

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 12, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Annual Report, 1988-89, of the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

Second, I am pleased to table the Review of Rehabilitation Services in Manitoba, 1989, a report done for the department by Dr. William MacDiarmid.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Scott Bateman Junior High, thirty Grades 7 and 8 students under the direction of Mr. Blanchette. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak).

Also with us this afternoon from the Pembina Crest School, we have twenty-seven Grade 9 students under the direction of Leslie Mesman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans).

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

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Nursing Profession Abusive Treatment

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Today, the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses released a report on the incidence of abuse of nurses in the workplace. Mr. Speaker, the results indicate that our nurses in Manitoba are subject to physical and verbal abuse from patients, from families, from colleagues, and indeed even their employers. This is intolerable, particularly as it is becoming increasingly more difficult to attract both men and women into the nursing profession.

My question to the Minister of Workplace, Health and Safety is: what is the Minister doing to ensure that her department is monitoring situations where nurses are physically endangered? What plans does she have to expand the mandate of her department to ensure that these workplace dangers do not go undetected?

**Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health):** Mr. Speaker, the report was just released today and my department has received it. I have not read it at this time, but I understand that there is a recommendation that MARN

would like to hold discussions with the Departments of Labour, Justice, and Health. We welcome those discussions.

\* (1335)

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, we would recommend that we look beyond discussions and actually establish some protocol.

#### Health Care Facilities Security Systems

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Will the Minister of Health advise the House what directives he will give to the Manitoba Health Services Commission regarding the funding of security systems, and that, because they have underspent monies consistently in health care, many hospitals have cut back on the security systems available to nurses, thereby putting these nurses in danger?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** My honourable friend, the Leader of the Liberal Party's preamble is not only convoluted, it is totally inaccurate.

Mr. Speaker, if she had listened some time ago when her colleague, the official critic for Health for the Liberal Party, tried to make the accusation that hospital funding was done, I had to remind him, and I remind her today, that hospital funding last year was above what was presented in the defeated budget which brought this Government into power, not less funding but more funding to the hospitals.

The issue of abusive treatment of the nursing personnel throughout the Province of Manitoba is a serious and ongoing issue.

The report by MARN will focus and hopefully provide direction to Government as to what further action we can take, but it is an issue that has been dealt with by the commission in co-operation and collaboration with not only the administration of personal care homes and health care facilities throughout the province but indeed the nurses themselves.

#### Police Response

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** The reality of the situation is that hospitals have cut back on security systems because they do not have the dollars.

Can the Minister of Justice tell the House today if he is prepared to issue a directive to the police requiring them to respond to calls from hospitals and nurses in the community to provide assistance, and to direct the police to lay complaints where appropriate and not rationalize this to nurses by saying, take it, it is part of your job?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is the policy of the police authorities in this province to respond to calls when they are made. It is also the policy to lay charges where the surrounding circumstances would justify the laying of charges.

I intend to discuss with my colleagues, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Workplace Safety and Health (Mrs. Hammond), the report referred to by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

### **Concordia Hospital Laboratory Worker Safety**

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a new question to the Minister of Workplace Safety and Health (Mrs. Hammond). It is not only nurses within our hospitals who are in danger. We have laboratory workers who are in severe danger as well.

Can the Minister responsible for the workplace tell the House today why a report on Concordia Hospital's lab that was prepared in February of 1986 has had no action and those people are still working under unsafe conditions?

**Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister responsible for Workplace Safety and Health):** I will have to take that question as notice.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, the hospital lab does not provide for permanent hoods to protect the workers from carcinogens. It does not even provide for portable hoods. Will the Minister today direct the hospital to correct that situation so that the employees in that lab are not exposed to carcinogens?

**Mrs. Hammond:** I will direct the staff of Workplace Safety and Health to immediately contact the hospital and check out the circumstances, and then we will deal with it accordingly.

\* (1340)

**Mrs. Carstairs:** They checked out the circumstances in February of 1986. Now we require action.

There are smears that are being prepared from specimen material which demands a biological safety cabinet and no such safety cabinet exists at Concordia Hospital.

Will this Minister order today the purchase of such a piece of equipment in order to protect the workers at Concordia Hospital?

**Mrs. Hammond:** Mr. Speaker, while I recognize that the Leader of the Opposition is bringing me factual information, I will make sure that my staff checks that out today, and then if that particular piece of equipment is needed, I am sure they will make an order.

### **Psychiatrist Shortage Selkirk Mental Health Centre**

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. We have always stated that we believe the mental health challenges in this province should be worked on in a co-operative way, that we should work in a non-partisan way to deal with mental health challenges in this province, and we have offered our co-operation to the Minister of Health in that regard.

A year ago there were six full-time psychiatrists at Selkirk Hospital. Now, as the Minister is no doubt aware, we are down to one full-time psychiatrist as an administrator, and one full-time psychiatrist providing psychiatric care to patients on the floor, the 300 patients in Selkirk.

Can the Minister tell this House and the people of Manitoba why the situation has deteriorated so dramatically over the last year and the 300 patients have been left in such vulnerability with this situation in the Selkirk hospital?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, the circumstance in terms of permanent, fully dedicated psychiatrists to the Selkirk Mental Health Centre is less today than it was some seven or eight months ago.

Part of the resigning of professional psychiatrists at Selkirk occurred when we attempted to resolve the same very serious and long-standing psychiatric problem at the Brandon Mental Health Centre.

Mr. Speaker, the recruitment efforts are ongoing with the faculty, the professional association and the institutions in an attempt to bring permanent psychiatrists to both Brandon and Selkirk. In the meantime, let not my honourable friend's indications of woefully inadequate service prevail, because a number of fill-in arrangements from other professional psychiatrists are being made available to provide for patient care in Selkirk.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health knows that patients now coming from all over Manitoba to the psychiatric facility at Selkirk are not getting any psychiatric assessments upon admission. They are not getting any treatment plans on their admission to the hospital, and it is the most serious situation at the Selkirk Hospital that it has ever been.

My question to the Minister is: why has he let this situation deteriorate so greatly and dramatically where it is the worst now than ever in the history of this province, and what action is he going to take to have specific and concrete results, instead of just words in this Chamber?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, the words in this Chamber from time to time are not accurate words, and from time to time they are not accurate when they emanate from the mouth of the Leader of the third Opposition Party.

Mr. Speaker, he is leaving the impression that there are no psychiatric assessments being done on patients

being admitted to the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. That is not correct, absolutely that is not correct, because we do have psychiatrists, both on a full-time permanent basis at the facility, as well as psychiatrists providing services from Winnipeg to provide those kinds of assessments and treatment plans.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the last time the Member made such an accusation was dealing with AIDS, and we found out what the truth was in his department.

### Mental Health Care Administration

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Can the Minister explain the absolute administrative chaos in his own department dealing with the Mental Health Services? There is no Assistant Deputy Minister in place for the Mental Health Services, after being promised in November of last year. There are two acting executive directors in his own department, and there are three vacant positions that he promised November of 1988. Can he explain to the people of Manitoba this chaos that is all around him and his Department of Health?

\* (1345)

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, seeing as how my honourable friend wants to put corrections on the record, let me put a correction on the record from Tuesday of this week, wherein my honourable friend said there were six rheumatologists in this province as of May last year. In fact, one of the rheumatologists left not two years ago but in July 1986. That was a very inaccurate statement made by my honourable friend, the Member for Concordia. We are under recruitment of the Assistant Deputy Minister. We have had a number of applicants for the job. We are hopeful that that it will be filled in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, we are losing as an acting executive director in the near future one of the positions. The three directorships are advertised and competitions are closing on them, and they will be filled in the near future.

**Mr. Doer:** I refer the Minister of Health to the American Rheumatologists Report to get the independent statistics on the situation in Manitoba.

My final question to the Minister of Health is his lack of any psychiatric recruitment, any psychiatric management, any mental health plan. What are Manitobans to believe, Mr. Speaker? Is it because nobody will work for the Minister of Health, or he does not trust anybody to work for his department?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, and I will admit he was not there as long as some of his group were, but there has been more reform of the mental health system in the 16 short months that we have been governing.

Initiatives have been taken in Dauphin, in the Parklands Region, in the Brandon region, in Winnipeg.

There has been a pro-active reform of the system which has been accepted widely across this province by not only professional associations who are willing to work with this Government to reform mental health but indeed the Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba Division, and other groups involved in mental health. The reform of this system is ongoing which was left negligent for years and years under an NDP administration -(interjection)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

### Conference on Urban Safety Manitoba Representation

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. Tomorrow and Saturday there is an international conference being held in Montreal which has drawn legislators and experts from around the world to look into the role of legislators in making communities safer from crime. This conference is by invitation only. There is no registration fee.

This Minister was invited to that conference on June 2 of this year and he declined to participate. More than that, he declined to even nominate an alternate. My question is: why has this Minister failed yet again to take advantage of a unique opportunity to meet with this blue-ribbon group and study this important issue for the very minor cost which would have had to be incurred to get to Montreal? Why has he not even taken the time to appoint an alternate?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister of Justice.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, we know that cost is never an issue with the Honourable Member for St. James, nor with his Leader, nor with anybody else in the Liberal Party.

I can tell the Honourable Member that certain commitments that I have here in the House as Government House Leader and commitments that for one reason or another keep me in Winnipeg or in Manitoba would no doubt be the reason for my not attending. Members of my staff attend numerous conferences as it is with regard to all kinds of matters which we think help us to provide a justice system in this country which to most reports is second to none in this whole country in many, many areas.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Edwards:** If the Government will not be represented, this province will. I am happy to inform Members of this House that we will be represented at that conference because this Government defaulted.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The question is?

**Mr. Edwards:** My next question -(interjection)- well, the Members see fit—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Member for St. James.

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, did the Minister not think it was important to be represented given that this province has had the second highest growth in criminal code offences of any province in the last decade, has had the highest increase of any province in violent crimes in the last decade, and has had the highest homicide rate in this country for the last six years? If anyone should be there, Manitoba should be there.

**Mr. McCrae:** The Honourable Member chooses his topics carefully, I assume, before he comes to the Question Period. One wonders why it is that he does not ask us questions, for example, about how we are doing these days in the criminal prosecutions area with the backlog in the Province of Manitoba, not only in Winnipeg but wherever else there happened to have been a backlog.

One wonders why the Honourable Member has stopped asking questions a year ago about the backlogs at the Land Titles Office and other services that we provide to Manitobans in this province. The Honourable Member—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Member for St. James.

**Mr. Edwards:** The answer to the land titles delay was to kill the housing market. We know that. That is the Tory answer.

My final question is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond). Would she have been interested in this conference which is going to explore how to prevent crime, including violent crimes against women, and did the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) even bother to ask her if she would be interested to take his place at this conference, given that 7.4 percent of the sexual offences in this country are committed in Manitoba with 4 percent of the population—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member's question seeks an opinion and is therefore out of order. Would you kindly rephrase your question, please?

**Mr. Edwards:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Was this Minister, the Minister for the Status of Women, asked by the Minister of Justice if she would be interested in going to this conference on his behalf given that it specifically deals with issues which would have been of concern to her, particularly as a representative of this province?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Speaker, you know the Honourable Member, as I said, chooses carefully, but I suppose if we did go to these conferences, then he would come back with some other tack, such as why are you

spending all this money, for instance? The fact is we do attend conferences, numerous conferences, and people do like to hear from us, for example, about our Spousal Abuse Tracking Project, our Child Abuse Witness Program, our Victims Assistance Programs in this province, the tremendous efforts that have been made by judges in this province in terms of education regarding family and spousal violence, and the changes. Judge Ron Meyers, for example, would be happy to sit down with the Honourable Member and tell him about the progress we have made with our spousal assault court, the only one in this country, so that we are quite happy to attend whenever we can.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### Service de Conseiller Funding

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** Monsieur le président, ma question s'adresse à la ministre des Services à la famille.

Depuis le 20 juillet dernier, date de la demande d'aide financière de Service de conseiller, la ministre des Services à la famille tourne en rond et semble ne pas comprendre les nécessités communautaires indispensables en vue d'assurer la croissance d'un enfant dans un milieu familial sain et favorable.

Monsieur le président, cela est d'autant plus regrettable car, le 10 octobre dernier, la ministre a décidé de refuser catégoriquement de supporter la demande financière de Service de conseiller. Ma question est celle-ci: est-ce que la ministre est prête à réviser sa décision, prenant en considération qu'elle dit elle-même, dans sa lettre du 10 octobre que, "les priorités de son ministère s'orientent vers le financement de programmes contre l'abus de l'enfant" et qu'il est clair que Service de conseiller offre ses services aux membres adultes de la famille, donc les parents de ces enfants, services qui rentrent bel et bien dans la partie préventive des programmes. Est-ce que la ministre accepte de réviser sa décision afin de financer le seul organisme bilingue?

### (Translation)

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Family Services. Since July 20 of this year, on which date Service de Conseiller applied for financial assistance, the Minister of Family Services has been going round in circles and does not seem to understand how vital it is for the community to ensure child development in a healthy and positive family environment.

This is even more regrettable in that on October 10 the Minister decided categorically to deny financial assistance to Service de Conseiller.

My question is this: is the Minister prepared to review her decision given that she herself said in her letter of October 10 that her department's priorities are directed towards the funding of child abuse programs and given that it is obvious that the services provided by Service de Conseiller to adult family members, meaning the parents of these children, fall within the preventive measures contained in these programs? Will the Minister agree to review her decision so that the only bilingual counselling service can be funded?

(English)

\* (1355)

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):** As the Member has indicated, I did correspond with that agency this week and indicated to them much the same answer as I had to give them when I corresponded with them before. We have not funded that agency in the past. The only way we could consider funding them was through a proposal for next year's budget, which we would have to consider.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Monsieur le président, la ministre ne semble donner aucune importance au paragraphe 10 des principes énoncés dans la Loi des Services à l'enfant et à la famille. Ma question, Monsieur le président, est celle-ci: à la lumière de l'article 10 de la loi et des nombreuses lettres d'appui qu'elle a reçues, la ministre est-elle prête à reconnaître que Service de conseiller offre un service indispensable à la communauté?

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, the Minister does not appear to give any importance to the statement of principles found in Section 10 of The Child and Family Services Act. My question is, in light of Section 10 of the Act and the many letters of support she has received, is the Minister prepared to admit that Service de Conseiller provides an indispensable service to the community?

(English)

**Mrs. Oleson:** Mr. Speaker, I do realize that was an important service that the agency provided. We also have that provision with the agencies that they provide that service, and we do recognize that children need help in cases of abuse. Our commitment is clear in that regard, but unfortunately this agency was a separate agency outside of Government which has not been funded before, and to come in in the middle of the fiscal year, it was just too difficult to be able to fund them this year.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Monsieur le président, j'aimerais que la ministre dise; cette chambre quelle solution elle propose pour annoncer aux quelques 500 personnes qui profitent actuellement des bienfaits du Service de conseiller et dont plusieurs ont non seulement besoin d'aide matérielle et financière, mais en plus, et surtout, d'éclaircissement psychologique. Comment, Monsieur le président, ou plutôt, qu'est-ce que la ministre va

donner comme raisons dans un communiqué de presse?

(Translation)

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister to tell this House what solution she intends to make public for the some 500 people who currently benefit from the invaluable help provided by Service de Conseiller, people who do not just need material and financial assistance but also, and especially, psychological support, how, or rather what, reasons will the Minister give in her press release?

(English)

**Mrs. Oleson:** Mr. Speaker, as I had indicated, the agency could apply and present a proposal for next year's budget. Our main concern is with the children. This agency also serves other family needs and so forth, but the Child and Family Services Agencies are mainly preoccupied, of course, with the care and nature of children.

### Manitoba Child Care Association Meeting Request

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, this province is at an impasse in child care. The Government and the child care community are headed on a collision course and something has to be done. The Premier is saying one thing, implying that all this new money is going to existing centres; Child Care Association is refuting those statements. Who is telling the truth? It is time for creative solutions to a breakdown in communications to end the impasse. Would the Premier agree today to meet with the Manitoba Child Care Association before October 17, the day scheduled for the voluntary day of demonstration, and negotiate fair salaries for child care workers and a reasonable increase in funding for centres in this fiscal year?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I have last week agreed to meet with the Manitoba Child Care Association provided they withdraw their threat of strike.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, for the record, the Premier refused to meet with the Child Care Association before any decision was taken on a ballot and on a day of protest.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns, kindly put her question now, please.

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**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

**Mr. Filmon:** I have done no such thing as refuse. I have said I am quite happy to meet with them provided they withdraw their threat of strike.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon) does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order. The

Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), kindly put her question now, please.

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\* (1400)

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, I think the facts will speak for themselves. My question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is: if the ballot being held today at this very moment shows a majority of support for voluntary action to demonstrate to this Government the serious gap in the existing system, will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) agree to meet with the Child Care Association before October 17 and negotiate a fair and reasonable settlement?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member's question is strictly a hypothetical question. Would the Honourable Member kindly rephrase her question, please?

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, given that early results of the ballot being held today by the Manitoba Child Care Association shows overwhelming support for a day of protest to send a message to this Government, given those early results, will the Minister, will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) come to his senses and make a reasonable decision and agree—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

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

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) do the reasonable thing and agree to a meeting with the Child Care Association before October 17 so that thousands of parents will not be inconvenienced and so that thousands more children will not be left without care?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) to stop trying to agitate for a strike. I have said to the Manitoba Child Care Association that you do not improve child care services in this province by withdrawing services in child care in this province. I am perfectly willing and happy to meet with them if they withdraw their threat of strike.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, if representing the genuine concerns of the child care community is agitation, then I am proud of it.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

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

### Day Care Walkout Conciliation

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, I am trying to present to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) a reasonable solution to a very difficult situation so that any withdrawal of service does not have to happen.

My question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is: since the Premier (Mr. Filmon) will not meet and will not respond to the Child Care Association's last letter which holds out the olive branch and calls for a compromise, will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) agree to appoint an impartial conciliator, a person such as Linda McNair, who headed up this Government's own Day Care Task Force, will he name such a conciliator to bring the two parties together before October 17 to develop a joint plan for restoring the confidence of parents and child care providers in Manitoba's day care system?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, if I could be permitted without interruption, we have made a firm and strong commitment to the child care community of this province, a 45 percent increase in funding in two budgets in the space of 17 months, \$13 million additional dollars, a 35 percent increase to the Salary Enhancement Grant to child care workers. I have said that I will meet with the child care workers, along with our Minister, provided they withdraw the threat of strike.

Last week I met with the Advisory Council on Child Care in this province, which included members of the Manitoba Child Care Association, to look at a long-term plan to provide additional funding to address concerns, including those concerns about salaries of day care workers.

We have at every opportunity responded to the letters. I have responded to every single letter that has been written to me by the Manitoba Child Care Association, including the ones she referred to that arrived in my office earlier this week.

Under all those circumstances, I have indicated we are prepared to do everything possible to improve quality, accessibility, flexibility of child care and to work for the best interest of the children and parents of this province and the day care community.

### Service de Conseiller Funding

**Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice):** Once again we have the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) who makes budgetary decisions based on misinformation.

The Minister has refused funding to the Service de Conseiller because, as she says in her letter, Child and Family Services provides marriage counselling. Well, they do not, Mr. Speaker. In a phone call to them today they indicated to us that they do not have a marriage counsellor on staff, they only deal with children.

My question to the Minister is: who do we believe? Do we believe the Minister who writes the letter and says they provide the service, or do we believe the agency who has told us they do not provide the service?

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):** The Member indicated we have been cutting funding. My department has never funded this organization. We do not supply marriage counselling, as such; we are providing service to children.

**Ms. Gray:** I am prepared to table a copy of the letters from Child and Family Services indicating they do not provide marriage counselling service.

My question to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is: who made the decision to refuse the funding to the counselling service, given that you had misinformation in making that decision?

**An Honourable Member:** It has never been funded before.

**Ms. Gray:** Refused service, not cut. Do you guys not know the difference between cut and refused?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Family Services.

**Mrs. Oleson:** I will repeat once again, for the edification of the Member, this was not part of the budget of Family Services this year. We have not been funding this organization so it is not in the budget. I cannot fund them.

### Child and Family Services Marriage Counselling

**Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice):** I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Family Services. Could the Minister indicate to us why she would write in the letter that Child and Family Services of Eastern Manitoba provide marriage counselling, when clearly they have told us and they have put in writing that they do not provide the service.

Do you not even know what is going on in your department?

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, Child and Family Services of Eastern Manitoba is funded to provide service to children who come into care by that agency. They are not funded to provide marriage counselling.

### Klinic Community Health Centre Capital Funding

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** My question is to the Minister of Health. The Minister has repeatedly delayed acting on the desperate need for a new facility at Klinic despite the fact the current building is hopelessly inadequate and overcrowded, repeatedly refused to release the capital announcements for this year, which hopefully will deal with that matter as soon as possible.

What is more, this Government has been downgrading the importance of the community clinic system in Manitoba over the 18 months it has been in office. I ask the Minister today, will he commit himself, as we do enter into the Estimates of the Department of Health, to announce today whether in fact this Government will provide the capital funding that is necessary to Klinic?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, since September 18, I have been anxiously awaiting the completion of Highways Estimates so we can get on with discussion of Health. My honourable friends in the Liberal and the New Democratic Parties

appear unwilling to debate Health, because they have been holding up the Health Estimates for three weeks. I have been ready to go, and when we debate the Department of Health, we will have a full discussion of all the issues in the Department of Health.

When we reach the Manitoba Health Services Commission this year and the capital estimates are available, I hope my honourable friends take more than the 30 minutes they took last year to discuss \$1.4 billion.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Are you all done? The Honourable Member for Thompson.

\* (1410)

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, let the record show that the Opposition asked for those Estimates in June and the Minister has refused to provide it for the last six months.

### Health Care Community-based Clinics

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** My supplementary question is in regard to a report that was released by the Saskatchewan Department of Health in regard to community clinics. They sat on it for six years, the Conservative Government in Saskatchewan, but I would like to ask the Minister whether he has had the opportunity to review this report which points clearly to the fact that community clinics are a very efficient way of providing service. Will he now change this Government's policies in regard to community clinics and give them the priority that they really should have in our health care system?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** No, I have not read the report. Mr. Speaker, this Government considers community clinics to be part of the continuum of health care services available to Manitoba. We have not frozen the capital budget which denied many, many organizations across Manitoba their needed health care facilities, as happened in Dauphin, as happened with Klinic, as happened on and on and on, because the NDP froze the capital budget in 1987.

Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friends want to make all sorts of issues on the capital budget, but again, the capital budget of this Government will demonstrate our commitment to a balanced health care system. We will address the needed issues, we will address the inherited problems of capital reconstruction, and we will do it in a way that is responsible to the taxpayers and to those needing health care in the Province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I repeat, in regard to the community health clinics, which this Government has downgraded, which this Government has refused to provide the operating capital or resources required, why will this Minister now, in light of the fact that it is proven they are effective, they are cost-effective, not provide them with the support that they require, both capital and operating?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the Member for Thompson, has been the official critic for the New Democratic Party one short day and he has already inherited his Leader's disease of not telling the truth.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

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

**Mr. Ashton:** I find the comments of the Member highly unparliamentary. Beyond that, I may have been the Health Critic for only one day, but I could ask the Minister to review his record of the last 18 months, in terms of statements he has put on the record, and then we could perhaps talk about truthfulness and lack of truthfulness.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. As I have told Honourable Members many times, this is a place where we would ask all Honourable Members to pick and choose your words very carefully.

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**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Health, to finish his answer.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, although I cannot really totally recall the question, I will give an answer.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

### Low Income Housing Subsidy Reduction

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** My question is to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). Last June I pointed out cutbacks to the grant and subsidies portion of the budget, in particular, cutbacks to low-income seniors and low-income families.

The Minister answered, "I can assure the Member across the way there has been no cutback in allotments for 1989." Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Housing misinformed this Chamber. According to his Order-in-Council dated August 2, 1989, there were indeed cutbacks.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Housing is: will the Minister apologize today for misinforming this House last June and admit to the cutbacks to grants and subsidies allotments?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing):** Mr. Speaker, I have to reconfirm to the individual that he is comparing budget to actual figures. I will explain that to him when we get to the Estimates process.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I will table the documents that show in black and white that the Minister did misinform the House, and again I hope he will apologize for doing so.

Citing the example, Mr. Speaker, given a senior received an increase in his pension of \$34.11 a month, his shelter allowance was reduced by \$11.20 a month. The pension increase takes into account the cost-of-living increases. The SAFER payment decrease happened because this Government does not take into account—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable Member's question is?

\* (1420)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Given that the decrease happened because this Government does not take into account cost-of-living increases—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** —my question to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) is: is this one of the reasons why the allotment was decreased on this particular budget?

**Mr. Ducharme:** Mr. Speaker, first of all let us get the record straight. The Conservative Government started the SAFER Program, and two increases in six and a half years by the previous administration was all these people got. We realized that there is an inconsistency in this particular program, and our staff is in the process of reviewing the maximum rent ceilings to determine that they should be in relation to the current market situation.

Mr. Speaker, our Government will fix that situation.

**Mr. Speaker:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, 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 Department of Health; and the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair for the Department of Rural Development.



**CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY  
SUPPLY—HIGHWAYS AND  
TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Chairman (Harold Gillehammer):** I call this meeting to order to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation. Before we complete the Estimates of the Department of Highways, I have a ruling to give the committee.

**CHAIRMAN'S RULING**

**Mr. Chairman:** On Thursday, October 5, 1989, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the Minister of Native and Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), regarding comments allegedly made by the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), with regard to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

As I did not hear the remarks in question, I took the matter under advisement in order to peruse Hansard. I do note on page 1630 of Hansard that the remarks "I do not think he did, he distorted facts as usual and lied as usual," were attributed to the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). Further on page 1631, the Member for Dauphin states, "So I stand quite clearly with what I said, but if lying is unparliamentary I will not leave that on the record, but certainly it is information and it is not factual."

There is a degree of confusion surrounding the issue as words were exchanged between the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) off of the record, while the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) was asking questions of the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger). The Member for Assiniboia had been recognized by the Chair and legitimately had the floor. I would like to caution Members that conversations between Members should be carried out at the back of the room and that the courtesy of attention should be given to the Member who has the floor.

It is unparliamentary to charge that a Member is lying to the House or to a committee. The Member for Dauphin did offer a qualified withdrawal when he said, ". . . if lying is unparliamentary, I will not leave that on the record, but certainly it is misinformation and it is not factual."

The Chair is pleased to accept the withdrawal by the Member for Dauphin, but at the same time I would like to remind all Honourable Members that it is the practice of the House to provide an unqualified withdrawal. I do mention that the Member for Dauphin did withdraw. As for his qualifying remarks, it is not unparliamentary to state that a Member is offering factually incorrect information. I would like to caution all Members to choose their words with care. I am reading these remarks into the record to conclude the issue.

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On the Estimates process we are on item 1. Administration and Finance: Minister's Salary—the Member for Assiniboia.

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia):** Just before we recessed on Tuesday we were asking a multitude of

questions on the Taxicab Board. I would like to just ask a few other questions and we will go on further.

First of all, in answering the questions to my colleague from St. Vital, the Member said he is not aware that there are any further vacancies on the Taxicab Board. Would the Minister consider placing a member from the taxicab industry on that board so that they have input from the industry itself? The other point is, could the Minister provide the critics with the minutes of the Taxicab Board for the last 15 months and a number of incidents of threat or violent acts towards cab drivers reported to the Taxicab Board in the last 15 months?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** First of all, let me indicate to the committee here that at the conclusion of the last set of Estimates, when we last met as a committee, that the critic, the Member for Assiniboia put on a variety of questions at the end and I indicated that we will be responding to those because at that time we were trying to possibly accommodate completing the Estimates of this department.

I have instructed staff to get the Hansard so that we can take those questions and deal with them and I will reply to those questions in written form to the Member so that he gets that information.

I would like to indicate specifically about the taxicab industry that the request was whether I would consider changing the format of the Taxicab Board to include a driver or somebody from the industry itself. I am prepared to discuss that with the chairman of the Taxicab Board and myself to indicate that we are in the process of setting up an advisory board for the Taxicab Board, like an advisory group. I made the commitment the other day already that we would be having driver representation from the industry on that board.

\* (1430)

It is not that we are ignoring the people who are in the business. We want to get them involved and I certainly anticipate, after what has happened this week, that we will be looking forward to the final report from the chairman about the hearings, at which time I will be able to take and make some decisions based on the recommendations that come forward.

Mr. Chairman, I am trying to recall one of the questions that the Member asked, whether I could make the minutes available. I never receive the minutes from the Taxicab Board hearings. The Taxicab Board is a quasi-judicial board an arm's length removed from the Minister, just like the Motor Transport Board. I do not get the minutes of those proceedings either. I will check into that. If this is something that has been done in the past, I have no difficulty with it, but I do not know whether that is a process that can be accommodated. I will check into that.

**Mr. Mandrake:** Mr. Chairman, the Member for Dauphin is also on the rural committee so I will keep my questions and let him go if he wants to make a statement.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to, in concluding the remarks, first of all thank the Member for Assiniboia for the courtesy of trading over the floor to me at this time.

