

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
2:30 o'clock, Tuesday, April 30, 1974

Opening Prayer by Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Before we proceed I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery where we have 35 students Grade 11 and 12 of the Teulon Collegiate. These students are under the direction of Mr. Reinsch and Mr. Masters. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Gimli.

On behalf of all the honourable members I welcome you here today.

Presenting Petitions; Reading and Receiving Petitions; Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources.

MR. CLERK: Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources met on Tuesday, April 23, 1974 . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed we dispense with the reading? Well if I can't get a consensus from the House then the Clerk will finish reading the order.

MR. JAMES H. BILTON (Swan River): Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if it might be read into the record for those of us that didn't attend the meeting this morning.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Proceed.

MR. CLERK: Your Committee met on Tuesday, April 23, 1974, and on Tuesday, April 30, 1974, to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ended October 31, 1973.

Your Committee received all information desired by any member from the officers of the Corporation and the staff with respect to the Report.

On Tuesday, April 30, 1974, your Committee adopted the Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ended October 31, 1973, as presented.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Flin Flon that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

HON. SIDNEY GREEN, Q.C. (Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management) (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an Order of the House No. 100 on motion of the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, and a Return to an Order of the House No. 101 on motion of the Honourable the Member for Charleswood. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm filing the Moose Lake Loggers Limited Report for the term ending March 31, 1973. And I've indicated, Mr. Speaker, I was holding this back for some time because the report is rather favourable but this year's situation is a complete reverse and I hoped that both would be available at the same time, but having made that indication I'm filing last year's report.

MR. SPEAKER: Any other Ministerial Statements or Tabling of Reports? The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. BEN HANUSCHAK (Minister of Education) (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Annual Report of the Public Schools Finance Board for the year ending December 31, 1973.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion; Introduction of Bills; Questions; The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

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MR. HARRY E. GRAHAM (Birtle-Russell): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Morris that the House do now adjourn to consider a matter of urgent public importance, namely, that fishermen of Northern Manitoba will be unable to carry on an economically viable fishing operation unless some form of assistance is provided by the

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(MR. GRAHAM cont'd) Government of Manitoba to assist in defraying rising operational costs north of the 53rd parallel; and furthermore since the opening of the fishing season is imminent fishermen must be apprised immediately of any program of assistance which will affect their operation.

MR. SPEAKER: As is customary when a motion of urgency is proposed I would hope that the honourable members would address themselves to two issues in the five minutes in respect to this resolution. The first one is whether there is merit for this Assembly to debate an issue based on the assumption of insufficient return to fishermen by a Crown agency which does not fall under the administrative jurisdiction of this Assembly; and secondly, of course whether there is a bona fide urgency to debate at this time. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, the matter of urgency I think is one that anyone must recognize if they understand anything about the problems of transportation in Northern Manitoba. The fishing season opens on the first of June. We are just one month away from it. It takes considerable time for fishermen to prepare their gear and move their base of operations out to the lake. This has to be done by chartered aircraft. They have to make the various arrangements, but on top of that they must know as quickly as possible what the possible economic . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I would again appeal to the honourable member to address himself to urgency of debate not urgency of the matter. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the urgency and this is the urgency that the fishermen must know as quickly as possible what their economic situation is. We have urgency in that respect, Mr. Speaker. We also have urgency in the fact that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation which we have no jurisdiction over has not informed the fishermen. So that we in this House have an obligation there to pressure the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to tell the fishermen as quickly as possible. The fishermen must be notified as quickly as possible so they can make up their mind whether it is economically viable or not.

The urgency, Sir, the urgency is paramount at this time that the fishermen be informed. And so, Mr. Speaker, that is why I have raised this issue at this time, the first possible opportunity I had. I had tried to deal with it under the Department of Co-ops but the total picture is larger than that that would be debatable under co-operative development. So I use this means, Sir, the urgency is immediate, the fishermen have to know now so they can make up their mind whether they are going to fish or whether they are going to ignore that avenue as a means of livelihood.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. EDWARD SHCREYER (Premier) (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I would not deny for one moment that the subject matter is not important. It is important and the problem that is being faced by those who have engaged and are attempting to engage in fishing on northern lakes is a very great problem. Those who have taken time to attempt to analyze the economics of the fishing industry, particularly as those economics apply in Northern Manitoba, realize that the fishermen face really a very dark picture insofar as profit margins or livelihood income is concerned. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree that there is urgency of debate because that presupposes that it is possible to come to some conclusions here and now today. Whatever can be done in terms of ascertaining the relative responsibility of the province and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is being done by staff people and I understand that a meeting certainly has to take place between all those provinces and those Ministers that report to the province on behalf of the activities of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it has to be pointed out that the kind of economic problem that is faced by those attempting to fish on the more northerly lakes, on the far northerly lakes, that the problem is basically one of transportation and no amount of debate is going to change that fact today. It is not as though the problem is one caused by the fishermen themselves, nor is it, Sir, caused by co-operatives. It is caused by distance and the margin, I fully agree with the Member for Birtle-Russell, the margin, when one takes what the f.o.b. price of fish - let us take as an example medium whitefish, 26 cents a pound, deduct the costs of transportation. The rest is clear.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Again I appeal to the honourable member to address himself to urgency of debate and not to urgency of the matter itself. The Honourable First Minister.

