw in, but when the harvest is early August it is a different story.

I hope that we can be successful in that respect. I cannot guarantee that we will, but the department is

committed to trying to resolve the issue through more aggressive education, one on one, talking with the producers, trying to convince them that burning is not desirable for their land and certainly not desirable from the standpoint of the impact it has on citizens of the City of Winnipeg or the traffic hazard it can and may cause.

So I want to maintain the right of producers to use that management practice and I want them to use it as little as possible and as responsibly as possible, and the department is doing it. I talked with one ag rep last week who has been out talking with producers. He has actually gone to other producers who have burnt and said, there is an example of a guy who did not burn, look how he is working his stubble in this fall. They are trying it right now one on one, trying to work the process through of education.

In the municipalities that the department looked at, they were looking at 30 percent and less of the stubble fields burnt. Just as an example, the percent burned in Macdonald in '87 was 30 percent, this year 22 percent; in Cartier, 14 percent in '87, 15 percent this year; Rosser, 34 percent in '87, 10 percent this year; City of Winnipeg, 22 percent in '87, 23 percent this year. The closer you get to the city the worse the problem is in terms of still using the practice, and we all know what happened. It is just an inconvenience to the city people and a health hazard and a traffic hazard that we should make all efforts to try to avoid in the future. I do not want to see regulations because regulations are tough to enforce. The City of Winnipeg has a non-burning by-law now and we still have the same level of burning in '89 as we did in '89.

That is my approach. I hope that we can be more successful in that approach in the future, but education is the one we want to use and our staff will go one on one. We will work with farm organizations or rural councils to help get our message across and use examples and help them in any economic respect to make a decision not to burn. I can tell you the rest of rural Manitoba, I cannot speak for the Interlake, but in the area that I come from burning is almost non-existent. Over the last 10 years, it has just gone from 50 percent of the fields down to 5 percent of the fields very quickly. People are working it in and reducing soil erosion, and they are finding that it works quite well. The tilth of the soil obviously improves in that process. If we could just get that message across in the rural area, around Winnipeg, we all would be a lot better off.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Am I correct then from the comments that the Minister has made that those who were burning within the City of Winnipeg essentially then are contravening the city laws because this is a little surprising because the mayor was one of those who was more vocal than most anybody else about the implications? Do I infer from that that he did not have the courage of his own conviction to do something about it when it was occurring under his jurisdiction?

Mr. Findlay: I cannot honestly answer that. I do not know the regulations within the city, whether it applies to farm land or not, but I am just saying that there is

a controlled area that should have worked. If he is objecting, then he maybe should look at his by-law and look at how he might want to change it, but we, as an agricultural community, believe the management practice we need to work to maintain the privilege to use it. We recognize that privilege will be taken away from us if we do not get our act together with regard to judicious use of that practice. I cannot comment any further on the city other than I do know they have an anti-burning by-law, but whether it actually applies to farm fields in the city boundary I do not know the answer to it.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I have a question on this same topic. Does the Minister, through his staff, have any figures or information as to the rationale that farmers are using? Now, I think there are two things: that obviously we do not disagree on the concept of it being a relatively poor farming practice, but I assume that there must be some of the farmers that are continually burning that feel they cannot afford to do otherwise.

If it is a case of a cost issue that they are faced with, then one can appreciate that and there might even be something that could be done to assist them in shifting or changing their farming practices. But if they feel it is a good farming practice, then you still have a major education problem before you. So the simple question is: are most of the farmers who are burning regarding it as an economic requirement because it is a lot easier to burn than it is to incorporate in terms of the cost?

Mr. Findlay: By and large, I do not think it is a cost factor. They are not burning for economic reasons, other than maybe flax straw—if they cannot bale it and sell it, that might be the best example I can think of where it might be. That is economically the best practice to get rid of that straw because it does not degrade, as you well know. That is the reason why they have to burn that straw.

In terms of cereal straw, the figures I gave you show that 70-80 percent of the farmers do not burn, and they obviously are working the straw and the stubble in, and are reasonably successful at it because the number of burning is declining each year. Mr. Pringle has just indicated that some leading farmers are saying that this is the first year that they have not burned and they do not intend to burn again. Maybe we are gaining a little ground, if the leading farmers will stop burning and stand up and say they are not and say the reasons why they are not.

Some of the fields I saw burning, where they combined, they chopped the straw but they turned the fins the opposite way so the chopped straw was in a nice neat little row, and they burnt at night so they burnt only a width of about this wide. All the rest of the stubble was there and they worked that in. The amount that they burnt was probably a third of the total volume of straw on that field, and they found that they could work the rest in quite nicely. Now I hope that they would look at turning the fins the right way, spread it out and work it all in, and that is the process of education and a bit of arm-twisting that we can hopefully be successful at, but leading farmers have reduced burning. More of them are reducing burning.

We have enough educational information to indicate the merits of not burning, so I hope to be successful in that.

* (1540)

I hope the staff could be successful in that process, and I guess when the process started this fall with some burning and the smoke was coming in, I guess I wonder—on the fourth and fifth night of potential problems—why they did not stop it or consider wind direction when they were doing it.

It is a bit frustrating. It is very frustrating because the educational information would indicate, spread the straw and work it in, we have all done it, we have all learnt it. Ten years ago I would say, a 50-bushel acre wheat crop, you have to burn the straw. I changed many years ago and never had a single problem since. I have had neighbours learn the same thing, so we have all come around, we just have to continue to work on the process.

Mr. Uruski: I am pleased that we are having some discussion on this issue here because I think there is a general consensus by the specialists or the agriculturalists, and most farmers that the practice of burning is a bad practice. Clearly, it is not the right thing to do and the majority of farmers have recognized that.

The department does put out, I think, very good information. In fact, this year the benefits of straw in terms of nitrogen fertilizer, the equivalent of an average straw crop, I think the article was 25 pounds of nitrogen per acre. That is the value of straw.

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

I think there is a practice that is deeper than just tradition. Here is the difficulty, and I think that we, as politicians, have pretty well come to the end of the line about making decisions on this issue. We have tried to take the high road and say education is the way that we will educate. The more that we have talked about—and I listened to some of the by-lines and there are a few attitudes that are expressed of those who burn, and the attitude that comes through to me of those who burn, and I am sure it is not total but at least of some of those who burn, is that this is my land and I will do as I deem fit.

It is a terrible attitude in terms of, really, as one relates to the rest of his community because as the story goes, the land does not belong to any of us. We are but temporary custodians of God's gift and the only piece of land that most of us will ever have is that three by six that we will all end up in, or some of us may be scattered over the rest of the soil -(interjection)-well, we are all headed there, Mr. Acting Chairman. I think for the health hazard, the Minister, I am sure, has received letters. Some of us have received letters from residents primarily in the Winnipeg area because I think the Minister is correct, in most regions of the Province that practice has almost, well, not totally, but almost totally been eliminated with the exception of the Winnipeg area.