I have looked over the Estimates discussion that we have had with the Highways and Transportation Department over the last number of months, or weeks at least—it seems like months, I guess it has been months since it was last June as well. We have seen during that time some good things the Minister has followed up with over the past one and a half years that he has been Minister, a safety code for the trucking industry that was begun during our time in Government, nationally, the sensitive regulation changes in trucking, the application of the regulations, some good programs that in many cases were started by the previous Government.

Overall, the tale that unfolds in the Estimates over this past number of weeks is one of failure, ineffectiveness, and complacency or inability, just plain inability, to get the job done. This Minister has failed to mobilize Manitobans against federal decisions, which is one of his major responsibilities, failed to provide the facts and information needed in a timely way to oppose those devastating decisions that are being imposed by the Conservative Government in Ottawa, and to quantify the specific impacts of those decisions.

We do not have that kind of information from him. He has not been on top of the situation. He seems to be constantly unaware of things that are happening, if it is CN layoffs or whether it is VIA layoffs or whatever.

He seems to have even failed to impress his Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the importance, and certainly some of his colleagues, with the need for an urgent meeting with the Prime Minister. He does not seem to have got that message across, because the Premier continues to refuse to do that. He has not been able to impress a lot of people with the information and the urgency of the situation that has hit Manitoba because of actions of the federal Conservative Government.

In addition, he has failed to get any movement on future transportation agreements with the federal Government. We asked about this last year. We asked again this year. He still has a number of points laying on the table. He said now that after the Estimates we can discuss further where they are at and so on, and that is nice, but there is no action over the year.

A year ago the committee, the all-Party committee, met on the transportation issues, and we met with representatives of the North, of the communities involved, so that we could plan a joint strategy. Nothing has happened since then. They invited us to go up to have a meeting such as that, a follow-up meeting in the North, in Churchill. It never happened. This Minister has failed to take action on that important issue and on the agreements. He has not followed up.

Here we had major agreements in place. We had done as part of those agreements, we had undertaken major capital works including new grain-car development and refurbishment of additional grain cars in the CN fleet so they would not be short of cars, including dredging at the Port of Churchill, a new tugboat, and many other valuable—the Hydro lines so important for a future for the Port. We undertook a number of studies that identified opportunities for Churchill.

The Minister had an opportunity, and has had over the last year and a half, to move forward on succeeding agreements to that and he has not been able to do that. He has not even gotten, as we saw in the Hansard in the Estimates in discussion, a firm financial commitment from his colleagues, from his Cabinet, for an agreement at Churchill.

The blueprint was there, and he is letting it slip through his hands. The federal Government is walking away without even a scar on this because the Minister does not say anything about it. He does not say anything. He says a little bit but he is not aggressive enough in getting any action. He has failed miserably on Churchill. In his two years that he has been Minister, we have seen 50,000 tons one year, and 250,000 the next year, the worst seasons on record for Churchill during his time as Minister, dismal seasons, perhaps the most dismal in the history of the Port, certainly last year's.

He has abandoned the safety of northern Manitobans with regard to the off-road vehicles. He has taken no action to ensure that there are safety programs put in place. He has messed up the amendments to The Highway Traffic Act last spring so badly that he has to bring in a whole new Act to try and straighten them all out again—terrible mess, convoluted mess. They had all the amendments on top of it after the Bill was drafted, and now they have a whole pile more amendments because it will not work and it was done so poorly on drinking and driving.

That is inexcusable for a Minister. He has failed to gain approval for a revised rail-rationalization program. He says that is still something he is working on. We are going to talk about that yet too. No answers here. He failed to gain federal funding for a national highway system that has been in progress now for some years, this program. Despite the competent efforts of his Deputy Minister in putting forward and leading the efforts here for Manitoba, this Minister has not been able to—with that team, with that support that he has—achieve any commitment from the federal Government.

Right under his nose, Mazankowski, the Deputy Prime Minister, continues to dismantle Manitoba and Winnipeg as a transportation system and move it to Edmonton to his constituency. This Minister says nothing about it. He knows nothing about it. He did not know in the House about it. He did not know that they are continuing to move piece by piece those transportation headquarters to Edmonton. He sits there, was not advised of it, was not aware of it.

One of the most disturbing things is the fact that since this Minister has taken over his portfolio, the railways, the major Crown corporations, federal as they are, seem to be by-passing him and his position completely. There is no involvement. He is insignificant in the process. They do not even talk to him, consult with him, advise him of decisions before they take them. We had that understanding that at least they would consult with us before. They do not do that anymore. They do not even consider this Minister.

When one looks at that dismal record, all of those things together, one has to wonder, and rightly so, one

could justly ask the question: why has this Minister not resigned as a result of all of that? How can he face himself in the morning in the mirror and stand strong and erect and say, yes, I am really accomplishing something? He is not. He has not done anything. He has been a failure in all of these areas and perhaps the only way this Minister can send a strong message at this time is to resign in protest over his own inability to get results. Maybe then people will listen. You will say, oh yes he resigned. Gee, we must be doing something wrong, or maybe they will just say, well, he was ineffective anyway, but it is his only chance to make a strong statement.

I say to this Minister now he has an opportunity before we pass his salary, because I can tell you that I believe his hand will shake a great deal when he takes that cheque, when he takes the money allocated to him as Minister, when in fact he has failed so miserably all the way. His hand is going to shake, he is going to lose sleep over it. He is going to have an awful time continuing, in any event, and we know that is going to be the case for this Minister. I say to the Minister now, resign and let somebody else try because this Minister has not got results. He has been a dismal failure.

\* (1440)

I have enumerated the various areas where he has obviously got no action and been ineffective. I say to the Minister, you know, he is a nice fellow and I like him and we get along fine, but this is business and we can only judge by his results in these very important areas to Manitoba. He has been a dismal failure and he should resign.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, I suspect possibly the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the critic from the NDP on Highways and Transportation, I understand had an opportunity to visit his constituency and he must have got bad news out there because, obviously, he is sort of upset. I do not know whether it has something to do with the message that the people are giving him back there, or whatever happened.

**An Honourable Member:** There was good news there, but bad news here.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** The Member makes all kinds of statements and puts all kinds of things on the record. I just want to indicate that in terms of comparing the record of his administrations and this present administration within my department that we can walk very proudly. In fact, when we look at the construction aspect of it, that Member had to hang his head in shame because his colleagues would not go along with the Highways—

**Mr. Plohman:** Highways and Transportation is much more than that.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** It is much more than that, but the highways construction specifically deals with highways, and the Member's record is something that he should hang his head in shame. If anybody should have resigned it should have been that Member who

could, instead of having increases in the highway construction program, had a decrease every given year to the point where he spent \$83 million in the year '87.

**Mr. Plohman:** Misinformation.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** I think that is something that is unacceptable, that is not misinformation. I have the record that shows exactly how much money was spent and I will put that on the record.

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**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

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

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, we have just gone through your ruling on statements about Honourable Members having an obligation to put correct information on and that person should not call another person a liar in terms of that information. I am not going to do that, but what I am saying to this Minister is the comments I made hurt him very much because they probably hit home, but the fact is that the budget during the years that we were in Government was not, as he said, every year less, it varied. There is a difference and he should look at each year and ensure that he is putting facts on the table because he is not. He is not putting factual information, there is an error in what he is saying, and he should check that before he makes those statements.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his comments. He does not have a point of order; a dispute over the facts is not a point of order. The Honourable Minister.

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**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, before I got interrupted. I am prepared to take and show the figures of monies that were expended every year in the Highways Department, not what was budgeted but what was spent, that makes a big difference. The Member is talking about putting misinformation on the record. Well, he got up in the House the other day and raised a question with me, Mr. Chairman, about 10 positions going to Edmonton in the accounting department of CN. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to put it on the record that six positions were lost through early retirement, one position was moved to Edmonton. If he talks about putting wrong information on the record, that was certainly another case.

If the Member wants to start comparing apples with apples, let us go, but it was seven positions that were involved, not 10; six were through the re-organization, six positions were deleted, they were not moved. The Member at that time made accusations that 10 positions were moved to Edmonton and I did not know anything about it. Well, I will tell you something, it is this kind of a thing, if the Member wants to be critical, he talks about the history of Churchill, and I wish the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) had maybe synchronized

his efforts so that the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) the other day—

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please. I recognized the Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** —if he wanted to compare his notes of what happened here the other day with the Member for Churchill when we went through the whole Churchill issue, as well. I want to repeat it for this Member's benefit that during their regime, 15 of the last 20 years, it has been the NDP that were in Government—or what is it, 15 out of 21, or whatever the case may be, the population in Churchill decreased from a high of 7,000 at one stage of the game and dropped down to where we have less than 1,000 people, and they talk about their record. Well, that record, as far as I am concerned —(interjection)—

**Mr. Plozman:** I would love to hear it all but I have to go. Resign and get it over with.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Then he sits there and asks me to resign. Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the critic comes here and makes a statement like he did on the record and then walks out of here. That is his prerogative, but that shows the kind of credibility he has and the kind of statement that he has because I cannot take and refute it to him when he is here.

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**Mr. Chairman:** On a point of order, the Member for Assiniboia.

**Mr. Mandrake:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is parliamentary to mention that a Member is walking out of the committee.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Member does not have a point of order. I recognize the Honourable Minister.

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**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, I make no apologies for the statement that I just made because I think it is downright rude to do what the Member did, to make that kind of a statement and then walk out. I make no apologies for that because I wanted to address the concerns that he put on the record reflecting on my decisions and my performance as a Minister. Ending up asking me to resign, I take offence at that because I would like to address the aspect of the National Highway Program. There are other issues that I would have liked to have addressed and refuted and do not have the opportunity to do this with the Member, and that, I feel is downright rude. I do not find that acceptable and I will deal with that issue with him in the future.

**Mr. Mandrake:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the Minister is saying. All I am trying to say is, let us just try and finish off by three o'clock if we can. I have several questions for the Minister.

In a driver's examination, level No. 3, in Brandon, I am not going to use the lady's name but I am just going to give you an idea as to what her confidential report was, and this is under Potential: lady is energetic, a reliable employee. Since becoming a driver examiner she has prepared herself for promotion by taking career development courses in dealing with people, interviewing skills, and most recently, written communications; and this is what the man had under his: has proven to be an honest, reliable examiner. Under Training and Development—and this is for the lady—an excellent candidate for administrative position. For the man: self-development in delegating duties to subordinates; 2. advanced interview skills.

Now these are just alleged things that have happened. The man was absent. He did not receive his merit increase and he received an extension to his probation on May 18, 1989. Again, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, I am saying this is alleged. I cannot prove it.

Now, back in June, Mr. Chairman, I spoke to the Minister about affirmative action. He provided me with a list of affirmative action in his department. Now again I go back to the affirmative action, and under the drivers examiners, level 3, there are no women employed. Now I was wondering whether or not the Minister could take this under advisement and provide both critics as to why this lady has to go through the harassment of competitions and appeals? Could the Minister intervene in this case and may cooler heads prevail?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** I feel sensitive when somebody indicates that within my department or any department of Government that there is not proper affirmative action being implemented. In this particular case, I am prepared to take and look at the case and see exactly what has happened. I have to indicate that within the Department of Highways and Transportation, especially in the construction end of it, of course, we do not have that many females who would like to be involved in that.

However, we are strongly encouraging certainly the engineering aspect of it. In fact, I might indicate we have two ladies who have been hired as engineers under the bridge program and we are elated. My director of bridges, Mr. Walter Saltzberg, has indicated that he is just extremely pleased. I have had the occasion to meet the ladies on the job, they are very capable of doing it.

\* (1450)

I do not think there is any problem in terms of hiring on the affirmative side. Maybe circumstances are such that we do not always have that kind of people available that the position calls for, but I think this trend is developing. It is coming along very nicely.

In this particular case, if there has been some discrepancy—and I am not defending the staff in that regard—it well might have been something that created a situation here, and I am certainly going to look into that. It is not unusual for concerns to be brought forward in terms of whether our hiring practices are proper, or the posting and assessments are done properly.

I have tried to involve myself when there is a problem to see this has been done in a correct way, and invariably I think very often, when you have positions that are being posted, by the time the people go through a process, the one that is not successful always feels as if they have been slighted. In the cases of minorities, in a case like that, maybe it gets to be a sensitive issue.

I am very concerned about that, and I will look into this issue. As the Member is probably well aware, I do not have that kind of information here. I will have to get the background of it. Certainly, we will look into that.

If there are any other cases where we are not following proper process procedures in hiring, I certainly want to be made aware of it, and personally I do not tolerate it and will take corrective measures.

**Mr. Mandrake:** I say to the Minister, drivers examiner, 3; number of employees, 11; women in non-traditional occupations, nil. This lady was a drivers examiner for five and a half months. Now, I will talk to the Minister personally on this, but I just wanted that on the record, because I think there is an injustice done here. I feel if cooler heads prevailed maybe we can come up with a reasonable and respectable solution.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, if the Member will give me the name and the details of it, whatever information he has, we are certainly going to go and check into that. As I indicated before, before we got into this other issue with the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the Member the other day was putting a variety of questions and concerns on the record. When we have the Hansard we are going to take and review that, and then I will try and respond as best I can, knowing full well that one does not always cover all the questions.

If there are further questions that the Member has, he can address the matter to me personally or by way of a letter, and we will deal with them.

**Mr. Mandrake:** Again, Mr. Chairman, a question to the Minister. Last year during Estimates there was a reduction in one communications officer in the administrative branch, and the Minister told me at that time when I raised that question that there was only one communications officer left. Has that been increased this year?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Because of the activity that has been taking place in my department, basically with drinking and driving, and the photo licensing development, the work that is involved there, I had one communicator last year.

I have one communicator this year who basically has been moved to deal with the drinking and driving aspect of it together with the A.G.'s department and with the photo licensing. I have hired a fellow by the name of Henry Dyck on a term position as a communicator in my department. That term position terminates in November, and I cannot indicate what will happen at that time.

**Mr. Mandrake:** This is to the same Minister. Was that a competition or was that just a political appointment?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Under a term position, you do not advertise necessarily, that is my perception. What I did, I had the availability of somebody like Mr. Dyck who I felt had been working with a radio station for nine years, who is non-political incidentally and - (interjection)-

Well, I will tell you something. If the Member wants to go and check whether this member ever belonged to a political Party or whether he had any involvement, he can do so. My only involvement with Mr. Dyck when I hired him was the fact that he had been interviewing me for many years during the course of nine years that he was with CHSM as a radio announcer. He came and I had the occasion to discuss this with him and felt that he was somebody who I could use in the interim while I needed the extra additional help and that is what I did. I make absolute no apologies for that, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Mandrake:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, Order-in-Council No. 1172. I notice that the Minister has now appointed another special assistant with the salary of \$37,504.00. Is this over and above the present special assistant you have?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to inform the Member that to my regret and my department's regret that my special assistant who I have had until about a week ago or two weeks ago, Terry Sokolyk, is now working in the Premier's Office. As a result of not having a special assistant, I have now appointed a new special assistant at the bottom of the wage rung. His name happens to be Hollis Kinsey. He has been with me now for I think four days. I am optimistic that we will have a very good working relationship. I have lots of confidence in him. I hope that when the Member for Assiniboia's critics comes forward with questions and information that he will get to meet this man and find that he will be easy to work with.

**Mr. Mandrake:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have noticed in the past while the misuse of dealer plates and repair plates. I will itemize these plates to the Minister. I do not expect him to provide me with an answer, but when I see a person driving around at twelve o'clock at night with an "R" plate I know that is a misuse of plates.

**An Honourable Member:** An "R" plate?

**Mr. Mandrake:** The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rocan) says, "R" plate. Obviously he does not know what an "R" plate is. I will tell him for his edification. It is a repair plate. It is only meant for repairing of vehicles to transport it from one end to the other and that is it. It cannot be used for personal transportation. D2665, D25505, D21568, R8346, R8133, R8184. Now—

**An Honourable Member:** Now do we yell bingo?

**Mr. Mandrake:** Yes, that is bingo all right.

These plates are only meant for transportation of a vehicle from point A to point B for repair. When it comes

to dealers' plates it is only for demonstration of the vehicle, not for personal use.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Member could indicate like he gave a series of plates, and I will get that information off the Hansard. If he wants we will check into—

**An Honourable Member:** It is on the record.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Yes. I just need copies of those numbers. I will get that off Hansard. I am just wondering if he could give me a little bit more background. The numbers of plates that he has, are these all plates that were, let us say, in progress after hours or how—

**An Honourable Member:** Yes, yes.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, I know it is highly irregular for myself to ask but just for clarification purposes, how many plates did the Member have there.

**Mr. Mandrake:** Six.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to be facetious but how did the Member manage to gather these? Are these from across the city or just in his end of town? I am just trying to get a bit of a feel for—

**An Honourable Member:** Across the city and out of town.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, maybe further clarification that I require, I am just trying to get a little bit of background. I find it is sort of unusual that somebody would note these things. I have become tremendously much more conscious of anything that happens on highways including licence plates. I see some of the ones that are up front there that I am not very pleased with at times. I find it sort of unusual that the Member would be collecting numbers of licence plates and indicate that they are repair licence plates and that they are used after hours, that is why. I will do a check on it and see exactly who they are registered to, whether it is one, whether there is an abuse there. If there is an abuse there we will try and correct it.

\* (1500)

**Mr. Mandrake:** This is going to be my last question because we only have about 30 seconds left. Regarding the urban design proportions of 5 and 83 in Roblin, the town is asking an urban design for provincial trunk highways including improved lighting, installation of sidewalks and gutters and other facilities. Council will advise the Minister of their feelings and will inform him there is no need of a study. Again, we are going back to studying things. They are saying there is no need in that. The real and immediate need is for an urban design to be done as soon as possible. Would the Minister look into that and get back to me? With that, I will say pass.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, hold it, hold it. I do not want to have this thing, a question thrown on

and a comment made and then pass it. I did not catch the first part. Where was this study taking place?

**Mr. Mandrake:** It is not a study, Mr. Minister. I will provide it to you. It is on the record. It is from Roblin, Manitoba.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Chairman, I might indicate to the Member what happened in Roblin. I was out in Roblin this summer and we went and looked at the circumstances that the Members were concerned about. We have a matter of concern there and they have asked us to correct this situation. I believe the Member is probably making reference to the stop sign where the highways meet and where they want the urban section done.

I have to, for the Member's edification, indicate to him that when we undertake a project somewhere we have engineers. I am not an engineer. I have to rely on the professional staff in terms that they basically know what they do. When we undertake a project the first thing we do is sort of develop a survey and design and do a study. In fact I can illustrate to the Member that at the present time it takes more time and is more complex now because in many cases we even have to do an environmental impact study. Highway 75, for example, we have to go through the environmental hearing process to do these things.

Coming back to the Roblin situation, we have to basically do a design. We cannot just go in there with machines and start digging it up. It is done on a professional basis where we develop a design, then in many cases we have to buy right-of-way, et cetera, then ultimately we let a contract, and then the project gets underway. He makes reference to not studying it. I think the Member would consider me not responsible if we did not use this kind of an approach. As I indicated, I have to rely on staff who have been there long before I came on the scene and will be there probably long after I leave, I do not know how long after I leave. Regardless who would be Minister, Mr. Chairman, the process in terms of the engineering process is going to be an ongoing thing and I have to rely on that. It is not a matter of studying these things but we have to go up through a process like that.

**Mr. Chairman:** Further questions? Shall the item pass—pass.

Resolution No. 72: BE IT RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,208,500 for Highways and Transportation, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation. I would like to thank the Minister and the critics for their co-operation.

The next set of Estimates to be considered in this section of the Committee of Supply is the Estimates for the Department of Health. I believe we have to briefly recess the committee and get set up for the commencement of these Estimates.

## SUPPLY—HEALTH

**Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer):** I would like to call the Committee back to order to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Health. We will now commence consideration of these Estimates. We will begin with an opening statement from the Minister responsible.

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to commence the debate and discussion on the Department for the Ministry of Health's Estimates.

Might I start by offering to my long-standing colleague, the MLA for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), my congratulations on his appointment today as the Health Critic for the third Party in the House. I welcome his incisive observations on how the health care system is functioning in the Province of Manitoba and I look forward to his generous contribution to debate; and of course to my colleague, the MLA for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). I look forward to his continued and long-serving role as critic for the Official Opposition to the ministry of Health.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to present today the working Estimates of the Manitoba Ministry of Health for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1990. I will be asking this committee to support my request of \$1,557,233,800 worth of spending, an increase of some \$99,260,300, or 6.8 percent over the previous adjusted vote of \$1,457,937,500 for last year's Estimates.

Before I go on with this presentation, Mr. Chairman, I want to pay tribute to literally thousands of dedicated workers throughout the health care system, and I would like to add a very special note of thanks to regional staff for their untiring efforts during this summer's fire emergency.

Also, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the community groups, professional associations, the universities, volunteer agencies, and individuals with an interest in the health system, whose counsel has made important contributions to decision-making as we develop the partnerships that are a feature of my ministry's activities.

Now, Mr. Chairman, when I took on this job 16 months ago I was faced with a health care system which was flawed and in need of repair, lacked direction and needed refocusing, was in decline and needed revitalizing. We have concentrated on stabilizing the system to prepare it to meet current challenges and demands by applying principles of innovation, sound management, affordability, and quality care as criteria for evaluation of services and programs.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to talk for a moment about some of the actions taken to stabilize the system. We established the Health Advisory Network under the able chairmanship of Dr. Arnold Naimark. The network has capitalized on the expertise available in Manitoba to address specific long-standing issues which have not been dealt with adequately up to now. Since January of this year six task forces have been addressing the following long-unattended issues:

Teaching-hospital review—examining the roles of the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface General Hospital to establish an acceptable funding base for Manitoba's teaching hospitals.

Second, Winnipeg Hospitals Role Definition—determining ways to ensure better co-ordination and co-operation among Winnipeg hospitals with special emphasis on the concentration of resources.

Third, Review of Extended Treatment Bed Utilization—confirming the definitions associated with extended treatment and determining appropriate policies, procedures, and bed levels for this form of care.

Fourth, Rural Health Services—considering the evolving role of rural health facilities, the function of regional referral centres, and the supply and distribution of rural health professionals.

Fifth, Northern Health Services—examining the unique health care delivery needs of Northern Manitoba and the issues of manpower recruitment and retention and co-ordination of services.

Sixth, Health Services to the Elderly—a special task force has been assigned to review co-ordination and integration of health services for seniors. Efforts will be directed to defining means to remove service gaps which may affect the elderly in Manitoba.

\* (1520)

In addition, Mr. Chairman, three new task forces will soon begin an examination of policy issues surrounding health information systems, alternate health care services, health promotion. I am advised the terms of reference for these reviews are now complete.

Mr. Chairman, the process of stabilization and rebuilding has also included a phased-in program to achieve wage parity between unionized and non-unionized health workers, provision of adequate funding for provincial ambulance services, bringing funding up to just above the national average. Unfreezing the Capital Construction Program has provided for redevelopment of facilities in rural and urban centres, as I outlined earlier.

We have been establishing partnerships with the voluntary sector through Partners for Health Promotion; with business through health promotion in the workplace; with communities through the establishment of Regional Mental Health Councils, which will provide for participation by community groups and individuals in the development of mental health services throughout this province; and with other departments through the development of a healthy public policy committee. We have enlisted the help of the community in reviewing the way our Continuing Care Program operates by inviting responses to a widely distributed consultation paper.

Mental Health Public Education—funds have been made available to the Canadian Mental Health Association to co-ordinate public education activities relating to the community transition of mental health clients from an institutional setting.

Beyond partnerships, Mr. Chairman, a much needed replacement for a Northern Nursing Station has been approved for construction at Easterville.

The Manitoba Heart Foundation will receive funding to participate in an innovative pilot project.

Mental Health Crisis Stabilization Units—funds have been allocated to support the continued operation of this mental health project.

Children's Hospital Research Foundation—resources will be made available to this organization in support of its valued research in children's diseases.

Mr. Chairman, we have addressed some longstanding organization problems. We have reorganized and refocused the mental health division, giving it a mandate to plan co-operatively with all sectors of the Mental Health Services Community to provide the services that are needed, where they are needed, with emphasis on community-based models and six creative demonstration projects.

We have re-established a model for a single focus of leadership in Community Health Services for Winnipeg. We have revitalized the board of the Manitoba Health Services Commission by creating a number of active subcommittees to address unresolved problems.

Mr. Chairman, the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower, under the co-chairmanship of Doctors Brian Postl and George Dow, has been given increased funding, a broader membership, and an expanded mandate to attract and retain physicians for remote and underserved communities.

Manitoba, like other provinces, has experienced a shortage of rehabilitation specialists. Dr. William McDiarmid, a prominent Winnipeg physician, has just completed a review of rehabilitative services in Manitoba, a report that I tabled in the House earlier today. We will be establishing a consistent and co-ordinated approach to administrative and financial support functions across the ministry in Manitoba Health Services Commission and Manitoba Health.

On yet another front, Mr. Chairman, I am proud to be able to say that we have rebuilt and revitalized partnerships between Government and other sectors of the health care system.

I recall when I first became Minister of Health, the only people around the health service planning table were Government people. I knew that had to change and it has. Let me give you an example of the new sense of partnership that exists.

Recently a unique event occurred. I attended, at the invitation of the Manitoba Medical Association, a meeting on rural physicians supply. At that meeting representatives of two Government departments, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the University of Manitoba, and rural communities jointly developed strategies to address the shortage of rural physicians. In the climate that existed two short years ago, a meeting like this would not have been successful, perhaps not even possible. Today there are regular meetings with the chief executive officers of health facilities which have already begun to yield results in

the form of better understanding of issues and the co-operative planning to address them. Meetings with professional associations, interest groups, non-government organizations and interested individuals have also been successful in clarifying issues and identifying workable solutions.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we all know that a long list of activities to repair, refocus and revitalize the system is not enough. We must at the same time just take care of business.

Following up on our successful AIDS Awareness campaign, we will be funding a vigorous AIDS Outreach Program to get health information and health promotion messages to those most at risk.

By building on the national and international reputation of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation at the St. Boniface General Hospital, we will fund a major new research initiative.

We have expanded the number of operating room hours at the Health Sciences Centre. A breast cancer screening program is in its final stages of development.

A northern community mental health residence is slated to begin providing services earlier in the new year in Thompson.

A Women's Health Services Directorate will be created in the ministry to co-ordinate policy development in service planning for women's health issues.

A significant initiative in cancer treatment will be undertaken in early 1990.

A rural pilot project will evaluate the use of a new technique for improving children's dental health.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to say something about the future. Repair, refocus, revitalization and maintenance will not be enough to prepare our health system for the challenge of the '90s. We will face new problems in the next decade, perhaps more difficult than the ones we now face.

For example, in 1979 the Province of Manitoba spent \$558 million in providing health care. In 1989 those costs have grown to \$1.55 billion, representing almost \$1,500 for each man, woman and child in the province, an increase of approximately 178 percent in 10 years. Health costs now account for 32.3 percent of the total provincial budget. Over that same period, our total wealth as a province, as measured by our gross provincial product, has increased by 124 percent, and our population by 6 percent. The fact is that health care costs and demands are rapidly outstripping our ability to pay for them. We must find ways to control the cost escalation and we must do it now.

Our most recent response to the quality and cost containment issue has been to call for partnerships with universities, business and all sectors of the health community through the establishment of the new Health Services Development Fund which provides the funds needed to encourage the development of innovative program ideas that will contribute to cost containment while maintaining quality care. Areas of initiative,



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innovative programming, health promotion, evaluation, systems technology and equipment acquisition will be targeted areas of spending in the Health Services Development Fund.

We are also establishing partnerships with the health research community through the strategic Health Research and Development Fund, and by providing significant additional monies to the Manitoba Health Research Council.

Mr. Chairman, other challenges will confront us over the next decade: the effects of socioeconomic condition on the health of the population; development of new medical technologies and the public and professional expectation for their application in Manitoba; the impact of an aging population and its concentrated use of acute extended and community-based services; our aboriginal population and the issue of jurisdictional responsibility; the misconception that health care services are endless and free; difficult contract negotiations with organized labour groups and professional associations; intense lobbying by new and existing special interest groups for limited resources; complex and difficult questions of biomedical ethics; the incidence of new diseases such as AIDS and their consumption of specialized services and resources; reduced federal transfer payments and their impact on provincial policies of fiscal management and health care financing; the maldistribution of medical manpower and shortages in certain specialties; the changing ethnocultural mix of our population especially in urban centres and its implication for service delivery.

If we are to meet these challenges that I have just enunciated to the committee, we must prepare now. That is why I will be introducing a strategic long-range planning initiative which will seek consensus among key players and set common long-term goals and providing guidelines to take us to the year 2000.

The initiative includes a comprehensive planning protocol for Manitoba's health care system that will synchronize planning now occurring independently at community hospitals, research foundations and Government organizations. This protocol will establish a single planning framework within which all health care planning activities in the province will be viewed. Some steps are currently being taken which will take account of three special issues: multicultural, technology and ethics.