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MR. SCHREYER: I'm attempting to do that, Sir, I'm agreeing with the Member for Birtle-Russell that there is a very obvious economic problem. It has largely to do with transportation. It has almost everything to do with transportation and not with any other single factor. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent to ascertain, not just by Manitoba, but by Saskatchewan and Alberta as well, as to what price levels will be determined by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation for the coming year. It is my understanding that those price levels have not yet been struck and therefore there is hardly urgency of debate in advance of a setting of an annual price by the corporation which should be coming very soon.

We fully understand that there is a problem. We also understand that the jurisdiction is one that is a rather diffuse and shared jurisdiction as between Canada and at least three provinces and possibly four. Certainly involving Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The problem of distance of transportation and the cost that accompany that distance are a problem that have to be faced by fishermen and governments of all three provinces that are part of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board's area of operation and jurisdiction. And we're all aware that there is need to attempt to negotiate a better price, but that, Sir, is again something that cannot be ascertained by debate in this Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Member for Wolseley, Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. I. H. ASPER (Leader of the Liberal Party) (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I have the feeling that the debate on the motion may be a mere formality for without any disrespect to you, Sir, it has been long apparent that we on this side have had a difference of opinion as to what constitutes emergency or a matter of urgency under the rule. Mr. Speaker, I don't expect, based on the precedence that has been established in the interpretation of the rules so far, that you will be inclined to grant the motion, but, Sir, I urge you . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I wish the honourable member would address himself to the resolution before the House and not reflect on past decisions of the Chair or of anyone else in that regard. I think he should know the rules by now that this is not done. The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I was merely dealing, as do you, Sir, and others in this Chamber with precedent, because precedent is the basis on which you'll make your ruling I would think.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that as a matter of principle the Liberal Party supports on two grounds the motion is that there is - every test that you have ever laid down to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, has been met in the resolution. There's no means of debate which has often been a means or a ruling by you to deny motions such as this. There's no means of immediate debate before the House. We finished supply on Capital and the Estimates of the Mines Minister where this can be debated. There is virtually no assurance because of the time and the lack of order of meeting department estimates that we will ever get to Mines. We don't know that, Mr. Speaker. And so there is no other opportunity, the first test that you've laid down. Therefore on that ground the resolution is rational.

Mr. Speaker, there's another reason that you should allow the debate because yesterday in this Chamber and I thought it remarkable that the First Minister at least twice in his address to the Chamber just now used certain words, Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Mr. Speaker, I look at Votes and Proceedings from yesterday and we were ruled out of order. We were not allowed to use the term Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. The Chair ruled that we could not debate on matters . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Again the honourable member is reflecting on a decision of this House in the debate that is before us now, which again is contrary to our rules of procedure. I appeal to the honourable member to utilize his know-how, to state what he has to state without doing it and circumventing the proper procedure. The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, the reason I made that point was that a ruling was made yesterday. The ruling was challenged, the ruling was sustained and the First Minister just three minutes ago violated the rule. He began discussing the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation as part of this, when we were denied that right yesterday.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I am going to again once more appeal to the honourable member. And I do not wish to debate with him, but let me at least make one thing clear to him.

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(MR. SPEAKER cont'd) Yesterday's debate was a totally different area, totally different arena, and totally different guidelines in respect to it. You were in Committee of the Whole. And that is the last thing I'm going to say on that subject. The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue is urgency; urgency as you've defined it. The honourable member has . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Again, let me indicate the rules are not my rules, they're the rules of this House and it's not my urgency but the urgency of the House as they have defined it, and that's what the honourable member is addressing himself to.

MR. ASPER: I beg to differ, Mr. Speaker. You have interpreted the term urgency, not this Chamber. It is your authority and only your authority, Mr. Speaker, and we are asking you again to make an interpretation of the word "urgency". Now, the honourable member has stated and has not been repudiated, for no one can disagree, that there is a certain lead time required to put those ships in the water. That time is now and that is a practical fact and that's what makes the case for urgency. As well, Mr. Speaker, it is well-known that the victim or the beneficiary of action by government as a result of emergency debate where all members can express their opinion and give their advice to government is the consumer of Manitoba, not the fishermen as much as the consumers.