I ask the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) if in fact the City of Winnipeg has a by-law that the

Minister of Environment should be demanding of the city administrators to enforce their by-laws within the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Acting Chairman, we have tried the high road now for decades and although some of the statistics are encouraging, some of those statistics show very little movement in terms of farm practices. Now if we are all agreed that the practice is bad, that there are benefits for maintaining the straw—the real issue in this whole question I think more than the straw, and many farmers will admit it, is the chaff. That is essentially the costly portion of incorporation and lack of deterioration in terms of—what is the word?—decomposition, that is where the costs really come in.

The leaving of the weeds back on the field, that maybe we should be putting out at least more literature and advice, although I know the Minister and I have discussed this whole question of the collection of chaff as a good feed for cattle. It may be an approach that we may want to try and do some of the experimenting. It may be worthwhile to set up an agri-food project and say let us try some of this equipment that is not very expensive, maybe \$5,000 or \$6,000.00. There might be an effort to put \$10,000 into an experiment around here in some of those that burned. Let us see whether the collection of that residue will entice farmers to spread the straw, get the benefit of the increased nitrogen, and lessen the debris of the chaff onto the fields.

That may be an approach that we should be considering, but clearly, Mr. Acting Chairman, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) is pointing the finger at the Civil Service. The Civil Service generally does as the will of their master dictates. We just have not had the will. We just have not had the will and the will has not been here.

Now let us get that back straightened up and get the metal into the back. Let us get the will, because ultimately there will be a lawsuit, there will be a death. There will be a death surely of either some youngster or some old person in the City of Winnipeg, in the neighbouring area, or an additional serious car accident as we had in eastern Manitoba with the peat burning, and then all hell will break loose. Then we will all be scrambling to deal with this poor farming practice, a degrading farming practice in terms of the future of our soils, which we all agree. Let there be a commitment from all politicians in this House to say, Mr. Minister, use your direct approach for one more year, but then let us get on with the business and deal with the question that it is not only a poor practice, but clearly a health hazard for the citizens of this province.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairman, a new voice. I thank the Member for his comments. I think we are all on track. Yes, I was hoping he would not say “immediately.” He says one more year. We would like the opportunity to be able to use the educational route, the voluntary approach, for one more year. I will admit that if we cannot be successful, duty calls in terms of our having to look at ways and means to make the right decision in terms of use of residue and working it into the soil.

Just a kind of experience that I have had personally, I have seen different manufacturers develop spread

wings for the choppers on the combines, and you can spread that straw over 20 feet. The old combines spread it over six feet, eight feet, but now we can spread it way out over 20 feet, chop it up nice and fine and work it in. In one or two rains decomposition takes care of it. I do not care what soil type you are on, that will work.

We are all committed that in one more year we will aggressively pursue it through the department and one-on-one, using municipalities also to assist us. Maybe some municipalities will be prepared to be a little stronger and maybe they will look at some by-laws themselves, but try to deal with it at that level for one more year and see if we can be successful. If we can show success that we can reduce it by half in another year, I would hope that would indicate that we are working in the right direction.

* (1550)

I guess I would say, heaven forbid that we should get a wet fall next year and a crop that comes off late and there will be immense pressure to burn. We need early harvest every year so that the process of incorporation can work successfully.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Acting Chairman, I hope that the Minister is correct that there is actual process. I would consider nothing less than a one-third reduction as a minimum reduction to some success in terms of continuing on in the process of education. If we do not achieve that, I believe that we should act because I believe that as a province, should a death occur, as a people we are culpable in that death because clearly we have to admit that the education process that we have talked about over the last number of decades has not worked; and that surely any reasonable person and a court of law, I venture to say, that it could be argued in a court of law that after having this length of time, and yet the practice was not discontinued, that the province in fact could be held as an accomplice in any case of negligence and death due to an accident, a death due to smoke inhalation.

I do not know what the court precedence would be, but I venture to say that some family will find a legal counsel who would be prepared to argue that case, and it will be a case that will not certainly show any responsibility or show us as a responsible body in this Legislature.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Findlay: I would just say that I hope the educational process works because the regulation process I do not think will ever work. The enforcement will be difficult. How you prove who threw the match in the middle of the night? How do you regulate and enforce? We could end up with a lot more burning just by people wanting to prove that we cannot enforce.

I think the only effective, real workable solution is education, so that people voluntarily decide that it is not a good practice, or I am afraid of causing those sorts of things to happen, that they do not light that match; that if we create a challenge situation out there

where say, well, catch me if you can, we will be in a difficult position. You know how difficult it is to prove something unless you have a witness to the fact that the guy actually did throw the match. We all know he did but you can not prove it.- (interjection)- Yes, but anyway, let us work on the educational route because in the long run I think it is the only one that will work. Enforcement may sound good in theory in here, but I do not think it is practical out there.

Mr. Laurie Evans: The Honourable Member brings a lot of potential questions forward. My question though is a little even more specific than that, Mr. Chairman, and that is regarding the utilization of the soil testing laboratory. I think the Minister will recall that there was some controversy a few years ago at least as to why such a high proportion of the soil testing was being done out of province. Can the Minister give us any idea as to what the percentage is that is being done in-province versus outside labs?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, we have some figures over the past five years to show you the level of use of the lab. The soil analysis starting in 1984-85 of 20,500; '85-86, 15,300; '86-87, 13,900; '87-88, 20,200; '88-89, 26,000. Now, last year we put a person on the road to sell the service, to talk particularly to fertilizer dealers who basically take a lot of the samples or indicate to their clients where they should get their analysis done. So I guess we have achieved some level of success in terms of a 6,000 sample increase last year. We would think that person on the road has something to do with it. The other thing is probably more samples were taken last year because of the dry conditions and the probability of nitrogen levels being up there, so farmers are more interested in knowing what their nitrogen phosphate, sulphur, or whatever levels were in the soil.

Between those two factors there was an increase in use last year. We would hope that the increased use continues on into this year. I spoke to the Western Canadian Fertilizer Association at noon hour and, surprisingly, samples that they have taken initially this fall indicate nitrogen levels are higher than expected, even in the Red River Valley here where the crop was so heavy. I asked them what lab do they use. He said, we use both and they both say the same thing, meaning in Manitoba and out of Manitoba. We do not have a figure on percent inside versus percent outside of Manitoba.