\* (1530)

A multicultural health advisory committee will address the specific health services needs of our ethnocultural community.

An ethics committee will be established to advise me on the application of public policy to biomedical issues.

A technology advisory committee will review the cost effectiveness and overall efficacies of new health technologies as they emerge.

As we develop the mechanisms that will enable us to plan for a quality health system, Manitobans can continue to be proud of in the next decade. We will

continue to be guided by the principles of firstly, innovation in the approaches for the delivery of health services; secondly, affordability and the opportunity to realign existing resources to meet new services requirements; thirdly, sound management in the application of fiscal accountability practices and evaluation to achieve desired objectives across the health care system; and fourthly, the development of partnerships to provide business, industry, communities and non-Government agencies with opportunities to participate actively in health services development within the existing health dollar framework utilizing community resources.

Mr. Chairman, the challenges remain to each and every one of us in this Legislature to meet those growing expectations of the health system in a reasoned and co-operative fashion. I look forward to the contribution of my critics and their assistance in achieving the larger goals of quality health care for all Manitobans. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Minister, we will now have the customary reply by the critic of the Official Opposition Party, the Honourable Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan):** First of all, I would like to welcome the NDP Critic for his new role. Mr. Chairperson, after one and a half years in Government and after spending 1.5 billion, 1,500 per person in Manitoba, the simple question is: are people happy? Last year, if you stood on the street and asked people the simple question, the answer is, no. They have a major concern. They are dissatisfied with the system. They have not seen improvement in the delivery of the health care system in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson, the simple meaning of universal health care system is, as some may put it, it is free. It is not free, the taxpayers are paying; we are all paying for this health care system. If the universal health care system is not readily accessible to all Manitobans, it does not matter whether they live in north, south, Winnipeg or other urban centres, that is not a universal health care system. I have not seen any improvement for the last 16 months.

Mr. Chairman, let us look at each and every area, section by section now, the accessibility issue, the accessibility of the primary health care services and why they have to differ in Thompson as compared to Roblin, Russell or Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Under the average circumstances, at any given time in Manitoba, there are about six to eight communities without a permanent doctor. There are about 28 to 30 communities who are looking for a physician all the time. People cannot wait too long to have implementation from this Government and wait and wait and not get any services.

For them the simple question is are we getting the right value for our dollar. The answer is again, very simple, no. They are not even getting the primary health care services.

To me that is not a universal health care system. When you have to wait for even primary health care,

and you have to visit 20 to 40 miles just to see a primary care physician, that is not a universal health care system.

For the last 16 months, in this area, there has not been an improvement. The Minister recently indicated he attended a meeting on the 16th of August with the various professional organizations, but he has failed to indicate what the recommendations were made by this Minister and his department. We have not seen any concrete evidence of that.

Of course the communities are working together, of course they are worried because they are spending \$1.5 billion, and they are never going to wait for the end of the 16 months.

Mr. Chairperson, the recent statement by this Minister in the news media that the accessibility of the primary care physicians can only be achieved by their way of doing it is not adequate.

There are different ways, acceptable ways, in which people in smaller communities are not going to wait for their own personal ideas on how to deal with the system. They want primary care health services. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has failed in that area. I am personally disappointed in that, because we have given him the idea. That idea was, and at that time he said it was, a good idea, but later on it just faded away.

No one is saying that is the only area one has to look at, but how are you going to provide services at a reasonable cost if you are not going to follow the normal circumstances? If there are a lot of physicians in Winnipeg and other parts of Canada who are looking for jobs, and if just by providing one year of internship would give them the training and also give them a place to practise, why not? It is a simple question. It is the economical way of doing things.

Spending \$23,000 would help us and help a lot of communities, and it was a good idea. It was very well received by communities all around Manitoba. This is one method.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) announced that under his increased budget for the health care services to increase the incentive grants, those individuals are not eligible to apply for those grants. This is a shame.

He is developing a two-way system here, and there are individuals who are ready to work in medicine. They are individuals who are coming from outside the country and staying in Manitoba for six to eight months, taking advantage of our taxpayers' dollars and then leaving. The leadership has to come from the Minister of Health, which is lacking and it is a waste of taxpayers' money. I do not think anyone would accept that.

Just to say that the college policies are right, no one is questioning about college policies. College has its own regulations. What is the college going to do if a community from Roblin or Russell comes and says we need a doctor? If that doctor fulfills the requirement, a college will give them the licence, but the policy has to come from this Minister or this administration to say, well, look there are other ways of dealing with things too, but that is not happening.

This is a waste of taxpayers' dollars, and that is why it is said we do not have an accessible system. We do

not have a universal health care system which is easily affordable to all Manitobans, and it does not matter where they live.

Especially when the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and a large number of the Members come from the rural communities, they have failed to show and I have no hesitation in saying that they have failed to improve the rural health care services as far as the physician manpower is concerned.

Mr. Chairperson, let us look at the services in the area of mental health care. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) announced a lot of initiatives and some of them were very positive, and we applaud those. He is moving in the right direction at least in that area. It is a definite improvement from the previous administration when the message going to all the professional groups was, if you do not like Manitoba, leave Manitoba. Many people left Manitoba. I think that message has stopped now. I think that is very positive.

Let us look at the bad news. Recently there was a survey done on the mental health care services in Manitoba. These services—the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is laughing but that is fine. That is the way he is going to do it, but I will continue with my remarks. Now the greatest No. 1 concern was shortage of psychiatrists; shortage of mental health professionals; inadequate training of staff working with the mentally ill—

\* (1540)

**An Honourable Member:** What do you want him to do, cry?

**Mr. Cheema:** No, I do not want him to cry. I just want him to—

**An Honourable Member:** Okay, well, that is good. You want him to be a Liberal, right down the middle.

**Mr. Cheema:** —sure, yes.

**An Honourable Member:** Not too happy, not too sad.

**Mr. Cheema:** Yes. Okay. Shortage of beds; inappropriate placement of mentally ill patients; involuntary admission procedures are poor; poor mental health services for the elderly; lack of mental health in all rural areas; and overall poor co-ordination of mental health services in Manitoba. The Minister definitely needs to move into that direction.

The people on the street need the services delivered to them. They just do not need some major committees put in place. Some of the regional committees that the Minister has put in place have a very big mandate. They do not have the resources to spend. If you do not have the resources to spend, if you do not have the professionals who are going to provide services, how are you going to deliver the services? That is the simple question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Mr. Chairperson, the other issue for rural health care is the funding procedure by the Manitoba Health

Services Commission. There is a universal way of funding the health care services without looking at what kind of patients each and every hospital gets, and what kinds of services they are providing. Some hospitals may have acute care services as compared to the chronically ill patients. There has not been a sense of direction from this administration. They are following the old policies. I think they have to change, in some of the aspects, how they fund the various rural hospitals.

The typical example is Pine Falls Hospital. It had a number of difficulties during this year. There was a problem with the nursing staff there. Mr. Chairperson, the Pine Falls Hospital and various other hospitals are in the similar situation. Their bed occupancy differs from one hospital to another. The emergency department differs from one hospital to another, but still the funding procedures are the same. They are following the same policy. They have to change that policy to suit the needs of each and every community. That is not being done. I do not call that a universal accessible system.

Mr. Chairperson, for the seniors population in rural Manitoba, there are few areas where there are more seniors than the others. The typical example is Dauphin. Dauphin has the maximum number of seniors population in Manitoba as far as the rural communities are concerned. We have not seen any new initiatives coming from this ministry to set up a program for seniors in that community, provide them the psychogeriatric care, or provide them the day hospital, a good example of a good day hospital functioning right now in Manitoba. That has not been addressed and if you are not going to start now, we cannot wait another 10 years.

The Minister has indicated very clearly the population is changing. By the year 2020 the senior population, that baby boom, will peak. We have to start looking at all the programs now so that they can be adjusted. So, as the Minister has said, he does not have to spend 178 percent more in five years if the issue is not addressed now. Fifteen hundred dollars per person is a lot of money. It is not a tax, it is not a free medical service, it is for the people, paid by the people.

Mr. Chairperson, let us go to the next topic in the home care services in the rural communities. There has not been any new initiatives in that respect. We have received a number of complaints from major rural communities. People have to go through a lot of red tape now just to apply for the simple home care services. The Minister would say, why did you not bring it to my notice? People do not want to put their name on paper. It is very difficult for a senior who is 65 years old, who has worked for Manitoba, to come up in the news media and plead for help. They should not plead, they should demand that. That is their right, that is not being given. I do not call that a universal health care system.

Mr. Chairperson, I will go back again to the same. My theme is accessibility, accessibility in the City of Winnipeg and other urban centres, both in terms of acute care and chronic care. All the Winnipeg hospitals, all the major hospitals, Victoria, Grace, Seven Oaks, Concordia, St. Boniface, if you visit their emergency units you have to wait for at least one to two hours on a normal day, what I call a normal day, just during

the weekdays, not during the rush period. If you end up having a myocardial infarction or heart attack, sometimes you have to wait longer. Some of the hospital corridors are full, but again there is no planning to ease the shortage of the emergency space in some of the hospitals. What has been happening only is a band-aid approach when the news media brings those issues up. We have tried to bring those issues but we do not have long-term planning from this department.

Let us look at how the money is wasted in those hospitals. If a patient is waiting two to three hours in any emergency, it is costing the Manitoba Health Services Commission indirectly in terms of occupying the space, it is costing money in terms of the nursing profession, the medical profession, other professional care, so in a way we are wasting taxpayers' dollars. There are no alternate plans to ease that shortage.

Also, we should not forget the wastage of time for wages for the people who are going to spend two to three hours in an emergency room. It is costing them money and there is also increased dependency on the other sources. Nothing has been done, and just to come and say that we have a universally accessible system is not true. It is very expensive and again I would say tax dollars are not being wisely used.

The Minister of Health has indicated, according to him there has been improvement in the waiting period for surgical procedures. I would question him in that respect. If there is improvement, why do people have to wait for 90 days for a simple cardiac surgery. You do not have to. After spending \$1.5 billion you should not be waiting for cardiac care surgery. Also we should not forget we are wasting taxpayers' dollars here. If each one of those patients, they are not sitting at home, they are visiting doctor's office, they are occupying some of the hospital beds, it is indirectly costing us more than it would cost to give them O.R. time for the surgeons who would need to operate upon them, and that is not being done.

The Minister of Health indicated during the early part of this Session that a committee has been set up to look into the Health Sciences Centre for cardiac surgery, and we are waiting for that report. I am sure that he will supply us during the Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson, let us look at all of the surgical procedures. Not even one surgical procedure you can get the same day, not even one. You have to wait for all surgical procedures. Waiting period depends from one hospital to another, and that is not a universally accessible system because of the lack of beds, because of lack of the O.R. space, because of lack of resources. If you are not going to provide them funding, they are not going to provide all those services, and it is costing them indirectly. It is costing all of us indirectly more money than it would cost just to provide those essential services when they need them. People do not have to wait for 90 days because there is not a bed available.

The impact of this underfunding, whether directly or indirectly, is costing us more money. Patients are occupying chronic beds. They are not working, some of them; there are wages lost; the families are going through a crisis because of the inadequate health care system.

Mr. Chairperson, not only that, when we are not providing professionals with the required amount of time, professionals are leaving Manitoba. Some of them are. In some of the specialties we are way behind and for surgical procedures people have to wait. I do not think anyone should wait for a simple—if they need to remove the renal stone. They should not wait for six to eight weeks, that is not acceptable. Somebody needs a sameidoscope (phonetic), he does not have to wait. They are not going to wait because some of the procedures, by the time you wait for six to eight weeks, it is too late.

\* (1550)

Mr. Chairperson, unfortunately we have not seen any planning, how that can be done in a simple way, to provide more ambulatory care facilities and nothing has been done to promote that, except there is one indication. At Seven Oaks Hospital they are going to use the space which was supposed to be used for obstetrical care for ambulatory care and we welcome that, but it was mismanagement on the part of the NDP to spend millions of dollars in one hospital and close down the maternity ward without having a study, without knowing that what is happening in the north end, just cutting it off and taking it for granted that that is their turf. No political Party should ever forget that the health care, they should not fool around with the health care system at all.

Mr. Chairperson, let us deal with the chronic care in Manitoba, and on average, as we have indicated, along with my colleagues and my Leader a number of times in this House and outside the House, people are waiting for a placement, either for a nursing home or for Home Care services. At an average about 25 to 30 person beds are occupied by chronic-care patients who should be either in their home or in a personal care home, people who want independent, supported living and that is not being provided. By not providing that, we are not only doing a disservice to those individuals and their families but to the taxpayers of Manitoba, and we are wasting tax dollars, and the Minister better be prepared this time to answer and give us the figures of how much money is being wasted on a daily basis in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairperson, let us look at the simple cost of one person occupying one bed in hospital who should be somewhere else, as just an example. It would cost a minimum of \$150 to \$200 depending upon what kind of bed that patient is occupying, and if you multiply it by 30 persons of those individuals, it is very simple mathematics. You do not have to be a genius or an accountant to look at that. You can be a simple person on the street with any education and say, well, we are wasting taxpayers' dollars. It is not happening. I will ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) why, when Deer Lodge Hospital had a number of beds, a floor is ready there to be occupied, no decision has been made, and that is not a sensible, universal health care system. It is a waste of taxpayers' dollars, and I think if we do not address that issue we may not have what we have now.

Mr. Chairperson, in the health care system all the politicians and all the professionals, they talk about

their own things, but we forget the family unit and family structure. When a person is in a hospital or suffering from any illness, it is having a great impact on the family structure, in terms of the stress, not only mental stress but also the financial stress, and that stress then transmits into the social services system. So basically we end up paying also for the health care and also for the social services, but still the family structure is not getting the service they deserve, but we have not seen anything, any solid evidence from this ministry of Health, because direction has to come from them. We can only complain because we are not in a position to make decisions, and every time we raise a question in the House the Minister of Health will say, what are you going to do? We are not in a position to make decisions. You are the ones who are making the decisions and you better be responsible about wasting taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Chairperson, let us look again in terms of chronic care, the home care services, especially in the north end of Winnipeg and other areas of Winnipeg. We have received a number of complaints that there is a problem in the home care services. Initially, we were even misguided by the whole structure of home care, and there is confusion among the public also, because according to the Minister of Health there is no changing of policy, but the public who get the service think there is a change of policy. I rather believe the person who needs the services, than the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).- (interjection)-

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please.

**Mr. Cheema:** When a person is in the hospital his family is under stress, and that again, as I repeated earlier, is causing not only mental stress but financial stress, and it is not uncommon for many families to move out of Manitoba. Maybe their grandson or their son lives in B.C. or in Ontario. They have to come back and forth to look after their parents who have contributed to Manitoba's economy and to build Manitoba and they are not getting the service they deserve. I do not call that a universally accessible health care system.

Mr. Chairperson, seniors seems to be the area where this ministry has ignored them, not only in terms of home care services but also the Pharmacare deductibles—gone up.

Mr. Chairperson, it is enough to have the problems of Bill C-32 and now we have the increase in the cost of drugs because of the GST. It is written very clear, if you read the whole thing, that the non-prescription drugs are going to be taxable, and if any simple person, you do not have to be a pharmacist to understand that or medical doctor to understand or a nurse to understand. You could simply say that one drug may be -(interjection)-

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please.

It is a simple thing that each Manitoban spending \$20 on a non-prescription drug, if they have to pay 9 percent more, that is not a joke, and if the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) is not serious about that or if he

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is making a joke of such a serious situation, I think  
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**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please.

**Mr. Cheema:** You know what the answer for that question is? Go on the street and ask people who have to pay 9 percent more on all of those things and then you will have the answer, and also the answer will be given to the Minister of Finance at election time very well. He should know that. —(interjection)— No, not you, the federal Minister of Finance, but that is your Party and you have to defend them.

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, let us look—

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please. I would ask Members who want to carry on a private conversation to withdraw to the back of the room. The Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, let me continue with the term "accessibility." Let us talk about the obstetrical services in Winnipeg and in Manitoba. Continuously, at St. Boniface Hospital, the obstetrical floor has been closed a number of times. Can the Minister of Health tell us what it would take for him to make changes? He has not made any progress at all. He is wasting taxpayers' dollars. Why I say that is because people are being transferred from one hospital to another, and then the babies are sometimes coming back. It is a waste of taxpayers' dollars. That is not a universal health care system which is affordable. We are wasting taxpayers' dollars because one of the hospitals in Winnipeg, Misericordia Hospital, has to go on their own and have a campaign to tell people to come to the hospital—we have the best delivery. The Minister of Health did not take any initiative. It was his responsibility because he is dealing with taxpayers' dollars not only the Misericordia Hospital.

\* (1600)

Mr. Chairperson, we have not seen any planning in terms of whether this Government wants to centralize services or decentralize services for obstetrical care in Manitoba. They do not know. You are right, they do not know, because they do not want to take the right stand that may not be particularly popular. They are just concerned about their votes. They are not concerned that taxpayers are paying 1.5 billion.

Mr. Chairperson, recently there was a complaint out of the Health Sciences Centre, a general complaint about the intensive care nursery. The issue should have been addressed for the last year but that was ignored until it took the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) to bring the issue to the floor.

A sad situation, but that is not uncommon or only in the Health Sciences Centre. The St. Boniface nursery is not experiencing the best times. There is also overcrowding there. They are supposed to have eight to 10 babies, but sometimes they have 12 to 14 babies in the intensive care nursery. The intermediate care

nursery is also closed because of ill planning, because they do not know how to provide obstetrical services in Manitoba. Nothing has been done from this ministry.

Mr. Chairperson, let me just go through some of the initiatives that this Minister said that they have taken. First of all, on prevention, which is supposed to be and should be the cornerstone of any health care system, not only in Manitoba, but in any part of the world. Just providing \$500,000 and evaluating them after one year does not make any sense. Also providing funds out of the lottery revenues, you should not fund, you should not fund, I will repeat, a universal health care system on the backs of a few people who are part of the lottery system. It is very clear that the lower- and middle-income people spend lottery money. Those people should not be responsible to fund our universal health care system.

We have seen little in terms of communicable diseases. It has been a sad story for this Government. Why is it a sad story? Because they just watch and see what other people are doing but do not look at the scientific answer to the AIDS question. The Minister of Health has failed. He has failed to capitalize on \$50,000 which is available right now to use for a comprehensive program for an AIDS campaign. It is available from the Minister of Health at the federal level. Finally he made some good changes and everyone has shown interest, but the Minister of Health has not shown interest. Even the Winnipeg police said it is a good idea. All the professionals say it is a good idea, but no one in any Government, in any political Party should have his own moral and personal views imposed upon the public. It is the public's money and should be spent in the best possible way.

Mr. Chairperson, let us see what the alternatives this administration has put forward for the last one and a half year. There was a question raised today by the NDP Critic about the Clinic. We have raised that question several times. Clinic is just one example of the community-based health care system, but this administration has failed to show any thrust in that because it is a political decision, it is not a rational decision. That is why I am saying we are wasting taxpayers' dollars because community clinics, such as on Broadway, does provide a very essential service. Rather than expanding the services to the rest of Winnipeg and other parts of rural Manitoba, they are sending the wrong message that they do not have any planning and continue to waste taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Chairperson, there are a number of other deficiencies. Those we will be discussing during the detailed questioning. But I would offer him one advice and also help from my own caucus and all my colleagues that when we bring a practical proposal, he should accept that and just not waste taxpayers' dollars, because health care should not be fooled by one person or the other, it is a very important for all of us.

So we will support him in any positive initiatives now and in the future. We look forward from him any new plans for the year 2000 and after, so that we do not have to face 178 percent rise in another five years. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the critic for those remarks. We will now hear from the critic of the Second

Opposition Party, the Honourable Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Chairperson, I must say, on my first day as Health Critic, it is going to be an interesting experience going straight into Estimates. I believe last year we spent 40 hours in Estimates, certainly it is time well spent, this is a major department. Certainly there are a lot of questions that will be asked I know by the Opposition of this Government's actions. I will indicate I do appreciate the comments from the Opposition Critic and the comments from the Minister, which were somewhat different from the comments he made in the House. I hope his generous statements in the committee reflected more truly the sentiments he has about my appointment. I am not sure, after Estimates, though whether he will be saying the same sort of thing because, quite frankly, I am going to be asking some pretty tough questions to this Minister and to this Government.

Let us look at what has happened since this Government has come into office. Let us look at this Government's record in terms of health care. I would say if you were to summarize it, you would say there have been a few initiatives, Mr. Chairperson. In most cases, the most positive initiatives were recycled initiatives that had been put forward by the NDP. For example, the Health Services Development Fund, which is a recycled version of the fund that the Minister criticized when he was in Opposition that was announced by the NDP, in fact, he has recycled it. Its a bit of an art form, he has announced it I think about 10 different time, has not done anything with it yet, but he has recycled the announcement to the point where a lot of us are beginning to wonder when the reality, when the action is going to take place instead of the announcements.

Well, as I said, there have been initiatives, I will be the first one to indicate, and when there is a good initiative we will certainly support it I know in the New Democratic Party. But in other areas there has been clear inaction on the part of this Government in dealing with the major challenges out there. I would say, really, if you were to summarize the record of the Government, you would say that there was inaction and, in some cases, actually selective cuts in terms of what has taken place over the last 18 months, in terms of services. You just have to talk to the people in terms of home care. We have heard a lot of what I would call technospeak from the Minister who gets up and says, well, the criteria have not changed and this is just a review, and this is nothing. Yes, we have underspent by \$4 million to \$5 million in the home care area and \$20 million in the area of health, but these are no cuts.

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

Well, tell that to the people, the people in the north end, the 70- and 80-year-old women who were cut off home care. Tell them it is just a bureaucratic procedure that has resulted in that. I do not think it makes any difference to them, Mr. Acting Chairperson. To them their service has been cut and that is the kind of thing that has been taking place by this Minister.

When we raised it in the House, did the Minister say, yes, I have a serious concern about this, I will deal with

the concerns. No, Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Minister basically said, you should not have brought those forward. There are valid reasons why the 83-year-old women living in the north end was cut off. In fact we documented the reasons, the unacceptable situations they were facing, but what did the Minister do? Did the Minister deal with that? No, Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Minister basically took the approach that it was a legitimate bureaucratic procedure and there was nothing that could be done, but that should come as no surprise.

\* (1610)

I would invite Members of this committee, especially the newly elected Members, to read the comments from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) when he was in Opposition, read the comments because I think that will give you a better idea of the true Conservative agenda than what you will hear from the Minister in his programmed answers in the Legislature, in his programmed answers in this committee, because when he was in Opposition his prime concern was in terms—and he has used some of the same words now—of sound fiscal management, fiscal accountability. When he was in Opposition he went after the Home Care Program and criticized it on those grounds. He did not criticize it for not providing adequate services. He criticized—and you could read the comments in Hansard, I would invite the new Members of this committee to do that—he said that there were problems in terms of the fiscal management.

Now I ask you, what was the Member's, at that time, true agenda? I think what it was, was to cut down on the costs. We all know what that results in. It results in services being cut, as we have seen in the north end, we have seen in other areas of this province. That was the true agenda.

You could look at the general agenda of the Minister and the Conservative Party. They talked about overspending, they talked about bringing down the cost in the health care system. That was their true agenda, not improving services but in terms of those cuts. I think that is the agenda they followed when they were in Government between 1977 to 1981. It is clear to anyone what happened during that period. I would say one thing and that is, thank God we are in a minority situation and they do not have a majority. If they had a majority what we would see is the agenda that was in place from 1977 to 1981, which was outlined by the Minister when he was a critic, when he was in Opposition. We would see that agenda in place far more than it is.

Yes, there are selective cuts that have been put into place, and, yes, in a number of key areas they have been active. I think really what it is, is a result of, because they are in a minority situation, they realize they cannot implement their full agenda. They have done parts of it, they have introduced parts of it, but they have not introduced their true agenda for health care in this province, and I thank God for that. I think it has been evidenced to a certain extent that the minority situation has worked to some extent thus far.

I know in the New Democratic Party it has been an interesting 18 months. It has been a difficult period,

but I do think one of the main reasons we have not had the wholesale cuts that would take place if this Government had a majority is because of the role that we have been able to play as an opposition Party in making sure that they do not implement that agenda. But I think it is important for the public to recognize that that is the true agenda of the Conservative Party in terms of health care. As the newly appointed Health Critic I consider it a real honour, as a New Democratic, as an NDP Member of the Legislature, to be the critic in this area because really this is one of the areas that I think the NDP has pioneered.

We pioneered the concept of Medicare decades before it was accepted by the mainstream Parties. We brought it in, in Saskatchewan, and we have consistently fought for Medicare. The interesting thing, if you go out on the streets and talk to people, and I agree with the Liberal Member, if you ask people, how is the medical system today, the health care system as compared to 18 months ago, most people will say it has deteriorated. Most people will say the Conservatives do not have a handle on what is happening. An ironic thing is perhaps this is an indication of the fluid political situation, but I know many people who would not vote New Democrat but would still say that the NDP did a good job in the health care system generally.

For the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), I would suggest he talk to people. The NDP has a strong history in the area of Medicare and I consider it a real honour to be following for my colleague, Jay Cowan, who I know is a very vocal critic in the health care field. I consider it a real honour to be continuing the fight of people going back to Tommy Douglas and the many pioneers of the CCF and the NDP in terms of establishing Medicare. I can tell the Minister that we in the New Democratic Party are not going to let this Minister implement his agenda in this province. We have been able to keep him in check thus far in terms of across-the-board cuts. We have seen the selective cuts take place and we will fight the Minister in this Chamber, we will fight him on the hustings, we will fight a majority, minority Government. Any time he tries to implement the Conservative agenda in terms of medicare, we will fight him and we will fight him all the way.

I can say to the Liberal Party they should be careful too about their agenda. I know the sense that was meant by the Health Critic when he talked about wasted money but I sure hope the Liberal Party has learned its lesson. They made statements in the last election saying they wanted to get rid of essentials like food. The Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) obviously did not talk to her Leader. The Member for River Heights, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs), made it quite clear that she wanted to cut out non-essentials like food in hospitals. I find it ironic that the Conservatives who in other provinces, Mr. Acting Chairperson, have implemented user fees but in the current minority situation have rejected them, are outflanked on this issue by the Liberals who have talked about— what else is charging people for hospital meals but a user fee? What else is it but a user fee? I would like to see the Liberal Critic renounce the statement by his Leader. It is a good opportunity today. I really

think it would be a good opportunity for the Liberal Critic to say that when he is talking about cutting out waste in the hospital system, he is not talking about cutting out such items as meals.

I want to turn more specifically to exactly what the agenda of this Government is. We talked in Question Period today about some of the problems. It is ironic that the Minister talked about lack of direction, decline, and the need for revitalization in the health care system, because if I was to say in one sentence the major problem with the approach of this Minister, it is exactly that. He lacks direction, there has been a decline, the system needs revitalizing. That was not the situation he inherited. That is the situation he has created in many ways.

I mentioned earlier about the health services trust fund that was established, the fund that he criticized. Why has this Minister recycled it to the point where 18 months later we are still having announcements that they are now having criteria developed for the program? Well, are we not lucky? After 18 months we have a fund that has been announced 10 times and they are finally going to establish the criteria for it. Why are we not putting money into the major needs that are out there in terms of need for health promotion? How about money in terms of the desperate needs in our institutions? How about funding for capital development? That is one area.

I mentioned about the 10 million trust fund. This Government has also established the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and the Minister of Health is here. This Government, this year, because of the increased tax revenues and also because of the improved situation, for example the mining industry, has had literally hundreds of millions of dollars of extra revenue to the point where there would have been a surplus this year in the current fiscal year, although probably in the upcoming year we will be dealing with a deficit situation. What they have chosen is to take this money and establish the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Unlike the Liberal Party, we are not going to vote against the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and kill the money that would be available for needs in a number of key areas. Mr. Acting Chairperson, we will not do that but we will put the question to the Government.

How can it turn around and tell the people in the health care system there is not the money? How can they not provide the capital and the operating funding that is needed? How can they not provide the funding for community clinics when in fact they are taking money and putting it aside for this Fiscal Stabilization Fund? I think that is a question they are going to have to answer to a lot of people, because I ask that question now and I hope we will hear the opinion of the Minister of Health. Is he saying that there are no needs in the health care system that could not be met through tapping into those resources that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is squirrelling away?

I look forward to the answer from the Minister as we get into the discussion, because those are the kind of questions we are going to be asking. It is fine for the Minister to get up and say we would like to do this but we do not have the money. The fact is, Mr. Acting Chairperson, they have significantly increased revenues.

.. What we are really talking about in this current situation is a question of priorities. I think that is the key thing you always look at with any Government no matter whether you are discussing Estimates or overall Government policy. You look at the priorities of the Government, and in this case when they do have significantly increased revenues, we are going to be asking the question why they are not putting those resources to the needs that are out there. If we were to describe the Fiscal Stabilization Fund as a rainy-day fund I would say, as the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) said, for many people in the health care system it is a rainy day right now. Why are they not listening to those concerns, why are they putting this money away when it could be put to use at the current time in the health care system? Let us look at what has been happening out there in terms of what has been happening under the present administration. It is frustrating, I must say, sometimes as a Member of the Legislature. Even prior to my appointment as House Critic, I have raised a number of concerns. In fact I know my colleagues in the NDP Caucus and Members of the Liberal Party have as well.