Any dealers that I talked to at different places this past winter, and I kind of approached the topic of what is wrong with our lab that you do not use it. They did not have any good reason other than they said, well, the American lab looks like they are maybe more up-to-date and this sort of thing. I said, well, are there any really different recommendations that come out of the two that you could say one gives better recommendations than the other? They did not really have good excuses, so I hope that given a little bit of time, a little more direct work by the department with the various dealers, we can continue to see the utilization of our lab increase. I do not think there is anything wrong with their data technically. There is a lot of backup research data that the university has done

over the years that substantiates the way the tests are done.

I guess if there was any area that I have experienced with the lab is that they are so hung up on the two-foot depth sample, as opposed to other labs using a seven-inch depth sample. They are both giving the same recommendations, so the little more flexibility in that process might just bridge the gap between credibility and lack of it.

We have had a Laboratory Operation Review process and we hope to have a final report in October, so we will continue to look at trying to increase the utilization there.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Can the Minister indicate what is the financial relationship, if any, between the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and the Pesticide Lab at the university?

Mr. Findlay: As the Member knows, an \$875,000 annual grant to the university, then the university makes the decision as to how that money is used. Now, if the university is earmarking some of that money specifically for the Pesticide Lab, that is a university decision. We are not earmarking the money or requesting that it go to the lab or not go to the lab. So the money goes as a block and the university makes decisions on how it is distributed between its departments or to, or not to, that lab. I do not know what the figure is that the university does contribute to that lab or how it is funded.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Is there then any facility in Manitoba that is under Government financing for pesticide analysis or residue analysis in soils, because this is becoming more and more of a concern among farmers? Just what is the carry-over of some of the pesticides, and how can those analyses be done and at what cost?

* (1600)

Mr. Findlay: Really, we are not aware that there is a Government lab per se that does that kind of residue analysis in any amount now. We are not aware even if the soils lab is sending over any samples to the pesticide lab in soil science at the university, whether they are doing any or whether they can do specific analysis or not. To the best of our knowledge, samples for that kind of residue analysis are going outside the province, some of it is being done by the private sector. But there is not a good concrete method by which farmers can get residue analysis done on soil at this point in time.

I guess one would have to look at whether the pesticide lab at the university is capable, or should be made to be capable, to dovetail with the soil testing lab in that respect. It is an interesting question. I just do not know offhand how many samples might come forward if that facility was available, how many requests there have been, or how many have gone through the private trade outside the province or outside the country for that kind of analysis. It is something worth following up on to see if there is a need that we are missing here.

There is no question that gleen would be one example of a chemical that has been used that can leave residues that are of significance. When there is a recommendation that certain sensitive crops should not be grown for three or four or five years and then you get dry years, what does that do to potential residue carry-over? It is a question that does not have good answers and there is not really the laboratory backup at this time, to give the answers here in the province.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(d)(1)—pass; 4.(d)(2)—pass; shall 4.(d)(3)—pass; 4.(e)(1)—pass; 4.(e)(2)—pass; 4.(e)(3)—pass; 4.(e)(5) Special Assistance for Commercial Beekeepers—pass.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Just a couple of questions on this whole thing here and it relates more to whether the attempts to control the mite have met with any satisfaction, or is this still a very controversial and even dangerous issue as far as the Minister is concerned.

Mr. Findlay: My question is certainly, technically a very serious situation for the bee industry. Ontario and Quebec have closed their borders some years ago and to the best of my knowledge they probably consider themselves to be relatively mite free. Saskatchewan and ourselves believe that we are going to attempt to continue to keep ourselves mite free by inspection and destruction of those colonies—and I will comment a bit further on that in a minute—that are found to have the mite. Alberta is kind of waffling around. There seems to be two factions there: one that wants to keep the mite under control by destroying infected hives, and the other says we will never control it, let her go. I hope that Alberta does not take that position because obviously we will have mite infestation not that far from our border. The mite is clearly south of us. There is no question, the mite is south of us.

The position of the Beekeepers Association has been to maintain a program of inspection and eradication where the mite is found; they are supportive of that. The department personnel believe that program will work for the foreseeable future. Our hope is that it will work until we have a chemical that can treat infected hives to destroy the mite. There was a chemical on the horizon, I just cannot remember the name of it right now, that a year ago it looked like it might be promising. I understand that something has happened and it is not going to come forward. Hopefully there are other chemicals in the testing process that will do that job. If we do not come up with a chemical control or prevention system, I think the system of inspection and eradication may not work in the long run.

This year we have inspected those beekeepers who have any reason to suspect that they might have, or the staff decided to inspect randomly, whichever. They found six beekeepers with some degree of infestation. All six beekeepers have voluntarily agreed to eradicate those hives this fall when the run is over, and basically now it is over, eradicate those, not over winter, but eradicate them and hopefully keep the rest of their sites clean.

I guess technically the process is to eradicate all in a site wherever they are found in a site, eradicate

everything in that site. There is a bit of a pilot project going on right now under a research permit from Agriculture Canada using menthol as a preventative. So the department is very concerned about it. We believe we are in -(interjection)- menthol, yes.

The department believes that we are on the right track. The Beekeepers Association believes we are on the right track, and I think for the good of the industry we will attempt to stay on that track, particularly as long as we have voluntary support for eradicating the colonies that are infected.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, the special assistance for commercial beekeepers, how many beekeepers applied and received that assistance? Was every honeybeekeeper in the province eligible for this assistance?

Mr. Findlay: I guess in basic answer to your question, every beekeeper that had more than 100 colonies was eligible at the rate of \$10 a hive over 100. I am not aware, we are not aware, that any beekeeper that would qualify did not apply. The records, of course, are kept by the department. Beekeepers are registered, so they really knew who the beekeepers were. The total dollars paid out, I believe, is very close to the \$750,000 that was allocated for them.

The reason we took the \$100 deductible was a desire to support those who are commercial or close to commercial, the serious beekeepers. We made the assumption that anybody less than 100 hives was very part time, maybe a hobby operator. We felt that financial assistance should go to those that are attempting to make a living out of the industry. We believe the industry is under severe economic hardship right now because of the price of honey. The price of honey is down around 40 cents a pound. It has been there for a while. The honey producers believe that their cost of production is roughly 55 cents a pound, so that is tough. It takes a good economist to work those kinds of basic figures out.

So we did three things for the bee industry. We rolled in tripartite, we made this ad hoc payment, and we set up an industry committee to look at where we are going in this industry and whether we are missing some opportunities. It is people from the university, from the industry, from the marketing side, the honey marketing people.

I guess the fourth thing we did was we contributed \$9,000 towards the national honey marketing plant. We are supportive of the industry and hopefully we can work them through these tough things. I would like to think that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, but right now it is difficult to see that light until the supply and demand situation gets into proper balance in North America so that the price of honey can rise.

Last year the production was excellent in the province, 185 pounds per hive in 1988. This year I understand preliminary figures are more like 130, 135 pounds, so production is down this year, and we are not aware that the price is going to be much stronger unfortunately.