Just in this year, for example, we have raised concerns about the emergency room crisis, we raised that in January. In January I also spoke for the urgent need for a review of the funding of the Thompson General Hospital. There was talk in February by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) of the need to deal with the Minister's decision to cancel a meeting with the Dauphin Hospital Board to discuss the need for a health facility in that community. There have been concerns expressed in terms of the ambulance services in February; the physician shortage, I spoke myself, as the MLA for Thompson, the physician shortage in Thompson. The Member for Concordia, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) spoke in February about the need for the end to home care cutbacks. In May we pointed to the growing problems in the area of federal funding for this very important area, the fact that we are going to lose more than \$101 million over the next five years in terms of federal funding over what should be provided, and that on top of the cuts that have taken place. In June of 1989 the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) once again spoke of the growing need in that area for additional nursing beds and a public health facility. There were concerns expressed, I know, in July by our caucus about the fact that health spending was \$21 million at the time, or at least that was the indication at the time, \$21 million underspent, \$21 million that was budgeted for that could have been put forward to needs in the health care system. Just in this last few weeks the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) went after the Minister for action on the deteriorating nursery conditions in the Health Sciences Centre. Those are just some of the concerns, and I know the other Opposition Party has raised its concerns.

Throughout the process, what the Minister of Health has done in most cases is initially refused to acknowledge there is a problem. He is very self-confident in the Legislature and gives long answers, too long if you ask me. I think he gives the longest answers of any Minister—I would hate to say it, probably

the longest answers with the least content, without even knowing the question. I think today's response to the final question proved what we have been saying for the last 18 months, that I think he has not been listening to the question since he was first appointed as Minister of Health, and his answers reflect that.

\* (1620)

For example, as the MLA for Thompson, I raised my concern about the funding situation at the Thompson General Hospital. What did the Minister say? He said, well, there has been no problem there that we are aware of, of any significance. I asked for an audit to be done up there of the resources, and what did the Minister say? We will not conduct the audit, there has been no real problems expressed. Did the Minister talk to the staff at the hospital? Did the Minister talk to the administrator? Did the Minister talk to the board? He did not do that until he went on a tour in September, and I hope he recognizes now—pardon me, in August, beginning of September when he was up in Thompson—that there is a real problem in terms of maintenance needs. There has been a real problem in terms of staffing. I mean, it has finally gotten to the point where the Health Services Commission has finally recognized the need for additional positions and has provided funding for two emergency health officers.

The ironic thing is though that while we have been trying to get the point across to the Minister about what has been happening, Mr. Acting Chairperson, what did the Minister do? Over the summer, when the funding could have been approved for the emergency medical officers, there were a number of people who were interested in those positions, but because of the delays in approving those positions those people have now gone on to other positions. We have lost possible physicians. That is a serious matter in the case of northern communities and rural communities right now. When you have the chance to get someone to take the position and you cannot, it is a very serious matter, and that is what has happened in this particular case.

Here is an example where some action has been taken, but it took the nurses to threaten to quit to do it. In fact many have quit in the subsequent months since I raised the concerns. There is a nursing shortage in the community of Thompson. They had to go to the United Kingdom, to go on a recruiting effort because there has been a significant number of nurses quitting because of the situation in that hospital. I raise that because it is a matter I raise as a Member of the Legislature, but similar concerns have been expressed by health care professionals, by the staff of hospitals, the boards and the administration.

The problem with the Minister's approach is that the Minister has often failed to recognize that there is a problem. It has taken an extended period of time before he has finally recognized it.

\* (1620)

It is gratifying to see some movement in that area, because I will be the first one to say that in the health care system there are going to be continuous problems



of that nature. There were problems when we were in Government, in terms of shortages; there were problems when the Conservatives were in previously; there will continue to be problems.

One of the most important things though is to recognize the problem and to move quickly, not to be defensive as the Minister has been, not to rely strictly on the advice of some of his bureaucracy who perhaps are not as aware of the problems as those of us who are raising them.

The case of hospitals in the North, for example, there has been a crying need. You just have to sit down and talk to them about the problems they have run into. The problem has been that they have been unable to get the message through.

I would urge the Minister instead of being so defensive as he was in the home care cuts, as he was in terms of hospital funding, in terms of issues such as the shortage of rheumatologists, the shortage of general physicians in rural and northern communities, the problems with heart patients and the waiting lists, I would suggest he talk to the people raising these concerns.

I remember when the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) raised the concern about the waiting list for heart surgery in this province. The response from the Minister—he was once again defensive—got into a whole rhetorical outburst as he does in Question Period on a regular basis, but he did not sit down to look at the situation.

I know one case in my own constituency, someone I know very well, the agony they went through in terms of the delays that took place in terms of the heart surgery. I remember, I have seen the letter the Member responded to in terms of this specific case. It was in regard to the concern being expressed about the Health Sciences Centre. The Minister was quite proud of the fact this patient had been actually at the St. Boniface. It did not change the fact that the patient had to wait, had to wait months on end. It got to the point where he would not take medication that had been prescribed by the doctor, because of the fact that he was so concerned, so anxious, to have the operation.

I might say the operation finally took place and he is doing well at this point in time, but when you look at the agony of people in that situation, it is something that should not be dismissed lightly.

Rheumatologists, the same situation, there are a 170,000 people in Manitoba with arthritis. The situation has deteriorated substantially in terms of the number of rheumatologists available. I think the thing that the Minister should be saying is yes, there is a problem, we are going to be trying to do something about it. Usually the Minister says, well, there may be a problem, we are not sure, but if there is, we will study it. That is not sufficient, that is not good enough. The Minister has to move in that area.

The same way I mentioned earlier in terms of the major shortage of physicians in rural and northern areas, I know the Minister has now, just a month ago, finally made an announcement in this area. When I got up in

the Legislature and raised the concern, the fact that the number of general physicians in Thompson, for example, declined nearly half in just less than two years, the Minister got up and said, well, there was a shortage of physicians before under the NDP.

Well, I can tell the Minister, yes, there was, there was probably a need for about 14 physicians, there were 12. The point I raise, the question, there were 6 and it has fluctuated, it has increased somewhat.

We are running into the situation in northern communities where you rely increasingly on doctors who will not, in any way, shape or form, be staying in those communities, who are there on a very short basis. I know there have been many doctors now who are waiting to qualify to get their final qualifications to be able to practise medicine.

We have been fortunate, for example, a number from South Africa have been able to fill a bit of the gap in northern and rural communities, but many of them have been in northern and rural communities for no longer than three to six months and then have moved into the city.

Something has to be done in terms of the rural and northern communities, because the type of service that is being offered now is absolutely substandard. What is happening is that there is a dilemma developing.

We have doctors in northern and rural communities that are being audited by the Health Services Commission for overbilling. They are left with a real dilemma. If they continue to see the number of patients they do, they are audited. In one case, one physician I know in a northern community had to pay back \$40,000 worth of bills.

The other problem on the other side though is, if they do not provide that service, who does? Are people from northern communities going to have to be flown to Winnipeg to see a general practitioner, because that is the point it has gotten to in recent months? There has been such a shortage.

I cannot underestimate the fact of the problem. As I said, in many cases, those problems have been there. They exist in every province.

What I am concerned about is the accelerating rate in which we are running into these difficulties and the defensive approach of the Minister on virtually every matter that we have raised. I mentioned in terms of shortages of staff.

I want to just deal with a couple of other statements the Minister raised because I think it is indicative of the approach of the Minister. One of the crying needs is clearly in the need of health care prevention. That is why the New Democratic Party brought in the trust fund prior to its defeat in 1988. There is a clear need for prevention. The Minister has moved in some areas in a limited way in terms of AIDS, for example, but clearly the people who are in the field are saying that is not enough. It is a growing health care problem, a major health care problem. The AIDS Awareness Program that the Government has put in place, while it may be positive, it is clearly not enough.

The same concern has been raised, I know, just recently by the other Opposition party in terms of drug and alcohol abuse. The fact there has been a delay on the part of the Minister, a dragging of heels in terms of accessing federal funding that is available in this field. It is a growing concern.

What is happening in North America is while the overall consumption of drugs is declining, and in this case I am talking about illegal substances, the usage of what I would call the hard drugs, is increasing. There is a major problem with, for example, cocaine and crack and other hard drugs. It is something that while it has not hit Manitoba perhaps to the same extent it has in some of the larger cities in Canada, it is going to be hitting us. The question is whether we are ready for it, whether we have the programs put in place to try and prevent this type of abuse.

While there was a program announced by the Minister, I would say it is going to be totally inadequate to deal with the growing needs in terms of drug abuse, and yes, alcohol abuse, because alcohol is a drug. It is abused and it is a serious problem particularly amongst young people. There is a serious problem with the abuse of alcohol, and there is also a serious problem with the abuse of non-potable intoxicants other than drugs and alcohol. There is not enough happening in the area of prevention, that is a serious problem.

I want to talk about the Minister's comments for a moment about partnership. He talked about partnership for the health care community. Under the New Democratic Party Government, one of our key areas of attempting to develop a trusting relationship with the staff in the health care field was to have a policy which we had implemented of not having layoffs and not having contracting-out.

What has the Minister done in this area? Has he followed that policy? I think the evidence is clear. He has changed that policy to the point now where there is contracting-out and there cannot be layoffs. There have been layoffs. I do not believe that is how you get a trusting relationship, a partnership with people in the health care field, by following through on that. The Minister, I am sure, will say, well, we are just going to live within the collective agreements and if they allow us to lay people off, we are going to lay people off. That is not the point. What we had developed was a policy that was aimed first and foremost in getting the co-operation of people in the health care field in terms of some of the changes that are going to be necessary in the health care system.

It makes a big difference to someone when you go to them and say, look, your job is not threatened either by layoffs or by contracting-out. What we are really concerned about is changing the health care system. We want a partnership with you, and we are willing from our side not to have layoffs and not to have contracting-out. That is what we are asking for and what we hope to achieve is co-operation. We did have a co-operative relationship that was developed. I think that is being jeopardized by the Minister's actions in this regard, and it is not going to be a big monetary item.

I can tell the Minister right now, he is not going to save a lot of money by laying off people at the Rideau

Park facility in Brandon or the Pine Falls Hospital. He is not going to save a lot of money by those actions or by bringing contracting-out. What he will do is he will poison the atmosphere with workers in the health care system to the point that they will not be able to sit down with this Minister and work out through a co-operative situation because they are going to have to be fighting to defend the interests of their Members. I consider that unacceptable, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

\* (1630)

We have had the same problem if you talk to the nurses' association. Talk to them about the partnership and what they feel about what the Minister has done in terms of the Health Advisory Network. Talk to health care workers what they feel about the fact the Minister has been very selective in terms of who he appoints and the fact he does not recognize the legitimate role of organizations representing health care workers in the field. He is unwilling to sit down with them and give them the recognition that they deserve. He is unwilling to put them on the advisory committees and hear their direct feedback as organizations representing many workers in the health care field.

I know the Minister does have a problem with labour unions. I know his philosophy, his right-wing philosophy, makes it difficult for him to sit down—

**An Honourable Member:** Rural right wing.

**Mr. Ashton:** Rural right wing is right. I thank the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) for reminding me of that. I would even say, at times, extreme right-wing philosophy. I know it is difficult for him to sit down with the labour unions that do represent the legitimate interests of workers in the field, but I really ask the Minister to put aside his personal biases and start listening to the concerns that have been expressed.

I point at specifically to the nurses in terms of the way that they have had a deaf ear from this Minister in terms of their concerns, because the thing is I think you will find that it is the health care workers, the health care professionals, who will be able to give you the best advice on what is happening there out in the system, what really is happening out there in the hospital wards of this province, in the operating rooms, the obstetrical wards. That is where you will get your best information. You will not just get complaints and concerns, Mr. Acting Chairperson, you will also get many suggestions, legitimate suggestions on how to improve the situation, but you will not get it if you poison the atmosphere by bringing in contracting out and layoffs.

I mean if there is one area of Government that we do not need privatization it is in the health care system, because it is going to poison the system, it is going to destroy the system. The Minister can talk all he wants about contracting out and I am sure he will. This will be the Conservative line, oh, well, we will do it with the standards and it will not make any difference to the system. It does not work that way. What you do when you get into that sort of privatization—and that is what it is, that is the only word, that is the only word that can be applied to contracting out. It is privatization

of services that are currently provided by Government employees. When you get into that situation you poison the atmosphere. I would say that the workers will still attempt to be co-operative, will still attempt to give you their suggestions, but they are going to spending half their time trying to protect the legitimate interests of the workers in those facilities rather than giving you the positive feedback. So I would say to the Minister, reinstate the no-layoff-and-contracting-out policy that was so wisely brought in by the New Democratic Party.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

I want to talk in terms of capital expenditures for a few moments. Let us talk about the capital expenditures of this Government. We have been asking for the last six months for the Minister to announce the capital budget

**An Honourable Member:** You froze the capital budgets.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Chairman, we are hearing the usual ridiculous statements from the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). He knows the background in terms of the capital projects. He knows, for example, in terms of Klinik, which I raised in Question Period today, that was included in the 1988-89 budget where the architectural drawings were approved. He knows that the Minister sat on them, and I hope that the Minister has come to his senses and will approve the Klinik funding. I like to be an optimist. I really believe they have a very good case in terms of the capital funding requests for a new facility.- (interjection)-

**An Honourable Member:** A point of order, Mr. Chairperson.

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

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Yes, I think it is very inappropriate for the Minister to be humming in the middle of presentations from Members. I think it may be sufficient not to listen to nurses and not to listen to other people in the health care system, but I think it is incumbent upon the Minister in this committee to listen to the legitimate points that are being raised by Members of this committee.

**Mr. Chairman:** I would thank the Member for his comments, and I would ask that we give the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) a chance to wrap up his comments at this time.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, I suspect the Minister probably was humming, I think for the last 18 months he has been whistling Dixie in terms of health concerns in this province.

I really must say the concerns I am expressing are concerns that they represent the views of a political caucus, a political Party. They also represent the views of a lot of Manitobans. I think one of the problems the Minister has, he is not listening, listening to the concerns. He likes to talk, we know that, but in terms of listening—and I do not like to personalize in terms of the situation. I do not approve of some the personal

attacks I know the Minister himself gets into a times, but I really would ask that he would listen to the concerns because they are major concerns.

Let us talk about what I was talking about just a minute ago in terms of capital of capital funding. We could go through the list in terms of the needs. I mentioned Klinik, I know in terms of the Concordia Hospital—

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please. According to Rule 65(1) in our Rules Book, the Member's opening comments are limited to 30 minutes. I thank the Member for his remarks. I would remind Members of the committee that debate on the Minister's Salary, item 1.(a) is deferred until all other items in the Estimates of this department are passed.

At this time, we invite the Minister's staff to take their places at the table.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, let me take the opportunity to introduce my Deputy Minister, Mr. Frank Maynard; and Assistant Deputy Minister, Lloyd Searcy, Finance and Administration.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is appropriate to attempt to reply to some of the comments made by my two critics, and I have to say that in terms of the comments made by both of them that I have to say I am deeply disappointed that neither one has offered any concept of the vision of the challenges we face in health care. You would almost think nothing has changed in the Liberal Party as Official Opposition in the past 16 months that they have been in here. It is nothing but spend, spend, spend—the old Brink's truck solution.

Not a new idea emanated from the lips of the Liberal Party. I have to say that this is the Party that before the commencement of this Session said they were Government-in-waiting. In waiting, to do what? You do not have any concept of the challenges facing Manitobans. You do not understand nor are you living up to the commitment of your Leader that when positive initiatives are undertaken in Government, by the minority Government, that you will acknowledge them. There was no acknowledgment of many positive steps that have taken place in health care in the last short 16 months by my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic. But that does not matter, because critics are not there to give credit to Government. They are not there to do that, but what they are there for is to provide some concept of understanding of where the challenges are in health care and what they would do as Government-in-waiting according to their Leader, the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), to resolve those problems. All I heard was spend, spend, spend, from my honourable friends in the Liberal Party. When I listen to my honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I simply have to say to him, I would swear the man fell out of a mushroom cap this afternoon. Because his idea of health care in some of the criticisms that he levelled are the same old shibboleths and rhetoric that we have heard for years and years from the New Democrats.

They have talked about selective cuts, again the big scare tactic à la New Democrat, but did you notice not

one example was offered by my honourable friend from Thompson. I can attribute that to him because he has only been the critic for six hours. Maybe he will understand, after a few more days as critic, that selective cuts have not occurred. He cannot come up with one example because in every single area that he wants to discuss, he will find this Government has spent more money to provide more services. The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), as I said, gives one the impression that he fell out of a mushroom cap this afternoon and he just appeared magically at this committee. Because the New Democratic Party had firm and steadfast control over health care spending in this province for 15 of the last 20 years in which the system has not matured into a quality system but is one under severe stress. We are building and resolving the problems that, in the words of his Leader yesterday in a question, we inherited.

It is my commitment on behalf of Premier Filmon and my colleagues in this Government that we will resolve those problems and when we govern for 15 of the next 20 years the health care system of Manitoba will be the best in the world. It will be one of the finest restored systems, just give us the time to make it happen. In 16 months I intend to deal with the achievements of this Government; in 16 months in resolving ambulance funding, an inherited problem; in solving the discrimination against non-union workers in the health care system inherited from the previous administration.

In dealing with and I wish my honourable friend from Thompson would have the common decency to acknowledge that people in Thompson have been crying for dialysis services for the last number of years. Now they are going to get it, not under a NDP Government with the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) as Member of it, but from a Progressive Conservative Government. A mental health residence to serve mental health patients of northern Manitoba is also an initiative of a Progressive Conservative Government, something asked for, for years and years, of the Pawley administration and the Member failed to deliver it.

\* (1640)

I have to tell you that I have never heard a weaker pair of Opposition Critics in terms of health care, not one new idea, not one recognition of initiatives and new innovative solutions to the problem.-(interjection)- My honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, says, well, you did nothing to resolve rural health issues.

I want to quote, Mr. Chairman, for the edification of my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan, from editorial comment which appeared, I believe, in the Beausejour newspaper of Wednesday, February 1, 1989. The headline in the editorial comment says: "Hooray for Rural Manitoba. Thank you, Darren Praznik and the Conservatives, for making good on NDP promises and granting us our personal care home." Note, promises by the NDP undelivered, which is the legacy that we inherited in the capital program because it was frozen in 1987 by those caring and sharing New Democrats.

I want to go on: "Community residents have for years clung to the hope of Government approval of a

care home, so much so that fund-raising efforts to date total over \$215,000.00." That is in Pine Falls, Mr. Chairman. "If we believe the recent political criticisms by the Liberals and the NDPs directed toward Health Minister Don Orchard's 1988-89 capital budget as outlined in a Winnipeg Free Press Focus article of January 23, as now can assume that, had they been in power, we may never have gotten the care home." That is what the people in Pine Falls are saying. Had the NDP and the Liberals been in power, they never would have their care home.

This editorial comment goes on to say in that article: "Former doctor of the Pine Falls General Hospital, Dr. Gulzar Cheema, who is now the Liberal Health Critic, wondered how the Conservatives could justify putting 20 beds in a town of 1,000 people while city hospitals function in intolerably crowded circumstances." The editorial goes on to say: "Does Dr. Cheema so quickly forget the crowded circumstances of the Pine Falls Medical Clinic and the heavy caseloads from the surrounding reserves and communities that push that 1,000 amount to uncountable numbers?"

Mr. Chairman, that is what the Pine Falls people are saying about the Liberal Opposition Critic and the NDP's term in Government, failed promises and ridiculous criticism of a balanced program for last year that met the needs in the urban area of Winnipeg as well as in rural Manitoba, not my words but the words of the editorial comment of Pine Falls where Dr. Cheema served as a physician.

My honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, thanks me for the reform of the mental health system. I welcome that thank you because for 15 of the last 20 years that the NDP have governed this province, consistently organizations in the community have said we have to reform the mental health system. As Opposition Critic four years ago, I made suggestions to the then Minister of Health on the reform of the health care system, and my honourable friend, the Member for Thompson, urged all Members to read those comments. I wish they would because I suggested that we establish, Mr. Chairman—

**Mr. Chairman:** Point of order.

**Mr. Cheema:** Would the Minister of Health answer my question about Pine Falls Hospital, if he does not mind? He has read the editorial and I would like to ask him a couple of questions.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman,—

**Mr. Cheema:** If he does not mind.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the will of the committee?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairman, I, on another point of order.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is no point of order. On a new point of order, the Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Ashton:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, we just went through the opening statements. I know in my case that I had at least as much in the way of comments that might

have satisfied the Minister in terms of what needs to be done in the future, but I am just wondering what we are dealing with now. If the Minister is obviously going to be given time to put his rhetoric on the record, I would like the opportunity, as the NDP Health Critic, to put some facts on the record about exactly what is going on in the health care system, what people are saying. I would like to ask the committee where we proceed from this point on in. We have had opening statements. I am quite happy to debate the Minister. I will debate him here for the next 40 hours on what this Government is doing to the health care system, the abuse that has taken place, but I would like to know where we are going.

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please. I would like to thank Honourable Members for their input. We are on line 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries, \$394,300.00. Shall the item pass?

**Mr. Cheema:** No, Mr. Chairperson, on a point of order.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I believe before the point of order I had the floor.

**Mr. Chairman:** On a new point of order?

**Mr. Cheema:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson. When we were all given the opportunity for 30 minutes to speak, we all did. Now if the Minister of Health is going to take some time, we are going to take some time also to answer his allegations and some of his ideas which are coming somewhere from the blue and he does not have anything to back them up.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Member does not have a point of order, and the Chairman will attempt to give all Members a chance to speak on these issues. The Honourable Minister of Health.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, my honourable friends the Liberal and the NDP in terms of their criticism on the reform of the mental health system are failing to recognize one of the most progressive reform agendas in mental health in Canada today. I do not say that but others say it who were involved in the delivery of mental health services. It stems from a commitment I made—or a suggestion, pardon me—four years ago in Estimates to the then NDP Government about establishing teams of professionals in mental health both in Dauphin and in Winnipeg to bring community mental health to the people. That did not happen until we became Government.

We are committed to continuing the reform path in mental health and we will do it. We will do it because there is substantial desire and co-operation in the mental health community to achieve that. For the first time in many, many years, they see and believe that there is will at the ministerial and Government level to achieve that, and there is, Mr. Chairman. That is why we are making significant progress in reform of the mental health system.

I heard an incredible suggestion from my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic. He is suggesting instant

same day surgery in the health care system. As a practising physician, does he have any concept of what he is saying? I suggest he does not, or he would never make such a suggestion. No medical professional, to my knowledge, anywhere in the province except the Liberal Health Critic is saying instant same day surgical services right across the board.

That is an incredible policy statement, and I am going to ask my honourable friend, in the course of the debate of Estimates, to clarify the Liberal Party position on that, because certainly that is not Liberal Party position in Ontario; that is not Liberal Party position in Quebec; that is not Liberal Party position in New Brunswick; that is not Liberal Party position in Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland, but here it is in Manitoba—instant same day surgery right across the board.

My honourable friend shows a terrible, terrible lack of understanding of the medical system. My honourable friend talks about professionals leaving Manitoba. Last week, my honourable friend said that Dr. Ramsay was leaving because of waiting lists and some other fabricated reasons. Dr. Ramsay, as a professional, an excellent professional, had to write to the Winnipeg Free Press to indicate that the Liberal Health Critic Dr. Cheema had not put any accurate facts or interpretation of his conversation on the record. I find that disgraceful, Mr. Chairman, that my honourable friend the Liberal Health Critic, in his desperation to create an issue, would not bring accurate information to the House, and would attempt to malign a professional individual like Dr. Ramsay who has served this province exceedingly well in both the clinical and the teaching position at the Health Sciences Centre, and for narrow, partisan, political reasons, my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, would try to demean his esteemed reputation in Manitoba and attribute reasons to him that did not exist. That is not responsible Opposition.

My honourable friend talked about a number of other things and I will deal with those as we get through them. My Liberal Health Critic and honourable friend does not recognize that for the last four years, with the exception of a small increase in the last year, the numbers of patients panelled for personal care home placement has been decreasing in the Province of Manitoba—for four consecutive years, with the exception of a small increase this past year.

\* (1650)

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend the Liberal Health Critic—and I do not know whether this is Liberal Party policy—but I would interpret from his comment that he wants a bed for everybody in Manitoba, either an acute care bed in a hospital, or personal care home bed. Is the solution of the Liberal Party to build a thousand beds, ten thousand beds, twenty thousand beds in personal care home service, and put everybody in a personal care home the moment they are panelled, the moment they wish to be placed there. If that is the policy of the Liberal Party, tell the people of Manitoba where you are going to get the financial resource to do it. You cannot have it both ways, and paneled waiting lists have been consistently going down because of the success of home care and support services to seniors

as policy initiatives that have been in place for the last number of years in the Province of Manitoba.

Talk to professionals in health care from Europe and from other jurisdictions. They point out very clearly that in Canada we institutionalize our seniors at a rate two to three times greater than any European country, and they say, why are you doing it? Because they do not, they provide services in the community, in the home, for those individuals. That is the way to go to create independence for seniors, not to build a personal care for every citizen of Manitoba once they reach the age of 75, as I interpret from my honourable friend the Liberal Health Critic.

My goodness gracious, I cannot understand the policy development mentality in the Liberal Party. They simply do not understand. My honourable friend makes the point that these paneled patients are waiting in hospital beds and they should go to personal care homes right away. Well, he says that would save money. Where does the money come from to build the personal care homes, care home beds, that are there in surplus availability so that the day you are paneled you go into one? Who pays for that capacity? It does not exist anywhere in the free world or anywhere in the world that I know. Who pays for it? Is the Liberal Party of Manitoba going to pay for it? Of course not. The taxpayers pay for it and that is why that utopian approach does not exist anywhere in the world.

Yet my Liberal Party friends would have us believe that is what they can achieve. That is a bald-faced distortion of reality because it is impossible to achieve, and if my honourable friend tries to tell the people of Manitoba it is achievable, then he is grievously discrediting his own professional competence to the people of Manitoba and those in the know.

Mr. Chairman, when a bed in a hospital, which had been set aside for many, many years is used for a paneled patient, do you know why it is used for a paneled patient? It is used because some of those people simply cannot remain in their homes, even with substantial support from home care, and they must go to an institution. That is why a number of beds in every hospital in Manitoba are set aside for paneled patients to wait until a personal care home bed becomes available. Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend seems to think that by waving this magic Liberal wand and emptying the bed in the hospital, we would save the money there and have it go elsewhere. That bed will be filled again. That is the tradition of health care in the Province of Manitoba and in Canada that an empty bed does not exist, it is filled as soon as it is empty.

So, in other words, my honourable friend does not understand that what he is proposing is costing in the hospital and costing in the personal care. He does not understand there are no dollars to be saved; there are only dollars to be spent. Again the obligation of the Liberal Party is to tell us, where do the dollars come from?

Now, Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend the Liberal Critic talks about Pharmacare, and I want to get into that topic with my honourable friend. I cannot put it anymore succinctly than the editorial in the Winnipeg

Free Press did when he had his press conference on non-prescription drugs because he did not understand the impact on the system of the GST. There is an estimate that the GST not applying to Pharmacare—that Pharmacare program can save us considerable dollars, but my honourable friend did not leave that impression because he is wrong.

\* (1650)

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend, the New Democratic newly appointed critic as of six hours ago, raises as I say the same old fear campaign and not one original idea. I cannot fault him for that because he has been part of a governing Party for 15 of the last 20 years that had very few original and new ideas in health care. So why would we expect, in opposition, they would have any new ideas?

He goes back to his old, old -(interjection)- now, my honourable friend, now this is what I like about my honourable friend for Thompson. He always gives the proper lead-ins, sound fiscal management.

Now he says this is terrible, and as a New Democrat he sincerely believes it is terrible, because New Democrats have never learned how to manage anything, let alone a budget.

Because I want to tell my honourable friend from Thompson that when he arrived in the Legislature in 1981, as a newly elected Member, the interest bill for the entire Province of Manitoba, of 118 years of successive Governments, totalled \$91 million for the entire provincial debt of the Province of Manitoba, after 118 years of Government of all political stripes.

In 1988, after seven years of Government, in which the Member for Thompson was a backbencher, the interest bill annually rose from \$91 million a year to over \$560 million a year. Where did that \$470 million go? Did it go to health care, did it go to education, did it go to family services, did it go to such a terrible thing as building highways? Absolutely not, it went to Zurich, to Tokyo, to the financiers that absolutely loved the New Democrats and their fiscal mismanagement, because they were on the money markets flying first class all over the world borrowing money wherever they could go with their tin cup and the Manitoba taxpayers in leash, because they did not have a single absolute clue of fiscal management.

My honourable friend from the New Democratic Party fails to understand that the very cornerstone of providing health care and services to the most vulnerable in the population of Manitoba will only come if Governments have the resources, not wasted resources, but have the resources to do it.

Fiscal management is of the utmost importance, because you can waste dollars and create deficits like the NDP did on project after project that wasted money throughout the length and breadth of this province, like a \$30 million bridge to nowhere, north of Selkirk. Those examples took money away from people programs, because the NDP could not manage a budget.

I will tell you, Mr. Chairman, that fiscal management is a cornerstone of this Government so we can provide programs to people.- (interjection)-

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please; order, please. The Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

**Mr. Ashton:** On a point of order, I had been cut off on my opening remarks after 30 minutes. The Minister has gone on for more than 30 minutes. I would like the chance to put on the record that now we have finally seen the true agenda of this Conservative Minister. All he wants to do is deal in terms of fiscal management, which is the—(interjection)—

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please; order, please. The Member does not have a point of order.

**Mr. Orchard:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say—(interjection)—

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please. The Rule 65 (2) "The address of the Minister introducing the Estimates of a department may exceed 30 minutes, but shall be restricted to 60 minutes". The Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Orchard:** Let me just—

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, if I understand the Minister of Health is not on his introductory remarks, that in fact he is responding to the introductory remarks from the Members for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) and Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and that it should not apply for the 60 minutes, I would suggest maybe that—

**Mr. Chairman:** The Member does not have a point of order. We are on item 1.(b)(1) Salaries \$394,300.00. Order, please.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hour being 5 p.m., it is now time for Private Members' Hour.

Committee rise.

## SUPPLY—RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski):** I call this committee to order.

We are on page 144. Item 1.(c)(1), Brandon Office—the Honourable Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** I wonder if I might ask some questions at this point. It is not specifically related to this item, but I am also going to be in the Health Estimates as Health Critic for the NDP, starting in about half an hour.

I am wondering if there would be leave to ask a number of questions, not specifically relating to this item, perhaps after passing this item, in regard to Municipal Assessments.—(interjection)— I think it is common courtesy.

If the committee wishes to pass this item, I will raise it immediately after the passage of this item.

**Mr. Chairman:** If the Honourable Minister of Rural Development is willing to answer the questions, it is quite all right to ask.

**Mr. Ashton:** Thank you, I thank the indulgence of the committee.

I have a series of questions that relate to the general area of Municipal Assessments and, in specific, the ramifications following the recent court decision and the taxation dispute between the Keewatin Tribal Council and the City of Thompson.

I would like to begin by indicating that within days of the court decision I met with the Minister, in this House actually, and indicated at the time that I was more than willing to be co-operative. I think it is an important issue. It raises a lot of ramifications—the court decision.

I indicated at the time that I would—I requested the Minister to meet with the parties involved, the City of Thompson, the Keewatin Tribal Council, and also requested that any legal information on the issue be provided both to myself and other Members of our caucus. What I would like to ask the Minister is: what meetings have taken place with the parties involved, the City of Thompson and the Keewatin Tribal Council, then a number of other questions following out of that.

**Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development):** Mr. Chairman, we have on a number of occasions met with the municipal organizations at which, at least on two occasions, I believe the representatives from the City of Thompson were present.

I had indicated to your Leader as late as two weeks ago that if there was a request from the Keewatin Tribal Council, or for that matter any other organization to meet on this issue, or any other issue pertaining to assessments, or any other issues relating to our department, that I would be quite willing and prepared to meet and discuss those matters with those interested parties.

**Mr. Ashton:** I hope the Minister will in fact meet with all the parties involved. I am not suggesting that it be a question of negotiations, but here we have a legal dispute. There has been some proposals for legislative changes that would deal with the ramifications of the court decision.

\* (1430)

I can indicate, and I have indicated this I know to the Minister, that I share the concern of the municipalities about what the implications can be in terms of their tax base. I go as far beyond the current situation, but at the same time obviously if we are going to come up with a resolution of this matter I think it is important that it be one that is going to be a lasting resolution. If at all possible, we should be looking for a resolution that will not send us back into the courts and lead to further ramifications, possibly increased ramifications.

So I would like to ask the Minister now in fact what his current plans are in terms of this particular issue.

Initially he had indicated that he would only deal with this if he had prior support from the Opposition Parties. I think both Opposition Parties indicated that the normal procedure for a Bill, certainly it has been the procedure since I have been a Member of the Legislature, is for the Government to bring it into the Legislature where it is examined through second reading, committee stage, and third reading.

I know in the case of my own situation, our caucus, I have indicated quite clearly to people who have asked me what my feeling is that I feel something has to be done in this Session to deal with the situation, but the Minister had said initially that he was going to bring it in only if the Opposition Parties agree.

Now I understand there is talk that some provision will be brought in under the overall package of municipal assessment reform changes, presumably in this Session. So I would like to ask the Minister what his current plans are, and when we can expect some legislative proposals from the Minister in regard to this specific taxation question.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Thompson raises a very valid question and some very valid points. I think it is important that the municipalities be given, at some point in time, a clear indication of what our intentions are in Government, and therefore I had early on, I believe last June, approached both Opposition Parties and asked them whether they would support either an amendment to the current assessment legislation or whether they would support a change to the assessment legislation when it was brought forward. Both Parties had indicated that they would need some time to discuss with their various caucuses their position on this matter. I would suspect that since the summer, or during the course of the summer, both Parties would have had enough time to discuss and give us an opinion as to what their positions were.

I found it rather interesting, not too long ago, when the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) introduced a resolution without responding to the request for consideration on this behalf. I also find it interesting that the Native organizations that the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is referring to have not requested a meeting, except for the Dakota-Ojibway organization that requested a meeting only last week. I have consented to meet with them on this matter, on the 20th of October I believe the meeting is scheduled, and I look forward to those discussions with that organization.

It puts us as a Government I guess in a somewhat difficult position having to deal with a Bill that has been currently tabled by the Opposition Party for consideration when we in fact had made approaches to both Parties and asked for co-operation. I do not see that co-operation coming, specifically from the Liberal Party, at this time because they have tried to initiate this action by themselves.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, I certainly cannot speak for the whole Liberal Caucus. I was somewhat puzzled by their initial letter and the proposed Bill. I am not

quite sure exactly what their agenda is, but my question is more to the Minister.

I talked to people in Thompson and I have indicated to them that the problem you get into in this Legislature sometimes is that there tends to be a tendency to finger point as to who is responsible and who is not responsible. I can tell there is a great deal of frustration about what has happened and has taken place.

I know that the Minister was apprised of that directly by a city councillor at a meeting in The Pas, and I do not want to at this point engage in the finger pointing. I want to deal with it in the same spirit that we did back within days of this decision. I think there has to be some resolution of this matter or else the ramifications can be quite serious for the municipalities.

I think we are looking at a situation currently where a section that was put in place to ensure that Treaty rights, exemption from taxation on reserves, has now been interpreted to be a broader right. Now that becomes complicated when you look at the impact of the 1982 Aboriginal Conference, in terms of the Constitution and in terms of aboriginal rights. That is one of the reasons why I have been requesting clear legal opinion so that we can ensure that if we do move to resolve this matter that it will be fair to the municipalities, ensure the municipalities are not faced with a major loss of tax revenue, and at the same time recognize the legitimate rights of Native people.

My real question to the Minister at this point is, and it is a question I am asking really on behalf of the affected parties right now, will this be part of the municipal assessment reform package, and when will that be introduced into the Legislature?

**Mr. Penner:** First of all, in response to a couple of points made by the Honourable Member, when we started the discussions on this, and as you say almost immediately following the decision by the courts, it was my opinion that all of us would attempt to try and come to some resolve within our own caucuses as to how we should deal with this very important issue.

I think it is an extremely important issue because of two facts. We have, on the one hand, assessment legislation within our provincial boundaries that identifies the issue. On the other hand, we have The City of Winnipeg Act which excludes any mention of rights of any of the tribal councils in regard to the ownership of land outside the boundaries of their jurisdictions, really outside the boundary of their reserves.

So I think that in itself creates a situation where I think the co-operation of all Parties in this House should be required in order to settle this either one way or the other. Therefore, I ask for that co-operation, and I want to say that I was of the opinion that both Parties would attempt to make an effort to give me an answer as to whether they would be willing to support any, either amendments or changes to the legislation that we are presently working on. I have not received a response from either of the Parties showing that support, except for saying I should sit down and negotiate with the various communities of interest.



I have indicated very clearly that I am in no position to negotiate who should be, in the final analysis, responsible for the payment of taxes on property that is now deemed by the courts to be exempt by the Native communities.

That is the position I have taken on this, and in trying to answer your question as to when the legislation would be introduced is still, in my view, somewhat dependent as to how co-operative the opposition Parties will be to resolving this issue.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, I think the position in the New Democratic Party—and I would like to make it clear for the record, the original suggestion by the Minister was a highly unusual suggestion, I think one that has never been done. It has not been done on final offer selection, for example, which we certainly do not agree to.

Nobody has come forward to the New Democratic Party and said, well, unless you agree on us bringing this Bill in to dismantle final offer selection, it will not be brought into the Legislature, and I am sure there are other similar Bills. I know the Liberals do support that Bill, but there are similar Bills which maybe the Liberals oppose, which the Government will be bringing in. So I am not sure what the difficulty is, and I would like to indicate also to the Minister that it is difficult for an Opposition to be dealing with specific wording.

I mean, we have a second reading in this House to deal with debate on the general principle of Bills. We have committee stage where the specific wording is dealt with, with every Bill. I can say in the eight years that I have been here, and there are people who have been in this Legislature longer than I have, there have been many changes to Bills at the second reading stage, many amendments to amendments made.

\* (1440)

In fact, we are in a situation now with a Bill that was brought in just a few months ago. We are reviewing it entirely again because there were drafting errors. There were unforeseen complications that were put into place. We have said in the New Democratic Party that it is difficult to commit to specific wording, particularly in the absence of meetings with both sides, and I think that is important to make sure those meetings take place.

I appreciate the offer today from the Minister, because I think it is probably the clearest statement on the record that the Minister is willing to meet with both sides. I think that is a good start.

The second thing we do require is complete legal analysis because we want to make sure we end up with a resolution of this, not something that is going to end up back in the courts. That may not be possible, I recognize that. We may end up with amendments that do end up back in the courts. I also believe, and perhaps I am being a bit naive in this case, Mr. Chairperson, but I think there may be some possibilities of coming up with an amendment, or even amendments to proposed amendments, that can ensure a degree of fairness to both sides because of what I interpret as the current situation.

The Minister outlined there is a distinction between the city and the rural areas. I have talked to people on both sides of this issue. I think one of the key issues that is not at stake is whether reserves should be subject to municipal taxation. I think that is clear. Obviously one of the reasons there is no such amendment, as was thrown out essentially by the court, or it was interpreted as giving exemption to all taxation in the City of Winnipeg, is there are no reserves in the City of Winnipeg.

I think there is clear evidence in other provinces that what has been recognized in general terms has been a Treaty right to exemption from taxation on reserves. That is not always clearly spelled out in the legislation, but I have reviewed some of the Acts in the other provinces, apart from Ontario which has a provision very similar to the current provision in Manitoba, whereas every other province has either directly or indirectly a statement that reserves are exempt from municipal taxation because, in essence, it would be double taxation. You would have one form of Government and we are talking more and more of aboriginal self-government. You would have one form of Government, in this case the municipality taxing another form of Government, in this case the bands on the reserves.

I recognize the principles involved and I am sure the Liberal Critic will probably be outlining his Party's position on it. I think that was clear and the former Minister indicated that in 1987, the previous Government's position was essentially that the intention of the previous section of the Act was not to provide a blanket exemption but really to recognize the Treaty rights exemption of taxation on reserves. So I think what we are ending up with, and I would suggest to the Minister, really, this is the bottom line of the current situation.

First of all, we in the New Democratic Party are not going to be holding anything up in the way of Bills. We are not going to filibuster a Bill on a fair resolution to this issue. Second of all, the question really is as much the wording and the exact principles that are recognized by the amendment. I have a sense of the intent of the proposal of the Minister, and it has since been replicated by the Liberal Party. I sense the intent of it and I think people are generally in agreement with that.

But I think before we can really resolve this matter, we need to know from the Minister when we are going to be dealing with this situation. I think we do have to have that consultation. It may not lead to a resolution, I would be the first one to recognize that. I know when the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) sits down with Labour Management on issues, there is not always agreement. The Government and the Opposition Parties have to make up their minds which side they are on, or which compromise position they support. It is the same on any Bill.

I would just ask for that information, once again, when the Minister anticipates bringing in the Bill so we can communicate that back to the affected parties. They are asking me when I expect it and I think it would probably be of assistance if the Minister said it. I do want to make clear that we, in the New Democratic

Party, have attempted to be co-operative. I think there was an element over the summer finger pointing. I think that was unfortunate, and there was finger pointing on all sides, and I think we can recognize that. I think our caucus, the Liberal Caucus, were involved with the finger pointing as much as the Minister, but we are in a situation where there could be major ramifications if a resolution does not come up with this particular thing.

The City of Thompson, for example, the Keewatin Tribal Council is interested in major residential development, \$1.5 million; the City of Thompson does not want to proceed with that development unless there is some resolution of the tax dispute, so it will hold up development in this case.

The bottom line is, and I will say it again, we in the New Democratic Party, feel that the rights of all sides have to be recognized. We feel clearly that something has to be done to protect the municipalities revenues. I think that is something that everybody agrees in this situation, so what we really need is some indication from the Minister of the timetable, perhaps some more specific legal information. I know he has provided some to our caucus spokesperson on this issue, our critic, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). We need that information and we need also, I would say, not even as much one proposal, but various options.

Perhaps the Liberal suggestion is something that could be looked at, perhaps there are amendments to that, perhaps there is better wording, perhaps there is a whole different approach that could be placed, but I think there is a bit of a concern. I know in our caucus that if we proceed without consultation, without complete analysis of the legal issues, we will not resolve anything. It will not assist anyone because both parties in this dispute I think are not assisted by the continuance of this uncertainty. I think that is something we have absolute fundamental agreement on.

I really want to indicate that we perhaps have been involved in some finger pointing, but as the New Democratic Party's MLA for Thompson, I can indicate my desire to be co-operative in this situation. That is why my public statement today really is the first statement on the record in this House. I have made statements in my community about my position on this. My first statement in the House is today. I did not get up three days after the decision was made because I thought it was important to give the Minister some time, and I told him at the time. I am sure he would recall that I said I think it is important to be co-operative in this matter.

I think perhaps over the summer we have lost a bit of sense of what co-operative means, but I think we could get a start if we know exactly what the Minister's plans are now. I assume he is not bringing in just one single amendment as the Liberals have done, but he is looking at an overall package. I really ask: when does he anticipate it, this month, next month, and will it include something to resolve this very important concern?

**Mr. Penner:** Again, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member refers to reserve lands, or lands contained

within a reserve. I want to say to the Honourable Member that the reserve lands under Section 7 of The Municipal Act—I can read the portion of the Act with your permission.

It says, "Notwithstanding any Act of the Legislature or any regulation made under this Act, land within an Indian Reserve is not part of the area of any municipality or a Local Government District and persons residing within an Indian Reserve are not residents of any municipality or Local Government District and any description of the boundaries of a municipality or Local Government District or the area within a municipality or Local Government District shall be conclusively deemed to provide that land within an Indian Reserve is excluded from municipality or Local Government District."

That basically in itself, by our own Act in this province, excludes any reserve lands at all from possible taxation by the province. Therefore, I think the concerns that the Honourable Member raises are covered by the Act, and I would say also that the opinions, the legal opinions the Honourable Member was referring to, have all been passed on to both Parties of the Opposition.

I simply cannot see what purpose it would serve to attempt to try and gain any other legal opinions beyond what we already know. For that matter, as I have said before and as I have said to your Leader, Mr. Doer, two weeks ago, if he would want to organize a meeting with the Keewatin Tribal Council, I would be quite prepared to sit down with that group and have those discussions.

However, I have indicated also very clearly that I will not negotiate or be the negotiator. I think that is something that I want very clear when we have those meetings.

I want to also say that the statement the Honourable Member made a few minutes ago is the closest I have yet seen the New Democratic Party come to supporting legislation of this nature. I appreciate very much that co-operation. I believe the indication the Liberal Party has shown by introducing an amendment to the legislation in this House that is drafted exactly the same as I had indicated in a letter to them that we might reuse wording that we might use to resolve this issue, they in fact took that wording and now have drafted an amendment that would serve that purpose.

\* (1450)

However, I think it is important that we look at this whole issue of assessments and assessment legislation in a total package. I ask the Honourable Member whether they have given consideration to supporting assessment legislation if and when it comes forward?

I say to you as an answer to the question as to when we intend to introduce it, we intend to introduce it as soon as we are able to introduce it. That in other words means as soon as it is ready. It is simply not quite ready yet, but as soon as it will be ready we will be prepared to introduce that legislation.

I would suggest that the co-operativeness that has been demonstrated in the last two weeks by both the

Opposition Parties in trying to come to some resolve on this matter are very, very much appreciated by myself and my colleagues.

**Mr. Chairman:** Before I recognize the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I want to say that we have now been graced with the presence of the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who is the appointed critic for Rural Development, and we will allow the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) another question and then we will revert back to the agenda.

**Mr. Ashton:** Just a little bit further to conclude my remarks. I know there is very important business to deal with although I cannot ignore the fact, and I think it has to be emphasized that this is one of the key areas that we need to deal with in terms of the Rural Development department.

I want to indicate to the Minister that I went around the province as part of the Municipal Affairs Committee that reviewed the recommendations of the Weir Report. I know the Deputy Minister would remember that, it was quite an eventful journey around the province. I still remember the DC-3 that we flew around, I do not know if it is still operating. Some of us were afraid that it might not have made the rest of the trip, but it was a memorable trip through the province.

It was a learning experience I think for everybody on the committee because it showed, I think, just how difficult an area the Weir Report had to deal with and the former Premier, the late Walter Weir I think did a commendable job in grappling with some key issues. I know the issue we are discussing today is one of the issues. I think there is no disagreement on the need for assessment reform.

The question is going to be though exactly what recommendations are implemented. I think we have to be forthright on that. I know the Minister, if he is looking at that legislation now, he is going to be wrestling with that. He is going to have, I am sure, long discussions in his Cabinet and caucus because once you change the system in any way, shape or form, it has reverberations throughout the system. I think that is something that has to be recognized.

What I would just say in conclusion is that I do want to be co-operative. I think that is certainly the case for our caucus and I want to indicate as MLA for Thompson, I mean this dispute is centered in Thompson although it is not strictly a Thompson issue. I have tried to be clear. I tell people, no matter who you are talking to, in this case you have two opposite views of this particular situation, what my position is as MLA for Thompson and what our position is within the New Democratic Party and I think we have said something has to be done this Session to resolve it. There has to be discussions, I am glad the Minister is going to proceed with it.

I would by the way request more legal information because for example, I recently was able to get a copy of the statutes in other provinces which is very useful in looking at the situation. Perhaps I could borrow that

to the Minister if he has not had that opportunity, though I am sure the department could obtain the same information. It gives you a clear picture of what is happening in other provinces.

I do think it is important to try over the next couple of months because I assume the Minister is going to bring in The Assessment Act this Session, I did not quite catch that in his answer. I would hope so, I would say and I am sure this is one case where the Liberal Opposition and the New Democratic Party Opposition would agree that we would like to see that Bill brought forward this Session. I would be very concerned if action on this matter was put over to other Sessions because first of all, given the uncertain political situation, there is no predictability about whether this current Legislature will be sitting beyond that.

There is a real concern. I believe this is the type of problem that if we let it sit for any considerable period of time, it will be more difficult to resolve because you are dealing with actualities of dollars and cents, you are dealing with assessment issues, you are also dealing with some pretty broad legal issues. You know, the right of the municipality tax, or else on the other side, the question of the aboriginal rights and how we balance that. I really believe that something can be done. I am an optimist, I said I believe that we can sit down and resolve it between the various Parties, but if we do not act soon I am very concerned that there is no resolution that is going to be possible and this matter will end up in the courts over the next period of years.

I really believe, by the way, that if it does go back into the courts again, regardless of what happens in terms of an amendment, it will be even more difficult with a further decision. If it goes to the Supreme Court instead of just the current situation we are dealing with, the Queen's Bench, and there is a decision at the Supreme Court level, it is a clear precedent no matter what happens. It could end up in a situation that puts one Party at a serious jeopardy in terms of their legal rights.

I am concerned right now what could happen to municipal assessments in this province. I would like to see some action, I think it is more of a question now of the process to make sure there is consultation, that is the first point; the second point is ensuring that both sides' legal rights are recognized; and the third though is ensuring that it is done quickly and that there is no future jeopardization of the current situation for municipalities.

With those comments I would like to thank the committee once again for being able to raise this matter. I think it is a very important matter and I hope that there can be a resolution over the next few months.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for his observations and opinions on this matter. I think they are well raised, and I appreciate the concerns that the Honourable Member has expressed.

I want to say before we conclude this discussion that I am on public record, as you are probably aware, during the course of the municipal meeting in spring, UMM

meetings, and also at the MAUM meetings. I have indicated very clearly that if it is possible at all to get the legislation in place before the end of this Session, then it is our intention to introduce it. However, as I said to you a little while ago, it is not ready and we are still working on it. Every time you think that you are now ready, we can do some final drafting, something else seems to pop up. I am sure you are aware, having been a Member of Government for some time, that those kinds of things do happen.

So that is where we are currently as far as the legislation is concerned. So again, thank you for the comments that you have made. They are well worthwhile. If you have some specific concerns that you might want a legal opinion on, I would invite you to write me a note and express those concerns. If we can gain an opinion on that we will do so.

**Mr. Chairman:** We shall now revert back to page 144. We are dealing with item 1.(c)(1). Shall the item pass—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield):** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I do not want the Minister to leave some erroneous information on the record in regard to the item that was being discussed here, the Thompson-Keewatin issue, because the Minister knows full well that we met on two occasions, himself, the critic for the New Democratic Party, and myself once in his office with the Deputy Minister, once in the loge. At two other meetings that he requested, the Minister himself did not show up. On June 19—and he always wants something in writing although he never proposes anything in writing to us—I wrote the Minister a letter which I would like to read into the record.

I said: As per your request emanating from conversations held between yourself, Mr. John Plohman, MLA, Dauphin, and myself, I am sending you this letter to clearly outline the Liberal Caucus' position on this matter.

1) Consultations must be held with representatives of both the municipal officials and the Indian Bands via their respective umbrella organizations.

\* (1500)

2) The federal Government must not be allowed to absolve itself of its responsibilities in this matter. Given the fact that the federal Government is Conservative, and that you are part of a provincial Conservative Government, this should not be a problem.

3) Municipal bodies must not lose any revenue whatsoever that they have due and should receive.

4) Treaty rights must not be violated, and

5) Given the fact that you are in Government, and the Minister responsible, it is incumbent upon you to present us with your proposals, whether that might be in the form of an amendment to the Act, and/or agreements, and/or a combination of both, and/or any other way you may wish to do it so that we may be in a position to advise you whether or not your proposals rectify the situation in a mutually acceptable fashion.

I look forward to your following through on the above, and let us not forget we must be sensitive to the needs of all concerned.

It is signed by myself. I copied it to the critic for the NDP, as well as the organizations involved. I never received a response to that letter, although the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), the Member for River Heights, did write to the Minister on July 21 asking again what plans he had. It was not until August 24 a letter was received by the Leader of the Official Opposition from the Minister. In one paragraph he says, I am therefore requesting a written decision regarding support for this amendment in the upcoming Session.

Now, on several occasions when he talked to us verbally, I indicated that in principle we supported the intent of what he wanted to do, but not having heard from him I felt it was incumbent to bring it up at our caucus meetings on more than one occasion, and still there was no proposal coming from the Minister, no Bill being initiated, and he kept insisting upon something in writing. Well, then our response to his desire to have something in writing was an amendment in the form of Bill No. 37.

(Mr. Richard Kozak, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

So I too like the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) find it quite unusual that the Minister would keep coming to the Opposition to look for guidance, to look for action. He seemed to want agreement before he had even put anything forward on the table, before he had proposed any legislation. As I had indicated to him in those meetings, I said, we would like to see something in writing. He kept asking for something in writing from the Opposition Members but never proposed anything in writing himself. When I say something in writing, I do not mean just a letter to Members. Is that okay for you? I said, propose a Bill.

Now he talks about legislation which he has proposed, a comprehensive Act, which is not ready. It will be ready as soon as possible. As soon as possible is not good enough. We need to be more specific. You have had since last spring to work on this. You have had all summer. You have had until now. Well, maybe the Minister will tell us whether or not he will be prepared to support Bill No. 37, whether the Government is prepared to let Bill No. 37 go through as soon as possible.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I would first of all like to ask whether we are dealing with 141 as the Acting Chairman had indicated, and had asked whether we in fact were in favour of passing page 141 of the Estimates? So I am wondering whether we are dealing with that.

**Mr. Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** On a point of order, the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** I did not notice any problems of that nature when the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was talking on this subject. I do not see why the Minister is so concerned about moving on with it now.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), on a point of order.

**Mr. Plohman:** I think maybe I have a point of order, Mr. Acting Chairman, and you will have to rule on that, but I would like to give it a shot anyway.

I think that what we have done is an exception for one particular individual who asked whether he could raise an issue, and that really what we should be doing is going line by line. I was a little surprised that the critic got up and I am prepared to do it at any time. I do not have my file with all of the stuff on this issue, and we can talk for hours on it. I want to raise some further concerns, further to my colleague's concerns, but it is not in the proper place. I would say it is probably No. 4, Municipal Assessments, that we should be dealing with this issue. So I think we should proceed and get to that point, but if the committee wishes to do it this way, that is fine with me.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** The Honourable Member's point is well taken. I believe the Minister has the floor, however.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I asked whether we are proceeding with 1.(c) on page 144 of the Estimates book, or whether we are going to continue the discussion on Section 2(2)(b) of The Assessment Act. The Chairperson at the time that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) requested the floor extended with the concurrence of all committee Members a courtesy to the Member for Thompson whereby he was permitted to address certain remarks related to Item 4 which will be before this committee at a later time.

This committee's attention should properly now be directed to item 1.(c)(1) Administration and Finance, Brandon Office, Salaries. The Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I am quite prepared to wait until No. 4, but again I point out that the previous speaker, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), had been allowed to speak on this. I did not want to leave any erroneous information on the record from the Minister, and that is why I stood up. I think it is obvious the Minister does not want to answer my question, but I will ask it again under item No. 4. So having said that, I am quite prepared to continue with the section that we are on.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** Item 1.(c)(1) Shall the item pass—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Acting Chairman, given the fact that this was questioned at length on a previous occasion and given the answers or the lack thereof that we received yesterday, I think we received the answers we wanted. I am prepared to go on to Section (d).

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** Item 1.(c)(2) Brandon Office, Other Expenditures—pass.

Item 1.(d)(1) Human Resource Management, Salaries—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** I have one question on this section. This deals with Human Resource Management services. One

of the items on their activity identification is an Affirmative Action Program. I would just like to know what the status of this Affirmative Action Program is?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, it is my understanding that our department has approved a plan for affirmative action.

\* (1510)

**Mr. Roch:** Could the Minister be more specific, give us more details as to what this affirmative action plan is in this particular department?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I believe that the Honourable Member opposite is quite aware that the affirmative action is to encourage Native groups and others to be part of the employment of our department. That plan has been adopted in all aspects of our department, and I am quite pleased to say that I believe all serious consideration will be given to whoever applies to any position regardless of race, colour, or creed. I would suspect that ability will be No. 1 criterion, but certainly we do have a plan for affirmative action and we intend to implement that plan.

**Mr. Roch:** If I understand the Minister correctly then, it will be the same guidelines and criteria that is being used generally throughout all the other departments?

**Mr. Penner:** Yes.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Acting Chairman, just on this, I was going to pass it but the Minister mentioned that he had a plan in place. I just wanted to ask the Minister whether he could indicate what year that plan was put in place?

**Mr. Penner:** The plan, Mr. Acting Chairman, was adopted about six months ago.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I do not want to ask the Minister to go over a long dissertation of the plan and its precise expectations in both, so I would like the Minister to provide us with information on that plan that has been implemented in his department, if he would, and that would suffice, rather than getting into a long discussion on it?

**Mr. Penner:** With your wishes, Mr. Acting Chairman, if I could bring that to the committee at a later time, or provide it to the Honourable Member, directly to you, if you will. It is whatever your wishes are.

**Mr. Plohman:** I want to have it, I do not know about the Liberal Critic.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** 1.(d)(1)—pass; 1.(d)(2), Human Resource Management: Other Expenditures—pass.

Item 1.(e)(1) Financial and Administrative Services: Salaries—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I would like to know, what is the status at this point of the Education Tax

Rebate Program? I believe, if I am correct, it is around 35 percent, but I am mainly asking where is it at vis-a-vis the administration of it by the municipalities and the department?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I am sure that the Honourable Member would know that the Education Tax Rebate is housed in the Department of Agriculture and therefore does not show up in this department.