* (1610)

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, yes it appears that with the change in U.S. support in terms of taking off the School Honey Program, I think that is what it was called, ending that program under President Reagan, through—I think the figure, if I am not mistaken was 100 million pounds of honey onto the market. As a result, that has caused the market to continue to be depressed and, in my mind, it is unlikely that will change in the foreseeable future, unless there is another school program, or some program, that puts the use of the natural product honey back into use in a public forum, in effect, a public subsidy. Quite frankly, that will I think continue to plague the Canadian honey industry along with the difficulty with the disease.

Is there, Mr. Chairman, while we are on the subject of honey, I know we are into tripartite but on honey is there any limitation in size of production of honey in terms of joining tripartite?

Mr. Findlay: There is not a maximum in terms of joining.

Mr. Uruski: This assistance, was this cost shared with the federal Government, this \$759,000.00?

Mr. Findlay: This was strictly Manitoba Initiative.

Mr. Uruski: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(e)(5)—pass.

4.(f)(1)—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Could the Minister outline the major initiatives that were taken, the only major expenditure increase in the marketing branch was under the increases of 133,000 for new and expanded market development initiatives? Could you indicate just what they were?

Mr. Findlay: Really there are three areas of activity. The first one is more market investigation. One of the things it is involved in is in conjunction with XCAN Grain, looking at market opportunities for peas in Taiwan; another is looking at the Japanese oil tariff that is being discussed in trade at large right now.

Secondly, where there is a tremendous increase in activity, and I alluded to it when I was talking about the Minebea operation, the number of trade missions that have come into the province, particularly out of southeast Asia. As the former Minister I am sure knows, they come in groups of two, four, six, and they come here ready to do business, by and large. It is amazing, there are certain private operators, Absco is one of them, they are busy all over the world looking for people and interested in buying Canadian products, and they are doing a good job of marketing products out of Manitoba. Whenever those trade delegations come to Manitoba, the Marketing Branch does a lot of work to show them what they want to see, help them meet the people they want to meet, and entertain them. It is not an 8 to 5 job when you are entertaining people from outside the country. There is a lot of effort being put there. I think we have had a lot of response in terms of trade missions coming into this province.

I have been working in the area of new product development. There will be some work to be done there. Really, the most visible active one right now is the entertaining of the trade missions, which has a tremendous amount of spinoff, direct and, down the road, indirect. They come and are always looking for repeat business. I think we are facilitating any particularly livestock association that wants to develop contacts with potential buyers around the world and facilitating them as much as we can.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, if I was a junior reporter in the gallery, here is a story that would hit the headlines: Civil Servants on Golf Course.

In dealing with the trade missions, and here is an area that never ceased to amaze me because, especially the people from Japan who are in the commercial enterprises, one of the greatest treats that they could have is to play golf, because in Japan it is at least a million dollar investment for a share into a golf course, a million dollar investment by our standards. It is almost unbelievable, yet we take that kind of activity for granted here in Canada.

Quite frankly, business is done on the golf course, so one could make a story to say these civil servants spend half of their time on the golf course. The fact of the matter is I believe no better relationship building between Manitoba business, Manitoba Government, and overseas prospective buyers and entrepreneurs can be done by accommodating them, whether it be touring operations, but clearly in some countries one of the things that they have is almost like a delicacy, the entertainment on a golf course.

It is clearly the role that the Marketing Branch, with the small nature that it is, has attempted to try and not be everything to everyone because you cannot, but try and produce the niche in certain market opportunities that they have. I want to say to the Minister I think they are pursuing it rather well, because clearly I think the investment in the Interlake of the Northern Interlake Breeders is certainly evidence of the kind of relationship building that has to go on, on behalf of the people of this province, overseas to continue what has been done over the years.

* (1620)

I want to say to the Minister—and I for one who have had the opportunity to meet many of these people and so has he now, recently—that this is one area that I would encourage the Minister and his staff to continue. Clearly, I say this not out of blowing one's horn, but say to the Minister it is imperative, as difficult as it is at times, for the lead politician in the agricultural industry to be there. Although Japanese politics has gone through upheaval over upheaval, nevertheless, the respect for the relationship that Manitoba has, and I believe Manitoba has built a good reputation and it is being followed up, but the clear sense of support at the highest political level is necessary. I have said it before and I make my continued pitch because I think it has paid off and will continue to pay off. It does not manifest itself overnight, but it is certainly something that we, as Manitobans, should be relatively proud of

the work of this small branch, and I think of the politicians who have seen the opportunities, seized on them and continued to work on them, and to the bureaucracy, as well, that has in fact promoted that area.

Mr. Findlay: I would just comment on what the Member was talking about. There is no question that the Japanese put a lot of emphasis on being able to meet somebody in this position. It is amazing the kind of response you get, the respect they show you, the doors that you can open for other activities to follow up.

The 18 days that I spent there were probably the toughest 18 days I have ever put in, but incredibly enjoyable. They had our time just jammed full. We were well fed, and fed to the point where you could not take it any more. The other thing that we did, in terms of meeting the people and following the schedule—and well-laid out. I do not think they could have used us anymore than they did, but as I am sure the previous Member took his wife with him, I took my wife. We paid our bills. Do not ever worry about that—we paid our bills.

It more than doubles the impact just to have your wife along with you when you do those sort of things. It pays big dividends. It is expensive to do, though, and I have really been pleased with the kind of response that has come back in terms of they are visiting here, they are taking Manitoba students over there at their expense this year.

They continue to make orders here, and we have just had an order of beef made in the Province of Manitoba. That is an area we would like to see activity in, but certainly we have had considerable activity in the turkey area.

I think the relationship that is there must be maintained by whoever is in this office. Al Gascoigne, I refer to him as Manitoba's Ambassador to Japan. He has a tremendous knack. He has been there 18 times now, I believe it is, and he has big shoes to fill in terms of the person that is going to follow him in that position, because his rapport there is—I do not think he could be faulted in any respect whatsoever. If it was not for him, I do not know we would have the doors open that we have over there, because he has maintained a continuity of contact, both there and here.

The other thing that is a tremendous facilitator with doing business that I see being done there is the fax machine. They can have messages back and forth momentarily. It is just an incredible machine that helps—the contact is needed over that kind of distance.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): I would like to bring things perhaps a little closer than the Minister's comparison of his trip with the previous Minister's to the Far East, and bring it a little closer to home with respect to Portage la Prairie.

I understand that the Central Plains, the Regional Development Corporation in the Portage la Prairie area, had put together some time ago a proposal for the Community Futures Committee.

One of the studies they were looking at working on was the food processing feasibility study. I understand

from the list of Steering Committee Members that a horticulturist—potatoes—from the Manitoba Department of Agriculture was a Member of that Steering Committee. I would just like to ask whether the Minister is aware of this committee's work and the study. If he is, perhaps then we can continue asking some questions on that area.

Mr. Findlay: I would just like to say to the Member that, no, we are not specifically aware of it, but if he wants to talk about it or ask some questions, we could have somebody here from that department, whoever was on that committee, to respond with some information. It was not Garth Stone, I would ask.—(interjection)— We could have Garth Stone here on Thursday, if he is available, and I am sure he likely is, to help answer some questions in that respect, but we are not aware of the specifics.

Mr. Minenko: I would not necessarily want to delay the matters and the deliberations of this committee but perhaps if that could be arranged.

I just have some general questions perhaps before we leave the area. I realize that the Communities Futures Program is more related to the federal Government, but given the recent announcements that Campbell's Soups—and I would have thought that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) would be taking a little bit closer relationship or working with this committee to see exactly how things are working out, because I would certainly think that this is an important area. From the material that I have seen anyways, or been able to glance through, it seems that they were certainly looking in Portage la Prairie, or the RDC at Portage was looking to certainly explore even greater possibilities in the whole food processing industry.

I was just wondering whether the Minister's department has had any greater contacts than just through Mr. Stone with respect to this program as to what are some of the initiatives they were looking at generally speaking, or generally if the Minister could comment what contact he might have on that.

I also noticed the Minister of Industry and Trade has a representative on this committee as well, and perhaps we can explore that at another time.

* (1630)

Mr. Findlay: I guess it is obvious we have a contact through Mr. Stone. I guess we do not look over the shoulders of all our employees all the time, but we know they are out doing good work, and I commend them for doing that.

In terms of Campbell Soups, as he makes mention of, clearly the decision has been made by the parent company, but I can assure the Member that there is a much broader interest in that facility than just what he sees in that document in front of him. We are aware of the broader interest. People are looking at it with the idea of processing opportunities they may be prepared to get involved in in Portage with that facility. So with that decision as to who they would sell it to is clearly in their hands. It is their facility, but when

people come forward and request some information to help them develop a proposal, we will facilitate them with whatever technical information we can give. There is not a narrow interest. There is a broad interest in that facility, and I do not expect to see it lie vacant very long.

Mr. Minenko: I think in response to a perhaps more general question, the Minister of Agriculture when specifically on the Campbell Soups—and if there is broader interest, I am just wondering if the Minister could expand exactly what he means by broader interest.

Mr. Findlay: I prefer not to at this time, because it may interfere with the process of negotiations.

Mr. Minenko: Does the broader issue here mean that there are other companies that are presently in the food processing industry that are looking at taking over that facility?

Mr. Findlay: I will not say there are other companies but there are other interests, maybe interests looking at starting up a facility or an operation that would use that kind of facility. So it is not bigger interests, but it is interests that are developing. They may not develop to the point of being able to put a proposal on the table that will fly, but there are people looking at what opportunities that may be presented because that plant will be available.

Mr. Minenko: Does the Minister then seem to suggest by his comment that other industries than simply the food processing is looking at taking over that land or facility?

Mr. Findlay: I think I have said all that I need to say, because when people are working hard to put something together, you do not want to scuttle their opportunities by anything that would be premature.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(f)(1)—pass; 4.(f)(2)—pass.

Item 5. Regional Agricultural Services Division, shall the item pass—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, this area appears to be the one where there is probably the least change from the previous year, and I am wondering whether the Minister could comment briefly on any major strategy changes that have taken place in that interim period. Noting from the Supplementary Estimates, the comment regarding the human resource management, per se, is there more emphasis being placed in the regions in terms of the family, the farm transition program? That I realize is a federal issue, but it must be one that is having considerable impact on the regions as far as their personnel are concerned. Are there any other areas that the Minister would comment where there is a change in thrust or direction, because the number of people and the budget is virtually the same as it was last year?

Mr. Findlay: Really, there are no major changes of any magnitude other than continued emphasis on the family

farm management side, emphasis on keeping up with technology changes so we can be a source of information of significant magnitude for the farm community. There is no question that there is a growing and continuing developing interest on the marketing side of farm products. Going back to my previous discussion with the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), there are people looking at ways and means of which they can get involved in doing something with farm produce in processing and marketing. The regional staff can play a support and development role in that respect.

I guess, if there is any change, it is more in the area of the soil and water agreement that we have signed. There are regional committees being struck to help community associations, whether they are soil and water associations or conservation groups, to be able to come forward with their proposals for funding under that program.

So there will be a lot of activity in the regions in that respect, starting now and over the coming months as associations position themselves to make applications, and areas where there is not a representative group or association in place to get those groups in place so that they can put forward proposals if they so desire for activities under the soils agreement, the conservation concepts for their area.

Mr. Chairman: Can I ask the committee's indulgence to go back to Item 4, which is Resolution No. 9, in order that it may be passed.

Resolution No. 9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty the sum not exceeding \$12,997,200 for Agriculture, Agricultural Development and Marketing Division, \$12,997,200, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March—pass.

* (1640)

Mr. Findlay: At this time I would like to introduce Andrew Dickson, the regional director from the Interlake—the good old Interlake, home town in Arborg, right?

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate in terms of farm, what I would call farm relationships and family relationships building, the department has been involved in a team approach in trying to assist farm families in crises, as well as there has been an ecumenical committee, chaired by a number of the church organizations—the churches in the province, whether those committees, the linkages between the departmental committee and those lay committees, I guess I would call them, exist and to what extent have they been operating in the various regions of the province?

Mr. Findlay: I guess the first thing I will say is that the department staff have worked in conjunction with different lay groups, the clergy, whatever kind of community group comes forward or forms. Both the ag reps and home ecs have worked side by side with them, and a regional directory has been put together

for various contact people, for various problems that the person may have.

But in addition to working with local people, the staff have worked with staff in other departments of Government, Family Services, whatever, with whatever specific situations that develop. There is no doubt that there are a number of difficult circumstances in rural Manitoba with regard to financial crisis and which oftentimes lead to emotional difficulties, family problems, marriage problems and the like. The department is really attempting, through the staff, to respond as best they can as individuals and as staff, to meet those needs and in conjunction with whatever resources, either in the local communities or Government at large, that can be brought to bear to help the problem.

There is a lot of work being done by a lot of people, both salaried people and volunteer people. I feel there has been a high level of success, because we have not heard of a lot of problems that have blown out of proportion anyway. So I am not saying that everything has been solved to everybody's satisfaction, but I think a lot better than had we not been involved along the way.