**Mr. Roch:** I believe it is being administered through the municipal offices, so then, if I understand correctly from the Minister's answer, they deal with the Department of Education in order to administer the rebate, is that correct?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, the Department of Agriculture has within its budgetary provisions the amount that is required to rebate the portion of tax accrued to education, but the municipalities administer that portion of the rebate.

**Mr. Roch:** The liaison there is between Agriculture and the municipal offices by virtue of the fact, so there is no involvement at all from Rural Development vis-a-vis the assessment notices, the statements sent out and the collection and remittance of rebates—taxes and rebates?

**Mr. Penner:** Well, the only involvement I suppose that the department would have would be when the tax notices are printed. There is a line indicating what the rebate would be, what the homeowner's tax rebate would be. So that is the only involvement that we would really have in the administration, not even in the administration, but that is the only involvement our department would have in the whole tax rebate item.

**Mr. Roch:** Maybe it is not the proper department to ask it, but possibly the Minister and his staff may know the answer anyway, but do the non-resident landowners still qualify for this rebate?

**Mr. Penner:** Yes, Mr. Acting Chairman, they do. Under the system that was implemented, the percentages of tax rebate that was implemented under our administration, non-resident property owners do qualify for the tax rebate.

**Mr. Roch:** Was the intent of this rebate to be provided to active farmers, to relieve the burden of taxation on active farmers because of the economic conditions currently happening in agriculture?

**Mr. Penner:** The intent of the rebate, as implemented currently, is to relieve landowners, or property owners of that portion of education tax that has been indicated. In other words, 35 percent of the PSL would be rebated on property; that is all landowners who qualify for that tax, whether they lease their property through some other farmer and allow for that deduction to be a deduction in the lease arrangements, that is of course up to the individuals negotiating a contract. It was our assumption that if you are going to reduce property taxes by an amount, all landowners should be accrued that deduction.

**Mr. Roch:** Therefore if I understand correctly all property owners are eligible for this property tax rebate, this education tax rebate.

**Mr. Penner:** That is correct, all farm land. I want to be very clear on that, all farm land owners, yes.

**Mr. Roch:** All farm land owners whether or not they are actively farmers. They can be absentee landlords and they qualify for the education tax rebate.

**Mr. Penner:** That is correct.

**Mr. Roch:** What happens if that education tax relief is not passed on to the tenant farmers or the lessee farmers?

**Mr. Penner:** Well, I suppose, Mr. Acting Chairman, what happens currently is that if a person leases a property and wants to farm that property for somebody else or through some kind of arrangements, there might be some negotiations. I am assuming there might be some negotiations going on between the landlord and the tenant which might make up the amount of tax that has been rebated. I do not know whether that takes place in every case, but the possibility is certainly there.

\* (1520)

I would suggest that as far as the Government of the Day is concerned, we wanted to make sure that the tax, the amount rebated, was rebated to the people who pay the tax and that of course is the landowner. It includes not only absentee landlords, it includes virtually anybody living in this province who owns land whether they are widows, or whether they are children of retired people who have been awarded land through one form or another, or given land who might live in the city and still own part of the family farm for that matter and feel very much a closeness to that land. As you are very well aware that happens. All of those things were considered when the decision was made to extend the rebate to all farm land owners.

**Mr. Roch:** If for example there was a problem, in the case of an active farmer who is struggling to make ends meet because of shall we say a long-term lease that has been entered into, and that active farmer is a person who is actively wanting to farm the land, but the land is being held for speculative purposes by a land developer. Can there not be some form of appeal procedure for that particular individual, the active farmer, to receive the full benefit of the rebate from that particular landowner?

**Mr. Penner:** First of all, I want to be very clear on this. The program that we are discussing here is contained in the budget of the Department of Agriculture. I am not quite sure how appropriate it is for us currently to be discussing an item that should be, in my view, discussed during Agriculture Estimates debate, or should have been and might have been, I am not sure. I want to say to the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) that I am not aware that there is any appeal procedure at the current time. I am wondering whether

the Honourable Member is implying that there should be either regulations or legislation drafted that would be involved in negotiating lease contracts, or spelling out what lease contracts should be. That is certainly something that our department, or I at least, will be very hesitant to get into discussing or considering.

**The Acting Chairman (Mr. Kozak):** I would remind all Honourable Members that we are considering the Estimates of the Department of Rural Development, item 1.(e) Financial and Administrative Services: (1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** I take it from the Minister's answers then that should situations that I mentioned awhile ago should happen that the active farmer would be out of luck vis-a-vis the rebate, and the land developer would receive it. I can understand the Minister's hesitation in wanting to implement an overabundance of regulations, but what I was really getting at I suppose is that in certain circumstances—I realize what he said about the circumstances of certain widows having land or children owning land—but what happens with this open policy on this rebate is that it may not always fulfill the intent for which it was originally proposed. I will be guided by the Chair's statement and the Minister's statement for that matter and let this item go.

While we are under Financial and Administrative Services, I believe it would be the appropriate time to ask this item, because it was asked of me some time ago, and I called the Minister's department and I talked with Ms. Fuller about this, but I would just like to clarify. This is on an entirely different topic.

The qualifications for a person running for municipal office are laid out in the Act itself. If a person is running for the position of councillor in an unincorporated village district, does that person have to be a resident of that district within those UVD boundaries?

**Mr. Penner:** It is my understanding that it is the department's opinion that they should be a resident of the UVD. However, the legislation is somewhat grey in that area.

**Mr. Roch:** I have already received that opinion and it is a little unfortunate because in some cases there seems to be cases where there is some uncertainty. Is there any intent or is there any proposal coming forward from the Minister to clarify that grey area?

**Mr. Penner:** There are a number of areas that could be, I suppose, questioned in The Municipal Act. I have instructed staff to take a look at this one specifically and a few others with the intent to revise or make sure that there is some clarity there, so, yes, we are currently doing that.

**Mr. Roch:** It may not happen, but if there are for example some challenges to people who, after the civic elections, may hold a certain office where it is felt on the part of some ratepayers that they are not qualified, and I am referring specifically to unincorporated village districts. I realize that in the case of regular wards, the Act is clear. There is no doubt that you have to be a

resident of your ward. In the case of school divisions, you have to be a resident of the division, not necessarily the ward, but unfortunately UVDs, it is not specific.

Would it be dealt with by the department via the municipal board or some other body, or would they have to go through the courts? What would be their avenue of appeal if they are not satisfied with the way items have been handled?

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

**Mr. Penner:** I believe there is a section of the Act that in my view spells this out as far as municipalities are concerned. I would view the LGDs, or there are people running in the LGDs, who would have to take similar action. That actually would have to be through the courts to ascertain whether they in fact were qualified to run or were not qualified.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall the item pass—pass.

1.(e)(2) Financial and Administrative Services: Other Expenditures—the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. Plozman:** I just want to ask the Minister under what section we could deal with the issue of decentralization of services. Is there one particular line where we should deal with that?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, it would be my view that it would have to be a ruling of the Chair or at the request of the critics as to when we should or where we should question this or deal with it. It is your choice for that.

**Mr. Chairman:** 1.(e)(2)—pass.

1.(f) Rural Development Institute Grant—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** I would like to ask the Minister, just exactly what does the Rural Development Institute do? From reading the Objectives, Activity Identification, and Expected Results in the Supplementary Estimates, it seems to be somewhat vague. I would like more clarification.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the Rural Development Institute in my view provides a service that through the University of Brandon has I guess been needed for quite some time. The institute is really an academic research centre for rural communities and works to identify the physical and cultural needs of rural residents. It matches faculty and community expertise to those needs and provides the facts to make some sound economic, social, and environment decisions and recommendations.

\* (1530)

The institute will, as you know, sponsor a rural development conference, which I indicated previously, on the 25th and 26th and has been quite involved in setting up public meetings in regard to probably developing some rural development strategies to help strengthen in my view some of the recommendations

and maybe even help develop policies at times and develop programming, make recommendations for programming, to strengthen our rural communities. That is really probably why the institute was established and that is the function it serves.

**Mr. Roch:** If I understand correctly, it is essentially a think tank. Does it actually develop policies, or does it just advise?

**Mr. Penner:** In large part, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is correct. It could certainly serve as a think tank. It could also serve as a sounding board for ideas of either Government departments in developing rural initiatives or strategies. It could serve as a place where communities might want to go and ask for support in developing programming for their areas. So I think it has a fairly broad mandate and I am pleased that we are able to say here that one of our staff is a member of the board there. I am quite pleased to say that Gerry Forrest, my Deputy Minister, sits on that Board and is part of the decision-making process over there.

**Mr. Plohman:** If the Minister has outlined how much of the money and where it was spent this past year, then I would tell him that I missed that and I would like him to provide that for us if he has. There is \$100,000 that was budgeted for '88-89. I would like to know how much of that was flowed and in what activities?

**Mr. Penner:** The item that you see in the Estimates here in the appropriations is the amount that was flowed to the University of Brandon and to the development institute.

**Mr. Plohman:** I understand that the grant was flowed, but I think that there has to be responsibility for follow-ups since that is Government dollars. I would like to know how it was spent.

**Mr. Penner:** There is an agreement. Instead of reading the agreement into the record, if it satisfies the Honourable Member I can table the agreement. If it is with your wishes I will table the agreement.

**Mr. Plohman:** Until I see the agreement and know exactly how detailed it is specifically with regard to projects that would be funded, I would like to ask the Minister whether the Challenges for Rural Development of Westarc Group Incorporated was funded from that particular appropriation of \$100,000.00?

**Mr. Penner:** No, there were not.

**Mr. Plohman:** Were there other studies done on rural economic development with the \$100,000 that was appropriated last year?

**Mr. Penner:** As I am sure the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is aware, when you initiate a conference of the magnitude that I see coming in Brandon on the 25th and 26th, there has to be a tremendous amount of background work and materials provided for a conference such as that. That is part

of the expenditures of this budget during and for those kinds of things. There will be others which I am not aware of exactly what all the money would have been expended for.

**Mr. Plohman:** I think it is important that the Minister knows as he appropriates another \$100,000 or asks the Legislature to know exactly what the university is doing with this money and setting up this institute, and what they intend to do with the next year's appropriation so that we understand whether this money is well spent. Certainly, we have to have accountability.

We know this is an important area, rural development, and an area that has long been neglected by universities I would think. It is something else to just give it an open-ended way without having details as to how this money is going to be appropriated, and with another \$100,000 maybe it is not enough for their ambitious program. I do not know what they are going to do with that. I just wanted to get some idea.

I did not get the tabled document that was just provided. I do not know what the Pages were doing with it, but I would hope that it would come here when it is tabled.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, while the Honourable Member is going through the agreement, I might add, some of the monies that have been provided through the grant are directed at project funding, as you will see, which is in the amount of \$25,000.00. It is my understanding that we have spent roughly about \$16,000 of that, specifically for the development of the rural conference, and there is about an amount of \$9,000 that is still out there, and that has not been expended.

I also want to say that the institute has just lately hired a manager to manage the institute. Professor Richard Rounds, who was in the geography department has been hired as the manager for that institute. Part of that core funding, of course, will be directed towards salaries, operations and those kinds of things.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, there is another area later on in the budget that deals with the whole issue of rural economic development. I am tempted perhaps to wait for a major discussion on this area to that area. I would like the Minister at that time, whether we get to it today or not, to make himself or his staff aware of this study, because I would like to discuss some of the aspects of this in that context.

It is the Challenges for Rural Development by the Westarc Group Incorporated.

\* (1540)

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, I just have one question in passing. Given the fact you mentioned you have some of your staff that sit on the board and I take it various other municipal officials that are on this board, how many directors are there on this board? Maybe it is in this paper that was tabled, I do not know, but how many directors do you have, and what components of society do they represent?



**Mr. Penner:** I do not have that information right at my fingertips now. As soon as I have it I will supply it to you, if that is your wish.

**Mr. Roch:** I would assume, and I may be incorrect, that a majority of these people on here are rural people. Would that be correct?

**Mr. Penner:** Yes, it is my understanding that the board of directors is mainly made up of rural representation on this board.

**Mr. Roch:** I am a little intrigued then as to why they would have picked municipal election day to kick off the Rural Issues Conference. I mean it is known—I will wait till the Minister answers.

**Mr. Penner:** It is really, Mr. Chairman, not the department of Rural Development nor the University of Brandon that has initiated this conference. The Rural Development Institute is involved in supplying information and helping establish it. It is, however, the Westarc Group and Canada Employment that had organized this Rural Development Conference in Brandon. It is really not the day of the municipal elections, it is the day following, the two days following the municipal elections.

It will create some difficulty, as has been mentioned in these Chambers before, for some elected officials, whether they are newly elected officials or re-elected officials. It would cause a difficulty for travel for them, especially those from some distances who would like to attend this will have some difficulty getting there on time, at least for the start of the conference, and we realize that. Had we been involved in the discussions earlier on, we might have raised that with them before the dates were set. We are as concerned about some of these individuals who have shown an interest in attending this conference and not being able to do so, at least at the initial stages of the conference, for the opening of the conference, of their inability to attend.

You raise a good point and I appreciate that. However, had it been in our hands, those dates might have been different.

**Mr. Roch:** I realize that the department is not responsible for putting it on, but even the fact that part of the funding is coming from the department—well, even that I suppose does not make them responsible, but at least the people involved should know, they are dealing in rural issues and it is kind of strange that if they are really concerned about rural issues they should be up to date as to when municipal elections are held. I mean, it is fixed by statute, it is every three years.

I know for a fact that several municipal officials will not be attending because of the timing. Even though it is technically being held after the election—it is two days immediately following the election—unless they are in the Brandon area, my guess is that there will be a lower turnout than would have been had on a normal year.

I am glad that the Minister agrees that it was poor timing, and I hope that in the future when such events

are held which are of importance, especially to municipal officials, that they will make sure. I realize that a lot of advance planning has to be done for these conferences, booking hotel rooms, meeting space, et cetera. I would hope that they take that into consideration because this is grass-roots democracy at work here, and I think that it is far superior and certainly supersedes that of any conference in the opinion of many of the local decision makers.

Whether or not they are up for re-election, some may be in by acclamation, but they are still going to be around their home areas to find out what the results are in other wards which affect their municipality, or the municipalities which affect their region.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to pass this section.

**Mr. Plozman:** Well, Mr. Chairman, it takes all of us to agree obviously, and I think the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) has raised an issue that is somewhat worth pursuing somewhat. I find it quite astounding that this was not picked up before.

I think we want the municipal councillors there as leaders in the rural communities, and it is impossible for them to go. There is no way that the councils would have provided the appropriation, the permission and the resolutions for these councillors to attend not knowing if they were going to be there or not or who is going to be involved. I doubt whether many of those councils would have actually made that decision. They would hold off on it and then it means that there is absolutely no time for these new councillors and mayors to be given the opportunity to attend. It is just the most awful timing that I could think possible—two days after the municipal elections. I guess the only worse timing would have been right on the election day.

So I would ask the Minister whether his member of the board, the Deputy Minister, is on the board and I understand would be involved in the planning and whether they cannot look at postponing this for a month so that these councils will have an opportunity to meet and decide? I mean, do we want this to be a success or not? It is important. I would ask the Minister that. In addition to that issue, I had an opportunity to look briefly at the agreement that was developed with the Government and the university and it talks about purpose and objectives. It is designed to promote, facilitate, co-ordinate, initiate, and conduct multi-disciplinary basic and applied research on rural issues and so on.

It does not say how these will be measured and it does not make any mention of an annual report. It talks about auditing of the funds, but it provides no mention of an annual report. It says there will be an annual operating and project funding budget prepared. I would assume the Minister then has access to project funding budgets, so he should know precisely how this money was spent if that is what has to be provided each year. My questions earlier were relevant and the Minister was not able to provide answers to them. I wonder if he would be able to get us that information if he does not have it before we sit again to consider these

Estimates. We may have more questions on this issue, but I would like the Minister to address this issue of possible postponement of that conference. Perhaps he can give us an idea of what the registration numbers are at the present time and how successful it is going to be.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, even if I would want to postpone or direct the postponement of this conference, it would not be within my jurisdiction to do so. As I said before, it is a conference that has been organized by Canada Employment and the Westarc Group and has been established by them. What I said before is that we had—my Deputy Minister was a member of the Board of Directors of the Rural Development Institute which will supply information and develop the material that is required for this conference.

I also want to put on the record that it is not only Manitobans who are involved in this conference, there will be participation from people all across Canada at this conference. The establishment, I suppose, of the facilities and the availability of facilities, it is my understanding were involved in the decision to hold the conference on the 25th and the 26th, although knowingly at that time that the municipal elections would be held during that time period.

If in fact the conference had not been held during the 25th and 26th, it could not have been held until later on, towards the spring, and it was felt by the people who were organizing this conference that it should be done earlier on, that it would allow the communities at large to information that was gathered through this process, the winter months, to digest that and put forward the material that was being presented or had been presented and discussed at this conference.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister did not give the undertaking with regard to the other question I asked. Since I have this opportunity, I have one concluding remark on this conference and that is that I find it very hard to believe that there is only day, one window, where this conference could have been held. Surely, it could have been held two weeks, three weeks, a month later. Surely there is a number of appropriate days. So I understand, from what the Minister said, that it is difficult for him to influence now, or whether it would even be feasible or practical to cancel or to postpone, but when it was initially planned, surely there were other days that could have been available for it.

I would like the Minister to just indicate whether he is prepared to provide the detailed information on the project funding budget, both for the past year and for the year coming up that we are discussing.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Penner:** To the last question, yes, we will search it out and we will provide it.

However, on the issue of the organization of the conference and the timing of the conference, as I indicated to you before it was really not up to us and our department to determine the days or the place for

that matter. It was the Canada Employment people, the Canadian Government in other words, and the Westarc Group that determined the time. It is my understanding that there simply was not another day that could have been considered until later on towards spring. It was their decision then to proceed with the holding of the conference at this time, realizing full well that it would create some difficulties for some people.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall the item pass—pass.

Item 2. Municipal Board: 2.(a) Salaries, shall the item pass—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** I have some questions here about the Municipal Board. I was just wondering, it says here in the activity identification that it is, or I should say in the objective section that the board is a quasi-judicial body where Members sit to hear appeals pursuant to various statutes of Manitoba. Are their decisions final or can their decisions be appealed to the Minister?

**Mr. Penner:** On the question of the authority of the Municipal Board, it is my understanding that the development plan, or decisions made by the Municipal Board on development plans, for instance, could be appealed to the Minister. Any appeals to the board or put before the board regarding assessment would be final decisions by the Municipal Board. In the case of considerations of subdivision, the ruling by the board would be a final decision.

**Mr. Roch:** The reason I raised the question was because there seems to be a lot of inequities out there in rural Manitoba. We are aware of the shrinking cultural base, which of course means that there are less people able to live out there as far as making a livelihood strictly off the land.

So if we are serious about wanting people to live in rural Manitoba, I think that the officials within the department had better realize that the Government is serious too, because time after time there seem to be areas where local councils elected by the local people approve certain subdivisions within certain guidelines only to have the bureaucrats appeal the decision of the elected officials, appeal and oppose applications by the taxpayers who pay their salaries, bring them to Municipal Board and more often than not—and I realize that there is a new board in place now and I hope they will be more reasonable than previous board members—but they go out there and they turn down more often than not applications which are very, very reasonable, while a neighbour in certain circumstances who may be under the auspices of the additional zone will have that very same type of application be approved. There are some inconsistencies. I would hope that the Minister or the department would have some set of guidelines, some set of policies so that there can be clarification on these to stop frustrating the people who live in rural Manitoba.

**Mr. Penner:** I suppose the Honourable Member for Springfield is well aware of the difficulties that rural Manitoba faces, especially in those areas surrounding the City of Winnipeg and many other urban areas in

the province. That is, of course, to retain those areas of the province that are deemed agriculture and beneficial to agriculture and to protect those lands in large part for agricultural production.

We do have, and that is probably the dilemma that many people face, or municipalities at times, maybe individuals face at times, in this province a set of policies, land use policies that have been developed over the years and I guess were implemented during Sterling Lyon's administration during the '80s. I believe it was 1980 that they were adopted. They have been in place over the last eight, nine years and have served the province in my view rather well.

However, I think there is a time, Mr. Chairman, with the permission of the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), that Government do examine policies to see whether they are consistent or whether they are consistent with the current philosophy of the Government or the administration of the day, and if required, if and when needed, that changes are made on an ongoing basis to reflect the economic as well as the social situation in the province at that time.

I think the difficulties that I have experienced in office, which the Honourable Member is referring to, is the establishment of either families in rural Manitoba, whether they live currently in the city or other urban areas of the province, and they want to move outside to establish living places, living quarters, homes, yards or even sometimes smaller operations. Those areas that have of course been zoned to do specific things or allow specific things in some parts of the province need to be recognized and the land use policies that identify very clearly in areas through the planning process in the province which has by the way, by and large, served this province very well.

Again, that is an area that we might want to rethink and look at and get our planning policy need to be I guess assessed and reviewed on an ongoing basis which will allow for the development that the Honourable Member is referring to in an orderly fashion making sure that all concerns are addressed and heard properly. I would ask the Honourable Member for his concurrence that we in fact should have some sort of policy regulation process that would protect certain areas for certain things whether it is agriculture, whether it is industrial, whether it is other development, whether it is residential and that be done within municipal boundaries or within planning district boundaries to identify clearly how that area in the long term would look.

\* (1600)

I think we have seen in the past far too much development going on without a proper organized method being used to establish; therefore, it becomes not only costly to municipalities, but it does become costly to the province and does become at times disruptive. I think we can refer specifically to the area that the Honourable Member represents. There are some large residential areas in that part of the province and I think by and large that people living there appreciate rural living. That is why they move there.

However, we must also recognize that it is an agricultural area in the main and that when farmers

carry on their activities there are certain disturbances that are at times caused from the agricultural activities, such as noise when harvesting, or dust created in spring when we put crops in our ground, or even at times when excrements are taken out to the field and spread and the smells, the perfume, that is generated from this activity, disturbs those people who ordinarily would not be used to those kinds of pleasantries that most of us who have lived in the farm community for many, many years have become used to and accept as the reality of country living. Therefore, I say to the Honourable Member that I hope what he is referring to in questions is, in fact, an orderly way of developing this province over a long term.

**Mr. Roch:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree that there has to be an orderly way, but saying no to every single application that comes along is not orderly, that is just plain stubbornness. In many cases, it is the case of a particular bureaucrat being upset that he may be -(interjection)- I am sorry, the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) has a question?

**An Honourable Member:** No, I was asking you whether you were drinking tea.

**Mr. Roch:** No, I am drinking coffee. Maybe the Member for La Verendrye wants tea, but I have coffee.

**An Honourable Member:** Herbal tea.

**Mr. Roch:** Steinbach tea.

To get back to the issue at hand, the problem that is happening right now, and I fully understand what the Minister is saying, is that there are concerns with the urban residents moving on to rural areas and maybe not appreciating what does go on in nearby farms. I think most people that move out there do, at least should be aware that country living is not the same as urban living. I would go on and suggest to say that is why they are moving out there, because they do indeed look for a country milieu, so to speak. The problem is not only people moving out there. There is also the problem of, you mentioned, keeping land for certain uses. I assume from that you mean for farming. That, by and large, is happening.

Let me cite an example of a full-time active farmer who, not very long ago, applied for a small subdivision because he had, I believe, 10 or 20 acres along the river. Across the road from where he lives is his main landholding. That small area, he could not do anything with it. It was all bush, I guess at one time pasture for very few animals.

Along the river, historically, it has been developed for residential. Now all of a sudden, out of sheer stubbornness I would suggest, the planners in the area refused to recommend that the development along that river be allowed. He finds it very frustrating because this particular municipality, which happens to be Tache, has always maintained a program of orderly development ever since there has been the influx of urban residents. What makes it more frustrating is his neighbour is allowed to develop because he falls within

the auspices of the additional zone which overrides the local municipality and indeed the Municipal Board itself.

Then there are other cases which led in the case of the Municipality of Springfield to form an organization called the Springfield Agricultural Ratepayers Association. What happened there, in that case, was an entirely different circumstance.

It was an assessment case in which, in this case, the department's officials had assessed the land on a value system based on the fact that there was potential for development. The fact remains that these are, by and large, agricultural lands which will not be allowed to be subdivided. They are lands which are held back. They are farmers who have no intention or desire to subdivide them, and yet when the local council, in its capacity as Court of Revision, did not accept the Assessment Board's figures. They appealed to the Municipal Board and won. Well, now it is being taken to the courts, and it will be in the courts at this point.

My point in all this is that if there were some clear-cut policies, and from what I gather from the Minister's answers something is being worked on, if there were some clear-cut policies, clear-cut directions as to what would be happening, it would be a little easier.

It is not enough to just pass the buck and say, well, the municipalities have to enter into a development plan. I think one must also look at the historical background of those individual municipalities and see whether or not they have been operating within certain parameters of their own. One must also take into account that these are locally elected officials, and to a certain degree they have to maintain some kind of autonomous relationship amongst themselves.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I had the pleasure of meeting with the Springfield Ratepayers Association just a couple of weeks ago, and we did have quite a discussion about the matter that the Honourable Member refers to, and that is of course the residential designation within an area that is used to assess the value of the property. They of course indicated their concerns about this issue as well as some other concerns that were addressed at that meeting. I appreciated very much the matters that they brought before me for consideration.

I want to say to the Honourable Member that groups like the Ratepayers Association in municipalities and other organizations are listened to very closely when they bring those kinds of concerns to my door, because I believe it is local people that know best what is good for them.

I certainly concur with the Member when he says that municipalities should be allowed some flexibility and leeway with making decisions within their own governmental jurisdiction. I could not agree more with the Member when he says that. However, I believe that there has been a process established over the years that has been acceptable in many cases to remedy the kind of concerns that the Honourable Member expresses in many areas.

The establishment of subdivisions within municipalities, whether they should be allowed or should

not be allowed, can be addressed very adequately on the local level through a provincial planning process. I would wonder whether the Honourable Member is saying or would he agree that there are times when elected officials, especially during this time of year, if there are no specific plans in place, and if they are left to make those kinds of decisions to themselves without regulation, without a given development plan over the long term that can be used as the basis for decision making, whether he would agree that those individuals at times, specifically during or just before elections, would sometimes make commitments that might otherwise not be made and therefore sometimes would allow things within a given area or a municipality that might otherwise not be allowed.

I believe that all of us are subjected to those kinds of political pressures from time to time, specifically during election periods. All I am saying by my comments is that I believe if a development plan is in place in a given area, and either a municipality or two municipalities have agreed to form a district and put those kinds of plans in place, it makes the decision easier.

\* (1610)

I would suggest to you also that the criticism that you have extended to my staff is not quite appropriate at this time, and I have difficulty accepting those kinds of criticism of our staff because I think by and large that our staff, whether they are planning or helping with municipal administration, assessment or otherwise, are in the norm very responsible people and only carry out the policies that have been dictated to them under which they are forced to operate. If you and I can agree that some of those policies are probably not adequate that they need changing, that will give clear direction to those staff people out there and tell them from now on business is going to be done differently, then I think that we could make those changes. As I said to you before there are areas within The Municipal Act that are grey in my view, and I directed consideration to be made of those areas, and if we can remedy them then let us remedy them.

The same thing goes for our provincial land use policies. I believe it is time that there be a substantial review of those policies. If they do not concur with the general public's thinking and the Government of the Day's philosophy, then we can change them and that will give clear direction to staff out there that we are now doing business in a different way. Until that happens, it is very difficult for staff to deviate from what is clearly directed by policy. So I am rather hesitant to accept the criticism that has been extended by the Honourable Member to our staff, because I think they are limited to what they are allowed to do by way of policy direction.

I would rather wonder whether the statement that the Honourable Member made in regard to court action in the Springfield area is in fact happening because it certainly has not been brought to my attention if it is and he referred to it before. I think the record would show that there was some court action being taken at this time. If that is not correct, then I would ask the Honourable Member to comment on that.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, if I said court action, I do not believe I did. I said potential court action because there was talk of court action at one point. But to comment on what the Minister said, it seems to be that is where the problem lies, is in the area of special policies and guidelines because there is a definite conflict. If indeed then the staff members are always acting, every single one of them are perfect and are always acting according to the Act and do not try to become powers onto themselves. Well, then I would suggest that leadership is lacking from the top and maybe they have to change those policies, they have to be reviewed, but they have to be done soon because it has been going on for several years now. The only answers that need to be given to them is that, well, your municipality is not part of the development plan, or else this is not in line with the Provincial Land Use Committee, or else there is always a reason. But yet again a conflict arises once one gets into the additional zone where they have gone completely on the opposite side of where they were 15, 20 years ago and seem to be allowing any and all developments.

I realize there are certain guidelines, certain policies, that exist, but surely to God, when someone owns 10 or 20 acres and is entirely surrounded by residential premises, that it does not make sense for the municipal board or for planners to refuse an application in such a situation because it is deemed that this is agricultural. It is very possible that in some cases some of these developments came up—if you can call them developments—prior to planning. I am referring to not little islands of houses in the middle of nowhere, I am talking about houses which have grown near towns which now because certain policies have been put in, there happen to be little parcels of land which are entirely surrounded by residential housing.

A farmer there who owns 10, 20 acres, which he is not allowed to subdivide because it is deemed agricultural land, but yet, you know, the Minister being a farmer himself knows that you cannot make a living off 10, 20 acres. It is impossible, not now with grains. But yet if that farmer would want to put up a hog barn, for example, it would not be allowed due to environmental laws.

So there are certainly many, many conflicts in different areas, whether it be planning policies, whether it be rules and regulations, but the whole area has to be seriously looked at. At one point it has to be cohesive with the Department of Rural Development's own role admission statement which states in part, within the parameters of this legislation, municipal Government is the ruler within its own house, and a municipal council is a corporate and independent decision-making body.

I would like to see that happen in fact as well as in spirit, because in some cases some municipalities who are looking to encourage more development within their jurisdictions, because of the declining tax base, because of the shrinking population, are finding themselves somewhat frustrated by decisions of the Municipal Board.

Now, there are all kinds of other questions which one could ask in assessment and everything, but I believe there are other areas within this department

where they might be more appropriately asked. I will take the Minister at his word for the time being, that this whole area of policy direction, when it comes to residential, commercial, industrial development in rural Manitoba is being reviewed.

I would go on to say, and I realize that the Minister has only been in his portfolio for a short while, it is unfortunate that it has been for several years like this, and it has not led to a good and well thought-out development. If we want to see the population increase in rural Manitoba, we will have to do that. I realize there has to be a balance between the land to be used for farm purposes and land to be used for residential purposes, but there are certain areas of the province and the Minister referred specifically to the area I represent.

I represent everything from the semi-urban, to farm land, to wilderness, to park, to bush, and there are some areas which are essentially sand, stone, bush, areas where development should be allowed but yet are not being allowed because they are deemed agricultural. I refer specifically to areas like Ste. Rita, Monominto, that area east of No. 12. Again I realize that as policy and as direction, it is also common sense at times. When an official from the Government goes out to inspect a site in wintertime, I do not think he can make a very informed report to state whether or not an area is agricultural—

**An Honourable Member:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Roch:** —as there is one specific case.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, there are a few items I guess I should respond to on issues that the Honourable Member raises. One of them is the questioning of the authority of the Municipal Board, if I understand the Member correctly, in questioning whether they in fact are being responsible in the decisions they are making.

I want to say today very briefly to the Honourable Member that again I reflect on policies that have been developed by either previous administrations or current administrations and that these boards are directed in their decision-making by those policies. That is the only thing that they have to go by, and if we think that they are not adequate then they of course should be reviewed. I am not going to say again that we are going to review the Provincial Land Use policy, but I know how difficult it is for any administration to develop long-term policies that are going to be beneficial. I also know that if and when that happens, those policies will not suit the needs of each and every person in this province.

When you have a million people in the province, you might well have a million different needs. I believe that there must be a general approach taken for the betterment and the development of the provinces, and that is basically what the role and mission statement clearly spells out. That we as the Department of Rural Development are specifically directed towards the development of those communities that need more employment opportunities, need more people, and want to encourage the retention of people in rural Manitoba.

\* (1620)

However, when I reflect back on what happened during the last year when I was the Minister of Natural Resources and was fortunate enough to take on the role of land and water strategy, it becomes very evident and very clear that when you have 3,000 people making presentations to a process such as that, there is a large variation of thinking.

However, some very general trends flowed through those presentations that were made, and out of that I believe it is a Government's responsibility to garner out of that the direction for the development of policy. I would say that if you would ask your honourable colleague in the NDP Caucus, he would say that they had started previously a process to develop water policy, and the process that they had gone through was a fairly lengthy one. What we saw when we came into office was a very basic draft of really some ideas for a water policy. That led to the public process and those draft policies were put before the people for either consideration, acceptance of, or rejection, and change.

Therefore, I say to you that the land use policies that have been developed in this province were developed in a very similar manner. I am given to understand that it took some four years to develop those land use policies and it was a large public process that spelled out the criteria for the development of those policies. I accept in most part that the people of Manitoba will, through processes such as that, through public processes, give Government a very clear indication as to what they will accept, what their needs are and what they require to develop the province.

I want to ask the indulgence of the Member opposite and ask for his concurrence that the land use policies were developed through a public process, that the public in large part directed development of those policies, that the municipal board has to base its decision-making on policy, and accepting the fact that is the stated policy of the day and until that can be changed, if it is required to be changed, they have to abide by that direction.

Therefore also our municipal planners, when they develop plans for either planning districts, or direct plans or planning for municipalities, are similarly governed by those policies. If we, a changed administration, deemed them inadequate, then we must take the initiative and change those policies and give new direction to the staff people and/or the boards that are governed by these policies that they can in fact take different directions.

I would say to the Honourable Member that there will be times when applications for subdivisions come into municipalities, planning districts or to the province when those decisions must be made, in large part the applications for subdivisions will be passed. I think the numbers I want to read into the record today indicate very clearly that the majority of the subdivision applications through the course of a fairly lengthy period of time, from 1976 on to 1980, have been approved. Out of some 19,150 applications there have been 13,750 of those applications approved. There have been 1,500 of those applications rejected by local council. Only

500 of those applications throughout a 13-year period have been rejected by the province. Therefore I say to you that there are very few subdivisions that are in fact rejected through the provincial process, and in large part the applications made through the process over the years have in fact been approved.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, if the Member—

**Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert):** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is your point of order?

**Mr. Angus:** The Honourable Member for Springside had the floor and was on a line of questioning, and it is traditional to allow him to complete his question.

**Mr. Plohman:** On the same point of order, there is no Member for Springside, but there is a Member for Springfield. It seems to me that if the critic for the Liberal Party has almost completed his remarks, I would certainly abide by that. It seems to me that this is not through his own fault but through the Minister's lengthy answers. This has been going on for some time.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Honourable Member was the first who I saw and recognized, and the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) can have his turn next. He looks like he needs a rest anyway.

**Mr. Plohman:** Well, I would allow—

**Mr. Chairman:** On a point of order.

**Mr. Roch:** The Member for Dauphin indicated to me from his seat that he was willing to let me go for one more question if that is all I had. That is indeed all I had, and if that is agreed upon I will pose the question. I have to agree with the Member for Dauphin that indeed I was not going to ask this many questions in this area but certainly the Minister's answers have led to more questions. The point that he tried to make with the numbers was not an issue. It is not the numbers that are approved or rejected, as I said on more than one occasion. It is the inconsistencies because it says right there, an activity identification of the Municipal Board.

Here are appeals pursuant to The Municipal Board Act, The City of Winnipeg Act, and I have only quoted in part the activity identification. I have tried to point out that there are inconsistencies throughout the province, especially in those areas where a rural municipality borders on a large town or indeed an urban centre, and there is especially quite glaring inconsistencies on the fringe area of Winnipeg's additional zone. The same board hears the same appeals, but yet different decisions appear to be coming down in different areas.

All I am trying to say is—and I concur with the Minister's statement of awhile ago—that there has to be some land use policies in place, and that I realize it is a long, lengthy process that is arrived at, and realize it sometimes takes years. But given the reality of today's fast-changing pace in society, I also believe

that this has to be an ongoing process of review. Ongoing changes have to be made to allow needed development to take place in rural Manitoba, all the while maintaining and respecting an individual's right to farm. So I think that, in essence, we are debating probably minor detail but whereas in principle we tend to agree.

So what I am trying to stress is that it is urgent that these inconsistencies be ironed out so the people out there, some of them, where a lot of money may be at stake for retirement or other purposes, need to know in the near future, and that is essentially what I have been trying to stress in this section.

I realize different Members sit on the Municipal Board, but I also realize that in courts, judges often look at other rulings in order to be able to come down with a ruling. They use them as precedents. Possibly the Municipal Board should do the same thing, and maybe they do, but it certainly appears that it is not always the case and I base that on the inconsistencies that are approved or not approved in some cases.

**Mr. Plohman:** I am sure the Minister will take under advisement the comments made by the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch).

I wanted to raise with the committee, Mr. Chairman, an issue that relates of course to the jurisdiction of the Municipal Board at the same time quite different from what has been discussed the last few moments, and that deals with the whole issue of level of borrowing and debentures by municipalities that comes under the Municipal Board's jurisdiction.

I notice here that there is rather an alarming increase of some 400 percent in the amount of borrowing authorized in '88 over '87. It looks to be short-term borrowing, and I just wanted the Minister to clarify. I am referring to the Annual Report of the Municipal Board. In going through that, I noticed that there is an increase from the amount of borrowing authorized in 1987, \$7,723,000 to \$28,294,414, which is nearly four times the amount, and that is a substantial increase. There has to be something being done differently that that is happening. I would like the Minister to clarify what it is that is causing such an enormous increase in the borrowing.

\* (1630)

I notice that the debenture is down slightly. Debenturing, obviously, longer-term borrowing, although maybe some of the other borrowing is also long term, and I would like the Minister to clarify that issue before I go on to some other related issues that deal with that.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the issue that the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) raises is a very complicated issue and I do not believe—well, I certainly have not got the facts at my fingertips, and if it is, with the concurrence of the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), we will provide you with the specific information that you are seeking.

**Mr. Plohman:** Well, Mr. Chairman, does the Minister have the staff secretariat, the senior staff in charge of

the Municipal Board available to be present at the committee so that these questions could be answered?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, being rather new at this, as the Honourable Member for—we did not say Springspeed before, did we? Springside, we said? Springfield. Well, I think it is always springy weather up in that part of the country, so Springside might be a good name for that.

Traditionally, I understand the municipal board has not been brought into this process. They are a specific court, I suppose you could call them. Therefore, their rulings are in most cases final, except for the few that I mentioned before. If you are asking for us to bring a municipal board in here to answer questions, they would have to be very specific questions I would imagine.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, I did not ask for the board to come in here. I wanted the secretary to the board or some other senior staff or someone from the department who can provide the financial expertise to answer the questions on this. I notice the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) is here. He is involved with negotiation with the federal Government on a water and sewer agreement, I believe. The Minister for Rural Development (Mr. Penner) should certainly be aware of those.

There is a statement made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that the municipality should be able to fund one-third of the cost of major infrastructure, regional centres, and I am talking about centres like Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Morden, Winkler, Selkirk, Dauphin. I do not know who else was involved in that agreement that would be struck. It could be the Southern Development Initiative. These Ministers obviously can share some of that information, perhaps.

(Mr. Darren Praznik, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

What we have is a rather substantial borrowing requirement to do that if those projects are to be undertaken. That is why I raised in the House a change in policy request which the Premier (Mr. Filmon) mistook when he rose in the House to correct me, I guess he said or to challenge what I had said, and that was that the policy that the previous Government had in place was 50-50. He said I said it was 75 percent. What I was saying is that our policy, our Party's policy, my Leader's policy, is 75 percent for these major projects from senior levels of Government so that municipalities would have to pay a maximum of 25 percent.

I want to explore a little further the capacity of those centres to borrow to the extent that may be required. I do not know if the Government has explored this, but it is very important, because if you are talking about major infrastructure for these communities, in Dauphin's case a water treatment plant valued now at close to \$9 million, you are talking 33 percent. You are talking \$3 million that has to be borrowed for that purpose, a substantial increase in their debt load.

Portage la Prairie has major expenditures required to be able to get their infrastructure up to par. They have been historically under heavy debt. Brandon has

millions and millions of dollars invested to improve their infrastructure. I am sure it is true of Selkirk and Morden and Winkler and the others, and Winnipeg of course.

With the rural communities that we have here and are dealing with on this agreement, I do not think it is fair if we really are serious about rural economic development and ensuring that these communities are able to attract the industry that requires a good, reliable, clean water supply that we can charge those communities that amount of money. We have to kick in a bigger share in light of a number of the things that have happened in this province.

That is why I asked the question the other day. I want the Minister just to pursue further or to follow up further with this issue, because I see the debenturing slightly down, but a major increase in borrowing. I do not know if it is in those communities and whether there is a direct relationship, but what is more important is the overall borrowing for those communities. How much accumulated debt do they have? What percentage is it of their assessment? How much room do they have? Is it possible for them to undertake these major projects that the senior levels of Government are negotiating for on their behalf? If it is successful, is it possible for them to do it? Are they going to be overloaded with debt to the extent that they are putting in jeopardy their local taxpayers?

I would like to ask the Minister to provide us with the information or have staff that can, not only provide the reasons for the increase in borrowing of nearly 400 percent in the previous year but the accumulated debentures for the total amount of assessment and percentage that it is of the assessment, so we can get an idea of the overall debt of municipalities in this province.

Secondly, to provide that information for the centres that I mentioned, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Morden, Winkler, Dauphin, Selkirk, a cross-section of major regional centres, insofar as their capacity to borrow.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, I noticed one deletion in the list of major centres that the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) listed, and that is the deletion of the town of Altona. Coming from that area, I would say to the Honourable Member that it is also a major centre in southern Manitoba, and the people in that part of the province certainly would want it to be recognized as such.

It is not only a major centre for commerce, but it is also a major manufacturing centre. It is also a centre that houses one of the largest printers in this province as well as probably this country. We are very proud of Altona as being one of those commercial centres that a large part of southern Manitoba depends on and as an economic base.

The issues that the Honourable Member raises are valid ones, and I appreciate the comments that the Member makes. As I said before, some of the requests that he is making are simply not at my fingertips, and we will provide that information when we have it.

However, I want to say to the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Dauphin) that there has been, I believe

what I call, a significant change in how municipalities will be able to fund infrastructure development. I am sure you are aware that previous to last year, it was not possible for municipalities to accumulate surpluses and put them away for a rainy day. That is now possible and I think it will allow communities to better plan their financial expenditures over a while and also will allow them to plan such major expansions or repairs to their infrastructure that they were up till now not allowed to do.

Therefore I think that change in itself will help communities in the future accumulate some surpluses, put money away for a rainy day, as we in this administration did not too long ago set aside some money for years when there will not be as much. We can use that money to do the kind of things that Manitobans need to have done on an ongoing basis.

\* (1640)

I would hope that the reflection on the ability to finance and fund even a third of the expenditures that are going to be required, specifically in Dauphin, in Portage, in Brandon, and some other major centres, to upgrade their sewage disposal facilities and their water treatment facilities, to be able to even fund a third of that.

I think it is an indication of the lack of understanding that has been afforded some of these communities over the past. I think there should have been some recognition of that years ago by previous administrations to put some remedial, either provisions in place, to allow for the expansion and/or upgrading of aging infrastructures.

I think the infrastructure that you have referenced is only one part of a rural community's ability to exist over a long term. The maintenance of streets and roads and municipalities, and all those kinds of things become a very, very expensive item over the long period, over the long haul. There needs to be proper financial planning and the ability for villages and towns, and the rural administrations to plan properly their financial expenditures. The borrowings that you referred to, and I am only speculating—I am not sure out of which book you are quoting from, but it might well be the—is it the 1988 Report?

I think if you go back to page 10 in the annual report you will find in the middle of page 10 it states that the significantly higher amount of authorized borrowing in 1988 can be attributed to the larger projects that you referenced, in most cases.

I think if you go to page 33 you will see that the third line from the top references the City of Brandon in a \$14 million sewage upgrade system. So there is an amount of \$14 million there that would contribute to the increase, as well as on page 34 the City of Flin Flon has a million-dollar paving project that they borrowed for, on page 35 the City of Portage la Prairie water and sewer force main replacements of \$960,000, and I believe on page 38 the Town of Winkler an upgrade for its water treatment plant of \$3,300,000.

So in large part those would be the increased expenditures or borrowings that municipalities would have incurred over that period of time.



**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Mr. Acting Chairman, I just want to comment on the question and the concerns raised by the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Rightly so, he is raising the question of how municipalities can afford to pay their share of these much needed and necessary services, but it is interesting that, while he shows these concerns for communities outside of Winnipeg, his Leader is attempting to force the City of Winnipeg into a billion-dollar expenditure as fast as they possibly can. He has raised it, I think, three or four times in this House during Question Period as to why Winnipeg is not complying with The Environment Act of the Province of Manitoba. He is trying to force the City of Winnipeg and its taxpayers into a billion-dollar or more expenditure, Mr. Acting Chairman, and on the other hand, he is talking out of the other side of his mouth dealing with the question of rural municipalities. You cannot have it both ways.

I suggest to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) that he speak to his Leader, and suggest to him that if he is prepared and is concerned about rural municipalities facing these kinds of economic impacts, then he better consider what the economic impacts are for the City of Winnipeg when he attempts to force them into a billion-dollar expenditure on their combined sewer system.

**Mr. Plohman:** You know, the Minister has opened a whole new can of worms here that would deviate from the discussion.

Frankly, we would not want the city to come up with the money in the same way that I am saying the province and federal Government should be coming up with the majority of the money here.

**An Honourable Member:** Spend, spend, spend.

**Mr. Plohman:** The province has a responsibility—and the Minister says spend, spend, spend, while he socks away \$200 million in the rainy-day fund. We have told him it is raining now and he should use it now for some of these very important projects that we have raised here. It is a matter of obeying the law, and if the Minister now is coming down on the side saying it is okay for a large community to disobey the law and to disregard it while others have to obey it, then I think that speaks very ill of this Minister in terms of saying if you have power, if you have money, if you are large you should get away with things, but if you are small you cannot get away with those things.

I think that is what the Minister seems to be advocating here. Let me just say, in terms of the Minister's answer, he has referenced a number of large projects and it possibly would provide for the specifics on this borrowing. I guess that would indicate though that some of this borrowing is quite long-term too, not by debentures, but what mechanism the \$14 million that Brandon is using I would like to know in terms of how they would arrange that, but not in too much detail. Well, I do not know if the Minister is able to give that detail, in any event here.

I would like to point out, because it makes my point, that there is a serious need in those larger communities and many of the smaller ones as well, but certainly for major infrastructure improvements which has been neglected partially because we could say the province—and these Ministers are saying well, because you guys did not do it.

The fact is the federal Government has for years reneged on its responsibility to provide some funding for municipalities. That is why there have been resolutions from the Canadian Association of Municipalities or whatever the organization is called. It has also been coming from individuals, municipalities, for years, resolutions coming forward asking the federal Government for provincial organizations—asking the federal Government to provide some assistance. They have not entered into a program.

So we have a real problem there, and I could not agree with the Minister more on that. It is not that it is the provincial Government that should have provided. As a matter of fact, under our Government we increased the funding through the Water Services Board substantially on the formula that was there however imperfect it was and is, the 50-50 formula. We doubled that money through the Jobs Fund for that purpose during the '80s because we felt it was important and it was a good program.

The Members can talk about the Jobs Fund all they want, but the fact is we did put additional monies in for water and sewer because we recognized that, but we still did not get it from the federal level of Government. Before 1980 there was a program that the federal Government provided some assistance but it was not continued. It was discontinued by the Liberal Government of the Day at that time and it has not been provided by the Conservative Government in Ottawa since that time.

There is a major challenge and it is important. If we can get the federal Government and the province to both agree that this is prohibitive for these communities, the cost of replacing their infrastructure on a one-time basis, that indeed the senior levels of Government should not be looking at the municipalities as equal partners in this but should recognize their lesser ability to raise substantial funds from their taxpayers. Therefore, a desire on the part of provincial and federal Governments to put in place a program that would ensure that a larger amount is paid.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) says that he needs a third of it from the municipalities to show commitment to the project. I do not think that much is necessary to show commitment, quite frankly. I think 10 percent would show commitment, 20 percent would show commitment. It would not mean that they would be throwing dollars away simply because they are available if they had to come up with that amount of money. A million dollars, say even 10 percent of \$9 million, in the neighbourhood of a million dollars, is still a substantial amount for local taxpayers.

I ask the Minister if he will make a commitment to provide that information for those communities, including Altona, and provide us with that and in terms

of the borrowing capacity that they have. I understand the Minister can clarify from his staff that there is a limit of some 30 percent of assessment. I believe it is 30 percent that municipalities can borrow up to. Are any of these municipalities, these towns, these regional centres, going to be close to that or above if they are going to be able to construct these huge projects that we are talking about? Especially when we see, like Brandon with \$14 million project already this year. Where are they in their borrowing ability and how can far can it be stretched and still qualify? I think that Minister should very seriously reflect on this issue. It may be that there is lots of room, but I want to know that, and that is what I am asking.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, let me say to the Honourable Member, I do not want to leave him with a false impression that the City of Brandon has borrowed \$14 million. There has been approval given that they be allowed to borrow up to an amount of \$14 million. I think that similar type of a situation probably also is afforded to Winkler because I know that specifically in that town they are in the process now of upgrading their water treatment facilities. I am certain that they have not spent the entire amount and therefore would not have had to yet borrow that amount of money. They have however been given the authority to, and I would think that some of the other towns might fall into that same similar type of a situation.

I want to, very briefly though in response, Mr. Acting Chairman, respond to the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and his concerns expressed in the ability for communities to be able to afford the upgrading of some of the facilities that he is currently mentioning.

I want to also indicate that the environmental legislation that was passed in this province by the previous administration, by your administration, is going to give the province the authority to indicate to communities that the effluence they create is going to have to be, in the long term, disposed of in such a manner that they are either cleaner than when they used the water, or as clean.

The direction that has been given, or will have to be given at some point in time, and the environmental considerations that are going to be afforded by legislation or otherwise to communities, and the address that is going to have to be shown by those communities in resolving some of the problems with polluting either rivers or streams or our ground water, or our ground itself, our air, is going to be extremely costly. Taxpayers, either in this province or in municipalities or on a federal basis will have to put their hands in their pockets and pay for the upgrading of those facilities to ensure future generations of the ability to use the resources that we depend on so much.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

I ask the Honourable Member if the concerns that he expresses about the ability of those communities that we are discussing to afford the upgrading of those

either, sewage treatment plants, water treatment facilities, infrastructure in general. Why then if they already had those concerns as he says years ago, why then did they as an administration not act to allow to make some minor changes to allow those communities to budget into the future, and set aside some monies that would give them the ability to finance without borrowing, finance those kinds of upgrading that are going to be required.

I think it is time for society to sit back and say to themselves, where are we at today, as they are, where do we want to go and what is it going to cost? The plans for those kinds of initiatives must be, in my view, cost shared by everybody, and how you do it is what the Honourable Member was referring to.

I think it is important that local authorities make those considerations, make them well and plan into the future, in order that the people they serve will in fact be able to afford the kind of facilities that are going to be required to make sure that our resources are protected.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, just in response to that, I believe that reserves have been allowed for some years, certainly fire reserves, for fire trucks for example, specific purposes have been allowed in the past and it is something that if the municipalities brought forward that they would like to do, it can be addressed and responded to by the province. As a matter of fact, the reserve funds have been there and I do not know what the Minister is talking about, in terms of the legislation, that he talks about this past year.

Municipalities have been undertaking purchases from reserve funds. As a matter of fact it says in the annual report that it is noted that purchases from a municipality's reserve fund have been increased substantially. So those reserve funds have been there.

The Minister can talk about the long-term planning, it is all very important and I agree with that, but in the meantime it is important that precisely because of what he said about the environmental Acts, the Act that the Minister is calling to bring in right now, The Ground Water and Water Well Act amendments which allow the province to take very stiff action on anyone who might be polluting aquifers and ground water, so all of these things come together. That is even more reason why senior levels of Government have to recognize that there is a responsibility there to assist.

I am saying this Minister is in Government now, not myself. It is valid for him to ask whether we should have provided for that in the past, but I am saying the reality is now. Greater and greater burdens like the GST are falling on the backs of people all the time, the impact of free trade, and it might hurt a number of small communities. We see in Neepawa and in Portage la Prairie, whether the Minister might argue that is not the reason, but whatever, the fact is that there are a number of other factors impacting on our communities and they will be very costly.

The Minister now has an opportunity to take action. I say that he should be pushing forward with that. That is why I am bringing this forward today.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, just for the record, I was referring specifically before to the public utilities and

the accumulation of reserves in the public utilities. I think it is important to note that the Public Utilities Board, by its policy, did not allow the accumulation of reserves and funds to be established for the upgrading of utilities. That changes what I was referring to before. That is a very recent decision by this Government to allow those changes and the accumulation of those reserves to allow communities to plan financially for exactly the upgrading of infrastructures over a period of time.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Chairman, I indeed appreciate the opportunity after sitting here all afternoon and listening to lend my voice to the record in the closing minutes of these estimating proceedings this afternoon.

I hope that the Minister appreciates the disgrace that the infrastructure is in, in the Province of Manitoba, in the small municipalities and towns, and the need for some Government action. My former colleagues from City Hall, the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) and the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), will well acknowledge the investment of seed money and/or stimulus money to not only feed the economy and fulfill a very basic need, but it creates jobs oftentimes in a period of the year when jobs for the construction industry are hard to come by.

You can really magnify an impact by planting that money. For the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), Mr. Chairman, to suggest that you cannot have it both ways, in relation to asking the City of Winnipeg to spend a billion dollars as he says, I think he has to review the Hansards from City Hall when he was at City Hall, when he lambasted the provincial Government of both sectors to help stimulate the redevelopment of the City of Winnipeg waterways. The rivers in the City of Winnipeg are rotting. Shirking their responsibilities in relation to the legal requirements of the environmental Act is not a plan of action to solve that problem.

No, there is not enough money in our pockets right now, but I would like to assure the Minister, and I would like to assure all of the Cabinet benches that while the costs may be high, the escalating ticking clock of costs in the environment, the cure is going to be impossible to handle. If you do not develop a plan now to address the problems in the City of Winnipeg over a long-range period, not only are you immoral in terms of breaking the regulations and breaking the laws, but you are not actively attacking or addressing the problem.

You have a responsibility and you now are in a position to do something about it. I would encourage you to look at the opportunities of stimulating the economy, creating the jobs, and addressing a major problem right now. That is the rotting infrastructure and the environmental concerns in relation to the waterways.

With those final remarks, Mr. Chairperson, I will thank the Minister for taking that as notice.

**Mr. Plohman:** One final comment on this, we are not going to pass this today I believe in any event, so I wanted to ask the Minister if he will have that

information for next Monday's sitting, the information that we requested on this.

\* (1700)

**Mr. Chairman:** The hour being five o'clock, and time for Private Members' Hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### COMMITTEE REPORT

**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 Springfield (Mr. Roch), that the report of the committee be received.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

### HOUSE BUSINESS

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs):** As Acting Government House Leader, I wish to announce that the Industrial Relations Committee will meet on Tuesday, October 17, in Room 254 at 10 a.m. to consider Bill 54, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act No. 5.

Further, Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the Economic Development Committee will meet on Tuesday, October 17, in Room 255 at 10 a.m. to consider the following reports in this order: Moose Lake Loggers, Channel Area Loggers, Communities Economic Development Fund, and McKenzie Seeds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for 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 Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). Stand?

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources? (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for St. James.

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand to support this Bill put

forward by my colleague, the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). It is an important Bill and recognizes what has been the fact for a long time in landlord and tenant matters, and that is that the damage deposit is in fact an area of contention and mass frustration. I know that from personal experience having been involved, as a lawyer, both on behalf of the landlord and the tenant in these matters.

I must say that the wisdom and common sense of this particular Bill speaks for itself, and it has been a long time coming. This problem has been known for some time and I must congratulate the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for coming up with such a seemingly simple yet effective way of dealing with the problem. I do not think we can underestimate the need to streamline and make effective the landlord and tenant system in our province, because in many cases we are dealing with the vulnerable in our society as tenants—not all cases, certainly, but in many cases. I think we need to recognize that they need as much support as possible. Indeed, that was the original reason for setting up the Office of the Rentalsman.

The fact is that the Rentalsman has done much that is good and much to assist in the process, but what I find interesting on a regular basis is the lack of knowledge amongst tenants about their rights and the lack of real knowledge about The Landlord and Tenant Act and, in fact, a lack of knowledge about the Office of the Rentalsman and that is extremely upsetting because that is an office that is there for them to turn to when they do not know what their rights are with respect to things like security deposits.

I assume that all Members will support this Bill because of its simplicity and effectiveness. One thing that might be looked at is an adequate publication of this to bring it to the attention of tenants, indeed landlords, as the onus is on the landlords in fact to fill this condition report and get it in place within a specified period of time.

Mr. Speaker, I might go on to say that following upon the review of The Landlord and Tenant Act in August of 1985, or the setting up of a committee, in February of 1987 a report was provided to the then Minister of Housing which recommended several changes to the legislation. Both the NDP and the Tories saw fit to put this issue on the back burner, and that is indeed regrettable.- (interjections)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Chair is having some difficulty hearing the remarks of the Honourable Member for St. James, who has the floor.

The Honourable Member for St. James.

**Mr. Edwards:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, both the NDP and the Tories saw fit to put this matter on the back burner, and that is regrettable, because, as I have said, the residential tenants in our society are oftentimes the most vulnerable people in our society, and they certainly need our assistance and our advocacy when they are in situations in which they feel they have been abused.

I might add that landlords themselves oftentimes feel they are not in tune with what is going on in the

Rentalsman's Office and in the Department of Housing, and that level of frustration has come to the fore in landlords' rights organizations. While they certainly have the right to do that, it is unfortunate they have felt that is necessary.