Mr. Uruski: I ask, I know in the regional meetings and discussion groups that sometimes get formed through farm management seminars and those areas where farm families may come forward and reveal some of the difficulties that they are facing to some of the professionals whether, if the department does take any initiatives on its own in cases where farmers come, for example, looking for assistance towards mediation, and knowing the financial stress at the time at the field level, whether or not the field staff may take, or does take, an initiative and try to—and I know that is not an easy area to determine, but at least assess whether there is more in terms of emotional difficulties, besides the financial difficulties, or whether some outreach can be made before either someone comes forward or before a crisis can occur in that family?

Is that kind of an assessment possible, knowing that our staff are not professional, at least the first contact staff are not always professional in those areas? But some do have a good sense of feel for human relations and where people are at. Has that been a direction that you have promoted and/or are prepared to promote to try and head off any possible emergency that may come up?

Mr. Findlay: Just in a general response to the Member, staff have done some training to be able to read symptoms of whatever difficulty a person might have, a broad scope of symptoms, so that they can play a role of referral of that individual to the appropriate professional staff, whether it is in Family Services or whether it is in Health or whether it is mental health, or wherever that referral should take place. I think we are playing an important role. If we can identify—and hopefully the training leads them to a comfort zone that they can identify, because it is not an easy decision to make to refer somebody, particularly with the mental health situation. If we are able to head off a crisis by that referral, by getting the right professional help, I think we have played a very important role and it is

part and parcel of the overall farm family support that is important at this time.

None of the staff are trained for giving guidance other than a referral and I hope that the information they get gives some of them some degree of confidence that they can make referrals with some degree of comfort. I know some staff will be more comfortable doing that than others and I guess it is safe to say that all staff know that if they have difficulty dealing in a particular situation, and I say a younger person coming in, then they should quickly lean on a more senior person or someone else close by to give them some assistance if they know that there is a decision that needs to be made in regard to referrals. They are playing that role and are working with whoever is locally prepared to help or elsewhere in the Government is prepared to work to handle the delicate and difficult situations that come forward.

I think by and large the success is reasonably good because there have not been a lot of things blown out of proportion. I will just say, now that we are in this topic, people under financial stress respond and can do strange things. The people who are in the mediation process face a very delicate situation and many times, it is fair to say, put themselves at a high element of risk. I am just thankful nothing has happened at this point, but that is a group of appointed people who are taking a tremendous responsibility. I do not know if they have, but I think it is time that they start interrelating with our staff in this process of referral, whether it is an obvious difficulty that needs to be addressed by professional staff.

* (1650)

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for his insight. I want to ask whether there are many vacancies at the regional level across the province or whether there is any major shift. There are always vacancies, whether they are out of proportion from previous years, whether some of that information is available.

Mr. Findlay: Just looking at figures, generally there is no abnormal difference in terms of vacancies, and ag reps are just trying to identify if there are either one or two vacancies, but in a general sense in terms of regional staff, they have been filled on account of normal process. There are always some ongoing vacancies, but there are no great holes. Home economists are being filled as rapidly as possible.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): I understand that this section relates to Home Economic Services, and I would like to ask the Minister if he could indicate if there have been any meetings initiated with the individuals responsible for the Women's Initiative in regard to service provided through home economists in agriculture.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the various staff have met with the Initiative at different locations across the province and the response that we are getting back is that they were very impressed with the level of involvement of the home ecs and what they are doing. So it has been on

I guess an individual sort of basis. There has not been an overall department process of meeting with them that I am aware of, but it has been done in the regions and by the staff on their own initiative.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Chairperson, I understand that home economists were involved in fact in the various regions and presentations and sitting in on the Women's Initiative. My question was, and I was not very clear, the Minister has indicated there has not been anything overall departmentally.

Since the Women's Initiative report has come out with its findings and then subsequent to that the new Minister responsible for the Women's Initiative has struck a committee to look at the data from the Women's Initiative, what I am wondering is, because we had seen some initial work about the threat of Home Economic Services which were mentioned throughout the various consultations with communities, I am asking, has the Women's Initiative advisory group or implementation group made any initiatives to meet with the Department of Agriculture staff, or the Minister himself, in regard to how they see Home Economic Services being used in the future that would be in line with what this Government wants to do as a result of the findings from the Women's Initiative, and has that process started?

Mr. Findlay: Basically the answer in terms of whether they have come to us, we are not aware of an approach yet unless it has been directly to the home ecs themselves, and we are not aware of that yet.

But I would say that the understanding is that many of the home ecs were involved very extensively in the process and have heard what was said in terms of their own programming and their own approach to doing a job day to day. We believe that they have taken a lot of the material, or comments that came forward have taken them to heart and are attempting to address some of those problems that came out through that process, but we are not aware of a specific request to meet with us at this time.

Mr. Minenko: Mr. Chairman, I think this is as good a point as any to ask some questions with respect to a campaign promise of the Tories in the last provincial campaign where they talked about—

Mr. Findlay: All done.

Mr. Minenko: The Minister of Agriculture says "all done." Well, I think the record that we have before us, even based on the throne speeches, shows that the Government has fallen a little bit short—and the emphasis on "a little bit". But that aside, Mr. Chairman, one of the campaign promises that I am sure the Honourable Minister of Agriculture is well acquainted with is the issue of off-farm income where the Tories were certainly looking at trying to deal with this whole issue and problem. Indeed, it is a very important matter where, unfortunately, various events that were beyond the control of our farming community resulted in more and more farmers, over the years, requiring to find off-farm income in order to sustain their operation and,

more importantly, even sustain themselves and their families.

As an important element of rural development in Manitoba—I am pleased to see the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) is with us as well - (interjection)- No, the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board (Mr. Connerly) says "good Minister." Well, we will have to see what is coming out of that department before certainly anyone can pass any kind of score card.

Getting back to the main issue at hand, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture, as agriculture is certainly an important element in rural development, I am just wondering if he could advise us what contacts his staff have in the Agriculture department with either the Minister's department, the Minister responsible for Rural Development (Mr. Penner), what kind of liaison or contact do you have with respect to that particular promise?

Mr. Findlay: The Member's lead-in statement about campaign promises, I want to assure him that any campaign promises made to agriculture have been acted on and delivered on.

With regard to off-farm income, clearly I guess in the agriculture industry, we would hope that the strength of our industry will grow and will overcome the economic problems of the past, well, 1980s in general, such that their need, the necessity for off-farm income to stabilize family income on the farm will not be needed as much in the future as it is at the present.

There is no question that many, young farm families particularly, have chosen this route to stabilize their income. The department has worked in any way possible to be a facilitator in helping people that need off-farm jobs. We have run numerous seminars over the course of time. We are involved, just as examples, in job re-entry programs for women; we are involved in the Westarc rural development seminar which is occurring on the 26th and 27th of October this year; we are involved in the Rural Development Institute, we funded the Rural Development Institute in its first year before it was transferred over the Rural Development; we have the Community Development Committee of Cabinet where both the Minister of Rural Development and I sit; so, there is continuous liaison between the two departments.