It would be nice if the Rentalsman's Office could be better known about and could be more effective in getting the word out as to what people's rights are and in adjudicating upon disputes which arise.

As I have said, the damage deposit has been an area that has been abused. It has been known to have been abused, and I have become involved, and many lawyers have, in trying to get them back and/or trying to hang on to them.

That is why this condition report will significantly add to the ease with which that issue can be decided and avoid involving lawyers, and let us be clear. I am an advocate of avoiding getting involved with lawyers if you possibly can. I realize that, and I truly say that, Mr. Speaker, I realize that is not necessarily my best interest as a practising lawyer. However, I can tell you, if you can avoid it, and whether it is in family disputes, which are possibly the worst, or certainly these landlord and tenant matters, by all means do.

What I always try and do, and I believe most lawyers do, because I believe most lawyers take this role responsibly, is to try and defuse the situation before it becomes litigious. That certainly is in the best interests of everyone, and landlord and tenant matters are no exception. If people can rationally get together and conciliate, as it were, reach an amicable agreement, then that is always the best way to go, and that is certainly the advice that I give where that option is available.

\* (1710)

The problem is by the time people come to lawyers, they are generally at each other's throats, and there is very little opportunity, if any, to reach that kind of amicable agreement.

In any event, at the present time there is no requirement that is placed upon a landlord to fill out such a condition report, but the landlord does have the authority, of course, to require a tenant to pay the security deposit. The landlord can then object to the return of the security deposit if he alleges that the tenant has caused damage.

However, that is where the dispute arises and that is where oftentimes the system breaks down and either the tenant, who rightfully deserves the damage deposit, simply does not have the resources or the knowledge of his rights to pursue a collection, or he takes the matter to Small Claims Court and will oftentimes incur expenses in time and frustration way beyond perhaps the amount involved.

Mr. Speaker, on the matter of delay which I have earlier referenced, that has been a characteristic of this Government to delay on important initiatives which are clearly in need in this province. I need not reference no one further than the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) in that regard.

It is his tradition not to act until a crisis erupts and earlier today he indicated that he had certain successes. Mr. Speaker, I am the first to admit that I have had some success in pushing the Minister of Justice into certain areas and he has been active in certain areas. As I say, I am the first to admit that when I have raised an issue persistently, there has been some reaction of some sort. Although as I referenced in Question Period today certainly dealing with the housing market, some of the problems have been alleviated. A lot of it was alleviated by throwing a lot of money at the problem rather than taking a more detailed look at the solutions that were there. Certainly a significant portion of the reason that the Land Titles Office delay was cleared up was specifically the great decline in the housing market in this city and in this province. I am reminded of the old adage, Tory times are tough times, and that has certainly been the case in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Before I wrap up comments on this issue, I want to reference what I consider to be another very important issue to tenants in this province. That is the issue of the Human Rights Commission because a large number of the complaints which reach the Human Rights Commission have to do with people who are refused premises based on what they perceive to be discrimination. The Human Rights Commission will tell you that a large number of their complaints are based on landlord and tenant situations.

We know now that the Human Rights Commission has an enormous backlog and has an inability to deal swiftly with human rights matters. That is very disturbing, and even more disturbing has been the suggestion put forward by the chairman of the Human Rights Commission that the way to deal with that would be to prioritize cases based, not on their urgency, but on the particular type of discrimination that was taking place. I think that is patently wrong and that is not something which this Minister should endorse.

I certainly do not agree that we should be choosing which cases go first based on what particular type of discrimination has occurred. Given that however we still do have an enormous backlog. I simply reference for the House at this time that backlog, and remind Members of the House that in the context of landlord and tenant matters, the Human Rights Commission backlog is particularly serious. It is often the people in our society who are disadvantaged, and as I have said, who are most vulnerable, who go out to look for premises and if they are discriminated against, it is very important that we have a swift form of redress for them.

The problem with the Human Rights Commission is that if it cannot provide speedy justice in those cases of discrimination, it will have failed because speedy justice is the only justice. If you let it go nine months, oftentimes the person will have no form of redress against the landlord other than a slap on the wrist.

**Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, if I may, private Members have very little respect in this House. As it were we have a limited amount of time to present our issues and with the utmost of respect, Sir, if you would only ask the Honourable Government Members to pay attention, we would really appreciate it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I would like to remind all Honourable Members—order. The Honourable Member for St. James has the floor.

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague the Member for St. Norbert for his interjection on my behalf, and I certainly agree with his comments.

May I ask how much time I have remaining?

**Mr. Speaker:** Not much.

**Mr. Edwards:** Given that I have very little time, I will conclude by again indicating my support for this Bill and congratulating the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) on bringing forward this much needed Bill, which as I say is very impressive in its simplicity and effectiveness. I think that we will see that borne out in the landlord and tenant area in this province.

I encourage all Members to consider this Bill very seriously, and I am sure that given a common sense to look at this Bill, all Members will agree that it deserves speedy passage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, this Bill remains standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns).

#### **BILL NO. 4—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (2)**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake), Bill No. 4, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Stand?

The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the Member for Pembina—

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to enter into debate on this very serious issue. One that is not contained in this Bill has been one that I have thought about for some time, and I take great pride and pleasure in extending my acknowledgment and appreciation to the Liberal Critic for bringing this particular issue forward. It seems that when you are Minister of Transportation it is much more cumbersome to bring forward amendments than when you are a private Member.

As a matter of fact I recall, driving behind a couple of cars in the past, many occasions where I noticed that the "Friendly Manitoba" inscription on our licence plates was covered by, especially on the bottom where the "Manitoba" would be covered—"Friendly," and then the name of a retail motor dealer on the bottom.

I do not think that is proper conduct on their part, and yet it has never been changed. I hope that this

amendment deals with that. It talks about the letters and numbers on the licence plate, but I do want to discuss with the Member as to whether it in fact deals with the issue of the inscription, the lettering other than that, if he has checked carefully for legal opinion on that. Clearly what it says to me is that the actual numbering of the plate cannot be covered or obstructed in any way by dirt or by any other covering, but I am not certain that it necessarily means that "Friendly Manitoba" cannot be covered up.

I think that is important, because that slogan was put on those licence plates over the last number of years because we feel it is important to advertise our province. We are proud of our province. We want people in various parts of North America, wherever our cars owned and driven by Manitobans are driven, to know about Manitoba. We particularly want them to know that we are friendly and that we want them to come and visit us -(interjection)- even though occasionally there is a Minister that deviates from that like the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). People coming here would very much find that—they would say, well, gee, I thought people were friendly. They say that they are friendly on their licence plates, and they see this Minister performing in the House here in such a way, vitriolic, and the strong terms that he uses on Members of the Opposition, that they would not think that he would be kind and friendly. It leaves some of us innocent and certainly sincere individuals in a position where we are devastated by the remarks by the Member for Pembina as he tears one after another apart in this House.

\* (1720)

Certainly people visiting would see that and say, well, that is not friendly Manitoba, but by and large we have people who are friendly, very friendly, and they welcome people to their communities, to the province. They want people to come, they welcome them with open arms to our province and visit our province here. That is very true in the communities that I represent in my constituency, but it is true right throughout Manitoba.

I find it offensive frankly, Mr. Speaker, that people would cover up this for commercial reasons, and quite frankly that has been done all too often, by particularly motor dealers but by others as well. I do not think it should be allowed and I do not think it is appropriate. I hope that this amendment is clear in its direction, that it says very specifically that "Friendly Manitoba" cannot be covered up, and that we are not talking about just the lettering and the licence plate number but the remainder of the licence plate as well.

I hope that all Members of this House will join in supporting this particular amendment. Now, I do not know if the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) had ever seen this before. He may not be that observant to follow along behind a car. Perhaps he does not get close enough, maybe he does not like to tailgate that way; therefore, he does not actually see this.

But the fact is a person within a few feet can quickly see, "Friendly Manitoba." It is something that one can read on that licence plate from some distance, yet the Member for Arthur may not be aware of it. The fact

is it is being obstructed and obscured in many cases and it is hurting our tourism and it is certainly not a good reflection of our province.

It takes away from the whole intent of that slogan which is to attract people to come to our friendly province. With those few words, I want to indicate my support for this Bill. I hope the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) will join in supporting this Bill as well, and that we will in fact have unanimous support to stop this practice which is being engaged in in increasing frequency in this province for advertising purposes, which we do not think is appropriate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

### BILL NO. 10 THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER ACT

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), Bill No. 10, The Beverage Container Act; Loi sur les contenants de boissons, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Is there leave that this matter may stand in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health? (Agreed)

### 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, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Is there leave that this matter may remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

**Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to participate in the debate over this very important Bill introduced by the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), because it gives me a chance to put some thoughts on the record about the multicultural nature of our community and our province.

The strength of our community comes for our tremendous and rich ethnic diversity. There are no majorities in Manitoba. If you were to look at a demographic breakdown, we all know that there is no political majority and we also know that there is no demographic majority. But if you were to look at a listing of the ethnic communities that make up our province, no one single group would have more than 50 percent of the province's population. They come from all over the world.

I can remember very well campaigning in my riding in April of 1988, and I would walk down streets in the

Central Park area and within a two-block radius I would meet and talk about politics with people who had come from 15 or 16 different countries. Some had arrived many years ago, others a few years ago, and others still only a few months past. They came to Canada looking for a better life for themselves and many of them will tell you, even more importantly, a better life for their children.

One of the great strengths that we have in our society, in Canada and in Manitoba, is the freedom to express that difference. There is no one single group that dominates. We are a society made up of many peoples. We believe that our strength as a community comes from that very diversity that the fabric of our community gets sustenance and strength that it comes from peoples all over the worlds.

They come here for many different reasons. Some come here because they are escaping political or religious persecution elsewhere. Others come because they are looking for more economic opportunity. In my own case, my grandparents came to Canada at the turn of the century escaping religious persecution from the czar in Russia, in 1905. All four of my grandparents were the subjects of persecution and they came to Canada because they believed that their children and their children's children—and that is me, Mr. Speaker—would have a chance in Canada to try to fully develop their potential, and that kind of freedom is freedom we all share. The different ethnic communities integrate differently over time, but what is most comforting for people who just come off an airplane or a boat or a train to a new country is, are there people already settled who share a language, who share a culture, who share a religion, who have common experiences with them to make the process of integrating into a new society easier. For if you do not speak the language and if you have no common ground when you arrive, you find the process of adjusting to a harsh climate and often a foreign language to be a very daunting experience.

What we have shown, as Canadians in general, and I think Manitobans in particular, is a generosity of spirit toward those who have chosen Manitoba as their home. We believe it is important that we have the freedom to express that difference, but we also believe it is important to share the common values as Canadians. This particular Bill, Mr. Speaker, is very interesting because it recognizes that those communities have a sense of identity and a sense of self and they wish to express that as part of their contribution to our society as a whole.

What has this Government done? How has this Government chosen to deal with the ethnic communities in Manitoba? Well, it says to the ethnic communities that, no, they have no autonomy within themselves, no, they ought not to be given the authority to elect representatives to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, a power that they had before, a power that the Government has taken away. I think the Government is sending some very important and disturbing signals to the ethnic communities of this province. First of all, the Government is saying, we know who could represent your interests better than you know yourself, and that indicates a kind of arrogance that I do not think is

being very well received in the ethnic communities of Manitoba.

Members of those communities want to say, we have the power, the authority, the confidence, the maturity as a group to say to the Government that we think these people are the ones who best represent our interests, and the Government has said, no, we disagree. We are going to choose those representatives of your community and we do not care whether or not the democratic process is used or not. That is the first thing that the Government has done, which we think is a step backwards, and also signals that the Government is less concerned about nurturing community groups and more concerned about imposing its own will from the top.

If you will, Mr. Speaker, another opportunity for political patronage, and the Minister of Culture, Recreation and—

**An Honourable Member:** The Liberals are opposed to political patronage.

**Mr. Carr:** Well, we know that the Minister responsible for Seniors is not opposed to patronage, but the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) has accused the Liberal Party of playing political politics with the multicultural issue that faces Manitoba.

I do not know if we are to take that as a compliment or an insult but what we do know is that ethnic communities certainly would think that the politics of electing their own representatives to the Manitoba Intercultural Council is a positive thing because it really is at the very root of our commitment to a democratic process.

\* (1730)

So the Government has said that, no, the ethnic communities cannot elect their own representatives to the Council, the Government will use this opportunity for more patronage appointments; and secondly, the Government has said that they will not allow the Manitoba Intercultural Council to disburse funds. It has only an advisory role to Government. So the Government then is going to choose its advisers and then it is going to decide what advice to choose and what advice to ignore.

So really what the Government has done with this sort of parallel blow to the Manitoba Intercultural Council is said to these communities that they ought not to be able to decide who sits on this council, and besides, the council has no real power anyway. I think it was Oscar Wilde, Mr. Speaker, who said that the best thing to do with good advice is pass it on.

**An Honourable Member:** Oscar Peterson said that.

**Mr. Carr:** The Minister of Health says it was Oscar Peterson who said that. He might have played it, but I do not think he said it.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has made two or three mistakes in the handling of ethnic communities, and

particularly with the Manitoba Intercultural Council, and these are serious mistakes that I think will come back to haunt this Government as it seeks to parade its record to the ethnic communities of Manitoba at election time when leaders of those communities will let the Government know as it has let the Opposition know, and how it is I am sure letting the Government know now through phone calls and letters that it disapproves fundamentally with the way this Government has chosen to play this issue out. No faith in community organizations and only another opportunity for patronage.

What does this Bill recommend? The first is that the Manitoba Intercultural Council should have the authority to elect its own presiding member. That those people who have been chosen by the communities themselves, the process that we recommend should be able to say we are going to choose the person who is going to lead us, rather than a Government imposing its own selection.

Secondly, this Bill recommends and would establish in legislation that the executive secretary or the executive director, as we would call him or her, of the Manitoba Intercultural Council should be appointed by the members of the council itself and not by the Government. Who is the executive secretary accountable to if it works for the council but is appointed by Government? There is a kind of a schizophrenia that any employee would feel. Am I responsible to the person who appointed me, or am I responsible to the person with whom I work on a day-to-day basis? There is that kind of confusion that the Minister has allowed to prevail in the way the MIC is structured.

The third thing that the Bill does is authorize the Manitoba Intercultural Council giving faith and some sense of belief that community organizations have enough intelligence, maturity and insight to decide for themselves how those monies ought to be spent. Now we could give the Minister some examples of funding agencies in this province which may lead her to come to the same conclusion that the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) has come to in the presentation of this Bill.

The Manitoba Arts Council is the provincial body that disburses funds to the cultural community in Manitoba. It does not have only an advisory capacity to the Minister. It does not recommend to the Minister that the Winnipeg Symphony, or the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, or small theatre companies should get X number of dollars. The Minister decides, as Governments must, how much is to be spent in that part of community life. The Minister will tell the Manitoba Arts Council that it has a particular budget, and the council is then free to determine because it is closer to the community where the needs are and how those monies should be spent.

Does the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) want to get involved in deciding whether theatre company A, or theatre company B, should be given grants from the Government? Is the Minister wanting herself to make decisions about the criteria for grants to theatre companies? Does she want to decide herself, or through one or two members of her staff, whether or not one

company is deserving of more than another? No, because it is the policy of this Government and it was the policy of the Roblin Government, which established the Manitoba Arts Council, and every succeeding Government since that an arm's length relationship between the Government and the cultural community is in the interests both of the Government and of that community in which it serves.

My second example for the Minister is the Winnipeg Arts Advisory Council which elects from within disciplines of culture its own membership, and it has worked very well. So the theatrical community, the dance community, the music community, and the artistic community decide amongst themselves who will represent them on this council, and they make decisions on the basis of their intimate knowledge of the needs of the community.

I suggest that when the Minister is trying to determine whether or not she is going to support this Bill, and if she is looking for a way in which she can support this Bill, I point to her at least those two examples of cultural institutions in Manitoba that give some meaning to the provisions of the Bill, this very excellent Bill, which was introduced by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles).

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that in this rich society that we have in Manitoba, from people who come from all over the world, there is a pride of place, there is a sense of being part of the entire community and also a real attachment to roots. These people come from places with widely varying cultures, traditions, languages and religions. They believe they have a contribution to make and they have made that contribution in such a fulsome way since Manitoba became a province and indeed before.

I believe that it is in the interest of this Government, and it is in the interests of this Legislature to say by example to those communities that we have faith in their judgment, we trust their ability to decide amongst themselves. That is the essence of this very progressive legislation and I commend it to all Members of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to pass on some comments in what I hope will be a constructive fashion to my honourable friend, the Minister. I note that this Bill was introduced and died on the Order Paper during the last Session, and I find that too bad. It was originally, for the Minister's edification, introduced in November 28, 1988, by the former Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately the debate was adjourned, but I am sure that the Minister was aware of that. I am sure she takes all private Members' legislation very seriously and gives it the utmost consideration, Mr. Speaker.

Let us just review up front the basic intent of the Bill and see if there is any room for co-operation or for movement, or if there is weight that can be lent to the arguments that are being put forward to amend the Bill. It is my sincere belief, and our sincere belief on this side of the House, that these are not randomly thought out but well thought out, hopefully constructive



suggestions with examples that may help the system work in the best interests of all Manitobans, which is what I hope we are all here for. I can understand and accept philosophical differences as to how we reach the goal, but certainly we will never get anywhere, Mr. Speaker, if we are not prepared to listen to constructive criticism and good ideas on how we can improve legislation on behalf of Manitobans.

There are three main points. First, we would like to ensure that presiding Members of the MIC be elected from the membership of that council, and that is not an unreasonable suggestion in relation to the amendments. We all, from our political Parties, from the captains of our hockey teams, from our classroom presidents, elect from the membership at large those people who are willing. It is only in the most extreme autocratic organizations or autocratic dictatorships where individuals are appointed and subjected. That type of leadership, Mr. Speaker, breeds contempt amongst the following. Leaders are only there by the will of the individuals who they are leading to support them, to assist them, to work with them, and co-operate with them, and what better method of having an individual lead or champion a fight than by having his peers or his colleagues select him or her for that particular role? I see on the fundamental basis of logic and common sense that allowing the election from the membership of a group, there is simply nothing wrong with that, so I see no logical reason why that cannot be supported.

\* (1740)

Secondly, we want to ensure that senior staffpersons of MIC, that is the executive secretary as it is currently named, be employed by MIC. Well again, Mr. Speaker, people who are going to be working within a structure, whether it be a corporate structure in a company, whether they work within a political Party, whether they work in any level, generally you request, you respect, and you get the respect and the loyalty of your senior administrators, and when they report to the executive, the executive employs them.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the very innuendo or suggestion of again placing a person in a controllership position slanders the credibility of the executive to monitor, but if that is a concern, if there is a concern that the communities are not governing themselves in accordance with pre-established rules, there are audit procedures, there are controls, and there are ministerial responsibilities that allow review and investigation and co-operation and assistance. To place your own watch guard in, whether that person is wanted or not wanted, seems to run counterproductive to developing a sense of effort and a sense of community involvement and a sense of wanting to work together to address the problem.

I see some difficulties, Mr. Speaker, if I as a representative of a group of people have an individual forced upon me on the top that I have not elected, that I have not voted for, that I am supposed to support to be my guiding officer. I see the bookkeeper that is going to be the chief executive reporting to the board of directors being somebody else who is brought in

from outside and imposed upon me. I see a tremendous growth in suspicion. I see a lack of reward for self-fulfillment. I see a very cautious and guarded and unrealistic approach to trying to elicit and encourage the co-operation of the very people that you want to encourage and co-operate.

You do not get anywhere, Mr. Speaker, by doing it all yourself. I think that if you can assist these people to develop their own methods, that is, provide them elastic parameters, provide them guidelines, provide them professional people to help their chosen administrative staff, let them elect their own individual officers and their own support people in those capacities, you are going to get a richer and a more positive investment of their time and a feeling of a return on the investment of their time.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, you can then have every right in the world to go back and say, as we have all done in all of our constituency areas or in any of the public representations, come to us to help us as leaders, organize things. We say to the people it is your responsibility, it is your party, or it is your group, you organize it, you choose a spokesman, you come, you create the initiative. I cannot be expected and Government should not be expected to do it all for people, but to force the heavy hand of Government on them is equally wrong. I think that a serious consideration should be given to the second reason, fundamental reason for this Bill.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, the final reason is the most important reason that I would like to bring to the attention of the Minister, and I would quite seriously like her to give every consideration to the third reason. That is providing the councils with the authority to disburse funds allocated the council through the Lotteries grant system. I recognize the ultimate decision-making and I recognize the power of the people in terms of the rise and fall of Government popularity, and I am very familiar with all of that.

I will bring to the attention of the Minister, experiences that my former colleagues on city council, the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) and the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) had in relation to assisting or funding the arts communities. On a regular basis we were continually lobbied by the arts groups for a bigger portion of the pie, a bigger chunk of money. We got incredible pressures from the opera, from the symphony, from the art gallery, from the ballet. It was almost like it seemed which one could hire the best salesperson or put on the best public relations show. We tried to implement a needs analysis and reward those that had a bigger need or did not have a bigger need. We came up with a very simple solution.

We gave all of that group, the Arts Council group, a block of money, and we said be masters in your own houses, develop your own formulas, dole out the money to those people in your industry who need it. We will negotiate with you on a regular basis annually the total amount of the grant, but do not ask us to decide whether the Winnipeg Ballet should get 5 percent more than the Art Gallery, or do not ask us to decide that the symphony orchestra should get more than the

Playhouse Theatre. You are members of your own community, you elect your own representatives, you should be able to work together and you should be able to address this issue. They did, Mr. Speaker, they did address that issue, and they addressed it in that fashion. The money was given out without any political interference, without any difficulties or criticisms in terms of favouring a particular group over another group. The very fact that a Government wishes to maintain control of the individual and piddly little amounts that they want to dole out, that they force people to grovel for -(interjection)- I am sorry?

**An Honourable Member:** Iron fist on an iron lady, that is all they are talking about.

**Mr. Angus:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) is making some comments from his chair and he is suggesting perhaps that the Honourable Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) - (interjection)- Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments and the heckling from the benches of the Government, but it seems to me that the third fundamental reason that this amendment should be seriously considered is that it removes any possibility of impropriety in terms of the giving of money to specific interest groups. It is a very easy solution that allows you to give a total amount of money, yes, argue the money depending on the ability to provide the total block grant on a yearly basis.

**An Honourable Member:** Shirking their responsibilities.

**Mr. Angus:** The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) suggests that it is a shirking of their responsibilities, and I just totally disagree with that because I think that -(interjection)- Okay. Mr. Speaker, if the Members across want to get into a specific debate on the specifics of the issues, I would be more than pleased to try and address them because, believe me, every one of those questions can be legitimately and logically answered. The Minister from her chair says, how are you going to administer it or control it if something goes wrong? Well, you do have the auditors, and you do have those people who can go in and assist these people.

But, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if you want to encourage the ethnic communities and the minority groups in the province to participate actively in this, you do it by giving them a fair system that will allow them to access the money. Let them dispute and argue and work out amongst their own groups the division of this money. Let them figure out who has the most need and make the best cases. Let them elect their own council and let them have their own executive people that they hire and employ and are accountable for. If the Minister and the Government is really concerned about the watchdog aspect, then they can provide the external auditors to control and to guide and to help them achieve the best results.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about the City of Winnipeg system of giving block money to the Arts group, cultural grant, and among the recipients of that group was Rainbow Stage. We know from experience that where

people are bent on beating the system, or they are bent on making a system not work, or taking advantage of the system, it cannot possibly be done.

That does not mean that the system is not good. What these amendments are proposing are very solid, very good, and concrete ideas that will allow the cultural communities to elect their own people, to hire their own executives and to administer the amounts of money in a system that they themselves have decided is going to be in the best interest of their groups. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is with the utmost respect that I make these suggestions to the Government and to the Minister responsible because it is based on the fact that I have seen these things work and that logic and a practical application of these amendments will see a much, much better piece of legislation. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)

### BILL NO. 17—THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson, Bill No. 17, The Employment Standards Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who has six minutes remaining.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Minister of Northern Affairs ask how much time I had. If the Minister of Northern Affairs is willing to give leave, and if other Members are willing to give leave, I am glad to speak at length on this Bill. It is an important Bill. I could speak right until six o'clock, if there is agreement by all Members of the House.- (interjection)- Oh, that way I could speak for one hour next time.

\* (1750)

I do want to talk for the remaining time that I have about this Bill because it is an important Bill. I outlined some of the details last time and I want to throw out a challenge, Mr. Speaker, on this Bill. I outlined the need for greater protection, greater notice for laid-off workers. I outlined the need for severance pay which we do not have at the present time. I outlined the need for job search leave and this Bill would accomplish that. It would bring in 40 hours of leave for workers who are being affected by plant closure or layoff so that they can go and look for work while they are on their layoff notice period. That is an important matter. I also outlined the need for job search leave and this Bill would accomplish that. It would bring in 40 hours of leave for workers who have been affected by plant closure or layoff so that they can go and look for work while they are on their layoff notice period. That is an important matter.

I also outlined the fact that this Bill would give for the first time in Manitoba the right of the employees

to the first refusal on any offer to buy the plant. What that would mean, Mr. Speaker, is that they would be able to have the option of keeping that plant open. I am not suggesting that in each and every case they would be able to do so, but this country is full of examples of where employees have taken over the operation of companies that were being closed by multinational corporations and actually it turned them around. In many cases they made a profit and they have been able to operate and maintain the corporation and continue the employment.

There are many ways in which that could be done, through workers co-ops, for example, or through sharehold purchase arrangements. I think that deserves a lot of consideration because there are many plants that are actually not even unprofitable but are less profitable than other changes in the corporation's chain. I would suggest that all Members of the Legislature should look and make sure that employees have that opportunity.

I want to start a challenge because when I did bring in this Bill originally I, quite frankly, expected the Conservatives would oppose it. From the information I have, they have indicated that. I look forward to their comments on the record on this Bill. But I was, quite frankly, looking for some support from the Liberal Party, and thus far there has not only not been that support, but the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) in fact beat the Conservatives to making a statement on this Bill. She told the Winnipeg Sun that she thought this would be too draconian on employers.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about people, long-serving employees. We are talking about very basic rights, giving improved notice, severance pay, the right to purchase a plant. I cannot see how that is going to be onerous on employers. All I would say is it would be fair. It would provide a fairer balance in the present situation where you may have worked for 30 or 40 years at a plant but you have no rights whatsoever, very limited rights anyway if you are laid off.

I would like to suggest to the Liberal Members that they perhaps talk to their Leader because I am not even sure if they caucused it. I do not know if the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), for example, would have difficulty in supporting this Bill. There are many people who have been affected by layoffs in St. Boniface constituency. We will let him speak for himself. I hope he will participate in the debate, but in the constituency of St. Boniface there have been many people affected by the closures in the packing industry, for example.

I would suggest that he might want to look at the Bill and perhaps see if he can shift the position of his Leader because I think it could be support, and the same thing with the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus). I am sure he has had Members in his constituency, or the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) or the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson), the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), each and every Member of the Legislature has had people who have had people laid off. Well, the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) says, I am trying to put words in his mouth. I wish I could. I wish I could put the words

in his mouth, I will support this Bill, and that is what I hope he will get up and say during debate.

I quite frankly think that there is room for common ground on this. I even think, by the way, that the Conservatives could support this Bill if they really sat down to it because in Ontario, when they brought in the best plant closure legislation in the province, it was a minority Government situation, a minority Conservative Government, that under the pressure from the NDP in that province, brought in significant changes to the Employment Standards Act in that province that brought in the best plant closure legislation in Canada. If this Bill were to be passed, Mr. Speaker, this Bill would be the best legislation of its kind in Canada, and we are in a minority situation where we have one advantage where each Party can put forward ideas. Quite frankly, I really do not mind if other Parties steal our ideas. It has happened in previous situations, particularly among Conservatives. If the Conservatives want to adopt this Bill or even portions of it, I think we could see that parts of it are approved. The same thing with the Liberals. If any two Parties in this House support a Bill, there is some chance that it can be passed. I would ask the Liberal Members to think about what this Bill really accomplishes. Bill No. 17, it is the same Bill essentially that was introduced last Session. It is not onerous on employers. I really think the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) spoke out of gut reaction rather than after having given this matter thought.

But I really do not see how any Member of the Liberal Caucus here today and other Members of the Liberal Caucus could not support this Bill. I would like to see how they can explain to people in their constituency who will be laid off and the same thing goes for the Conservative Members. How they will be able to explain to them if there is—and there will be further layoffs—how they did not support this Bill when it was introduced, how in fact in the case of the Liberal Party their Leaders oppose it, and I assume in the case of the Conservative Government that they have opposed it too. They have not actually been as clear as the Liberals on this issue. I do not know if that indicates any hope at all, but I look forward to some comments from the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), for example.

So the bottom line is, this is an important Bill. I am throwing a challenge to the Members, including the peanut gallery there, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). They are making fun of this Bill, but it is important to workers and they should support it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Inkster.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), that debate be adjourned on this Bill.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

**Thursday, October 12, 1989**

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**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreed. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).