In terms of making things happen in the way of rural development, agriculture is a significant player. Products produced on-farm that are handled in various ways and means create the jobs that go towards rural development. I can assure the Member that the process we are committed to of decentralizing Government jobs is a way of creating jobs in rural Manitoba that create off-farm income for farm wives, and for young people, men and women.

There are a number of initiatives going on. Really, if a job is to be created in rural Manitoba, it has to be economically viable. It cannot be funded in a non-economic fashion by Government. We are working as much as we can to attract industry in any way, shape, or form to rural Manitoba, like the Minebea operation

in the Interlake, a 600-sow operation, roughly 20 jobs, and overall through the process of the total of the program that they are laying out, probably a \$20 million investment in rural Manitoba.

We hope to attract additional processing activities, as to what I referred to in earlier questions, that are being considered and developed by different individuals prepared to put their money forward. So, the department has a wide variety of ways and means which they can stimulate and help off-farm jobs be created. I guess just working with the Department of Agriculture is an off-farm job for somebody.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 5 p.m. and time for Private Members' Hour, committee rise and call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I wonder if I might at this time, Sir, announce a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee for Thursday morning of this week at 10 a.m. in Room 255.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for that clarification.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report same and asks leave to sit again.

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

MOTION presented and carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS PUBLIC BILLS

BILL NO. 2—THE LANDLORD AND TENANT AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill No. 2, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le louage d'immeubles, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) who has three minutes remaining. Stand?

Is there leave to have this matter remaining standing in the name of the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz)? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for Transcona.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker, and my apologies to Hansard staff for having to cope today with my head cold.

I am not the reigning expert in this House on landlord-tenant relations. In fact, Transcona is not heavily stocked with rental units, but I would like to place a few comments on the record with regard to Bill No. 2, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill as put before us by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) represents a solution to a situation that defies logic. The provincial Rentalsman's Office has suffered and continues to suffer a serious backlog of cases before it, and it lies within the power of this House to eliminate the problem with one simple decision.

The Rentalsman's Office is tied in knots at present by up to 4,000 disputes a year over security deposits, disputes that would not arise or could be simply resolved if landlords renting an apartment were required to complete a condition report signed by both the tenant and the landlord or the landlord's agent.

Mr. Speaker, does it make any sense for this House to evade its responsibility to deliver value for the taxpayers' money by its continuing failure to require condition reports?

Does it make any sense for us to deny the Rentalsman's Office the documentation it requires to minimize its workload and to reach decisions based on fact, not on supposition? No, it does not.

Does it make any sense to allow a landlord whose premises have been damaged to appear before the Rentalsman's Office, to keep a security deposit with no written evidence in hand? No, it does not, and we as legislators would we wrong, Mr. Speaker, to assume that landlords do not need Governments to defend their interests.

* (1710)

Furthermore, does it make any sense to allow a tenant, a tenant falsely deprived of his security deposit, to appear before the Rentalsman's Office for the return of the security deposit with no written evidence in hand. No, it does not, and we as legislators would be wrong to assume that tenants do not need Governments to defend their interests.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a new question before us. This is a question that has appeared before this House and before all of us as legislators over a period of many years. The responsibility of this House has, quite frankly, been shirked by Honourable Members of this House over a period of years. Over the years, several recommendations were made to make amendments to The Landlord and Tenant Act, and a review committee was set up in August of 1985—I repeat, 1985, fully four years ago.

In February of 1987, a report was provided to the then Minister of Housing recommending several changes to the legislation but, Mr. Speaker—and this

is where I start to be mystified and my Party starts to be mystified—both of the other Parties in this House, both the New Democrats and after them the Conservatives, put this issue on the back burner and essentially ignored it despite the obvious growing need to clean up this legislation and rectify the problem that I outlined just a few minutes ago.

The Liberal Party is not prepared to let this situation remain on the back burner. We have decided as a priority to take the initiative. The amendment before us is in response to the vast number of disputes and complaints taken to the Rentalsman of this province over security deposits. In fact, disputes over damage deposits are the source of 25 percent of all complaints received by the Rentalsman's Office each year, fully 4,000 fresh complaints every year, Mr. Speaker, and the office of the Rentalsman is bogged down in administrative overburden.

The amendment that we propose today, the amendment as proposed by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), who has given a great deal of thought and a great deal of his sincerity to this problem, will require a landlord or the landlord's agent to complete a condition report, a simple enough request. This condition report would be signed by both the tenant and the landlord or the landlord's agent. The landlord would not be able to receive or require a security deposit from his prospective tenant, or tenant, until such time as he has completed the report. If the report is not made within seven days after the tenant has taken possession of his rental accommodation, or if the tenant disagrees with the report, which is his right, the security deposit may be paid to the Rentalsman and the Rentalsman shall make the report.

My friend, the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) suggests that I should have said, "or her." I concur with my honourable friend; however, I am aware of the brevity of Private Members' Hour and I am determined, Mr. Speaker, to complete my remarks in 15 minutes, despite my well-known commitment in this House to the equality of genders.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kozak: To complete my last thought, Mr. Speaker, if no report is made the landlord will not be entitled to require or receive a security deposit from the tenant until such time as this situation is rectified.

This is what I find shocking. I find it disrupts our administration, I find it ill-serves the landlords, I find it ill-serves the tenants. At the present time there is no requirement placed upon a landlord to fill out these condition reports, but the landlord does at present have the authority to require the tenant to pay a security deposit. The landlord can then object to the return of the security deposit if he alleges, "alleges," that the tenant has caused damage to the premises concerned during his occupancy, or if the tenant is in arrears at the time the deposit becomes refundable.

This situation begs for rectification, Mr. Speaker. We as legislators have a responsibility to deliver to the taxpayers value for the money that they pay to us in

taxes. We have a responsibility to fight for the efficient and fair administration of the laws of this province by the Civil Service of this province. We have a responsibility to defend the interests of landlords and an equal if not greater responsibility to defend the interests of tenants, who in many cases are less sophisticated than the landlords with whom they do business.

Our objective at present is a modest one. We want this Government to make a start on the revision, the updating, the improvement of the landlord and tenant legislation of this province. My friend, the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), has done this House a favour by presenting us as a whole the opportunity on a non-partisan basis to rectify a situation that we see as a problem and has given the Government an incentive to take further action to make more extensive amendments to this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and once again my thanks to Hansard for their consideration.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): It brings me great privilege to be able to speak to this amendment to The Highway Traffic Act. One minute, Mr. Speaker, please.

I deeply regret that I was prepared to speak to Bill No. 4. I just came out of committee and that was what I thought we were talking to, so with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down and let somebody else speak to Bill No. 2.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Transcona, on a point of order.

Mr. Kozak: I wonder if it would be provided as a matter of good grace by this House to provide leave to the Honourable Member for Assiniboia to address his remarks on Bill No. 2 on a latter occasion.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia can stand up at any time after and speak on this Bill.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): If indeed any agreement is required on this point, which is a questionable matter, I want the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) to know that we look forward to his comments and would grant such leave.

Mr. Speaker: By leave, it has been agreed upon that the Honourable Member for Assiniboia may speak at a later date. By leave, this matter will continue to stand in the name of the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz).

BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du

Manitoba, and the motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that the question be now put and stand in the name of the Honourable Minister of Justice, the Honourable Minister of Justice.

* (1720)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it is with some regret that I rise, probably mostly in my capacity as Government House Leader, to speak to the closure of the motion put before us by the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

It has been called a closure motion, which is an interesting and unfortunate circumstance. It is extremely interesting when a closure motion like this comes in a minority House because the Honourable Member for Thompson and all Honourable Members in this House understand full well the dynamics of this place, the dynamics under which we operate as a minority Government.

I have on many occasions tried to stress that it is my job and the duty of all Honourable Members, I suggest, to attempt to put into effect the wishes of the people of Manitoba. The people of Manitoba in 1988 elected a minority Government. No one, Sir, would be more aware of that reality than myself. Because of my awareness of that reality, I attempt to conduct myself as Government House Leader in such a way that co-operation and working together with other House Leaders and other Honourable Members results in the work of the people of the Province of Manitoba being done in the most efficient way possible. That seems to me to make good sense. The people have spoken and it is our job to respect that voice that was spoken back in 1988.

I have a problem with the principle of a motion that the question be now put when the debate at second reading stage of Bill 13 has been so extremely brief to this point. It strikes me that what we have is a majority Opposition and sometimes I am afraid, I have to say, a somewhat tyrannical majority in this House, in that the Opposition is showing its tyranny in this situation. I suggest, Sir, that the people of Manitoba would not look with pleasure on what it is the Opposition is attempting to do in opposing closure on a Private Member's Bill on all Members of this House.

I say attempting to impose closure because I would not want to play a part in seeing closure take place on a Bill which should be the subject of proper discussion and proper thought, and not just philosophical discussions and philosophical knee-jerk reactions to steps being taken by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) in this province, steps designed to guarantee for the future a better scenario in which the cultural community can operate in our province.- (interjection)-

The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) speaks from his seat about autonomy of the operation of the MIC, but it was just the other day his colleague, the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) rose in this House and agreed with Government Members

in this House in opposition to a resolution put down by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition attempting to take away all autonomy, and attempting to take away from Government the responsibility for boards and commissions. So the NDP should attempt to be consistent in its approach on this matter.

Now, the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) knows by bitter experience what can happen when the principle of ministerial responsibility and Government accountability is strayed from. Indeed, his colleague, the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) could tell him what happens when Governments attempt to use the excuse of autonomous boards or commissions to cover up for mistakes, and no better example of that could be the Perkins affair in the City of Brandon.

Now, Honourable Members of the Liberal Party were not around at that time and most of them have very little knowledge of what went on in the City of Brandon, least of all my opponent in the 1988 election who took the opportunity at an all-candidates' debate to suggest that he had no comments to make on the Perkins Affair, but he wanted to congratulate myself for my handling of the issue with regard to the Honourable Member for Flin Flon, who was then Minister of Education, took the opportunity to rise from his seat at that all-candidates' forum and shake my hand in the presence of hundreds of people in the City of Brandon for our Party's handling of the Perkins affair.

There were some very important things that should have been learned from that incident in the City of Brandon where a board appointed by the New Democratic Government of the Day set out to take actions which would remove a president of a university under circumstances which were less than human, less than humane—less than honourable is the word that I am looking for.

Now, that is a matter of the past, things have changed. I give credit to the Honourable Member for Flin Flon, to some extent, for some of the changes that have been made. I give even more credit to the present Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) for subsequent changes that were made to assist in putting Brandon University back on its feet, in terms of the way it is viewed by the people in the community and its effectiveness in providing education services to people in our part of the province.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the principle of accountability. The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) is quite prepared to accept accountability and to accept responsibility for what goes on in her department. Over, and over, and over again, we hear from New Democrats, and may I say, especially Liberals in this House, that they would like to see the principle of accountability thrown out the window, and that the Government should have no say in the appointment of people to do important work. In other words, they would like to see this Government appoint boards and commissions which would set out on a philosophical trip which takes them down the road toward liberalism in this province, and the kind of liberalism that they are talking about is the Trudeau and Chretien liberalism that the people

of Manitoba do not want, and have spoken loudly and clearly about that and, at the first opportunity, will speak loudly and clearly about that again.

We know about the principle of ministerial responsibility espoused by the Trudeau Liberals, the Trudeau Liberals we will remember, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals at whose shrine Honourable Members opposite worship daily. I am telling you I want no part of that sorry record of failure for my province, in the Province of Manitoba.

The Liberal Members of this House cling to those impossible concepts that Mr. Trudeau had held for this country, and this country includes the Province of Manitoba. Those Honourable Members are strictly out of step with mainstream Manitobans, and that includes Manitobans who form part of our rich multicultural community.

My honourable friends—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I would remind the Honourable Minister that we are on the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), which is The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act. I remind the Honourable Minister his comments are not being very relevant.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I also recognize that the debate today is on whether the question should be put, and it is to that principle that I am addressing my remarks.

Mr. Speaker: The Bill being debated today is, as I pointed out, the Bill introduced by the Honourable Member for Selkirk, which was The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act, and it is to that the Honourable Minister shall address his remarks.

* (1730)

Mr. McCrae: I point out to Honourable Members, as we discuss Bill 13, the proposed Manitoba Intercultural Council Act, that the approach that they are taking, the approach of closure, is inappropriate and not acceptable to the people of Manitoba. I, therefore, move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: Moved by?

Mr. McCrae: By me, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson).

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Attorney General is not entitled to adjourn debate on this particular Bill. He has already spoken, and I would request that the question be called if no one is willing to speak on the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Inkster is correct.

The Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would beg to move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. McCrae: I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that the House do now adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader—the Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, if memory serves me correct, if the Attorney General is moving that the debate be adjourned or if the House is going to be adjourned, then I would suggest you put forward the question, otherwise the Minister needs to have consensus to call it six o'clock. I understand that is not what he is trying to do. He wants to have a vote on the adjournment of today.—(interjection)—No, I am not agreeing to the adjourn.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Debate has already been adjourned on Bill No. 13, then the Honourable Government House Leader rose to adjourn the House.

It has been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), that this House do now adjourn. (Agreed)

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: Let the record show on division.

This House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).