Mr. Speaker, if we can, in a moment when prices are rising, when we're faced with milk prices increases, insurance increases and everything else increasing, if we can take a step today, not a month from today when it's too late, to do something for the consumers by cushioning the impact of higher costs then we owe that responsibility. Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared nor is the Liberal party prepared to trust any more experimental programs that the government would come up with on its own. We've seen the co-op program, we've seen the experimental things that have not produced results. We want debate. The First Minister made the case for debate when he said the picture is dark. He said there is a problem. Mr. Speaker, the First Minister made the case that warrants your ruling that this debate is in order.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the honourable members for their contribution in respect to urgency. I also specifically at the beginning had raised a couple of doubts in my mind which have not been answered. Consequently I must ask the House whether they wish the debate to proceed.

Is the House prepared to proceed with the debate? All those in favour please say aye. Order please. I'm putting the motion. The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Are we to assume then that you have accepted the motion and are now putting it before the House for agreement of the House? Because the first thing that must be done is that the motion be declared in order. If that is done then the motion is put to the House to determine whether or not the House are prepared to debate. Are we to assume now that you have accepted that motion? That it is in order?--(Interjection)--

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, it is in order. Correct. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell have a further point?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, that remark from the Minister of Labour was uncalled for.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I have not received affirmation from the House whether you wish to proceed or not. I was just placing the motion before the House. The Honourable Member for Arthur state his point of order.

MR. J. DOUGLAS WATT (Arthur): You read the motion, then you accepted the motion?

MR. SPEAKER: I have not read the motion for that specific reason.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. May I for the edification of honourable members read the rule so that they not jump to conclusions: "After any explanation made under sub-rule (2) the Speaker shall rule on whether or not the motion under sub-rule (1) is in order and of urgent public importance. And if he rules in favour of the motion he will then put the question, Shall the debate proceed?" The Speaker is trying to put that question. Will honourable members please co-operate with him.

MR. SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable House Leader. Shall the debate proceed?

QUESTION put, motion carried.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must also thank all members of the Chamber because I now realize, Mr. Speaker, that every member in this Chamber is just as concerned as I am and the Member for Thompson and the problems that are facing the fishermen of Northern Manitoba. During debate in the Department of Co-operative Development we have tried to bring forward some of the problems that face the fishermen. We haven't been able to bring them all forward, Mr. Speaker.

When I attended a meeting in the Town of Ilford of the fishermen's co-op there, the Member for Thompson was also in attendance and at that time representatives of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation were in attendance at that meeting and the representative at that time told the fishermen that he could not at that time reveal to the fishermen what price he was going to be paid for his fish this coming season. Mr. Speaker, we are only one month away from the fishing season, and if the fisherman does not know what the price is going to be how can he possibly, how can he possibly make up his mind whether he is going to fish or not. He knows that his costs are going to escalate; he was told at that meeting that air freight rates which last year were \$1.35 have now increased to \$1.60; so that he is placed in a very impossible position. If the cost of freight is going to increase then I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that maybe we in this Legislature should be looking at some form of freight assistance to assist the fishermen in the far north. We know that a subsidy has been used for the farmers in Western Canada. We've had a freight assistance subsidy for many years for farmers in the movement of their grain. We know that a subsidy has existed in the beef industry. We know that a subsidy has existed in the hog industry. Why not have a subsidy in the fishing industry, Mr. Speaker? Why not? We know that the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg do not face the same freight or express costs that the fishermen on North Indian Lake face. We know that his transportation costs are roughly one-tenth of what those of the fishermen on North Indian Lake. And yet the structure of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is such that the price paid to the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg is exactly the same as the price that is paid to the fishermen in North Indian Lake. And yet the costs of operation are vastly different.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know where exactly you can draw the line between areas. I have given you the two extremes, the Lake Winnipeg fisherman and North Indian Lake. But I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, and I suggest to this entire House that perhaps we should be looking at a subsidy for freight and express which will assist those at the northern-most end of the province who face the highest costs, highest air freight costs, the highest rail express costs, in order to have them compete economically and have an opportunity of the same financial return as the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, I know that my time is limited but I make this plea to the House at this time; that perhaps we should be considering this as only one suggestion put forward. There may be others and I hope that other members of the House will enter into the debate and put forward other suggestions. But I think that we must consider some possible means of assisting the fishermen in Northern Manitoba in the problems that face them today when rapidly escalating costs are literally eroding any possible means that they have of operating an economically viable operation. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier this afternoon, I quite agree that the subject matter is important and I will not presume to go tracing back over the question of whether or not there is however urgency. Since debate is taking place I merely want to take this opportunity to emphasize with as much certainty as the Member for Birtle-Russell that there is admittedly a very serious economic problem that faces those who attempt to engage in commercial fishing in some of the more northerly lakes. However, it is a misconception to think that the price which shall be announced, set and announced to fishermen so that they will have some idea of where they're going, what they'll be earning, is within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government. The matter of setting . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The undertones and overtones are too loud. I can't hear the Honourable First Minister. The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that the jurisdiction and responsibility under, the terms under which the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation operate leave with it the responsibility for determining realistic price levels and for announcing same. And the impression shouldn't be left for a moment that it is within the powers of a provincial

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(MR. SCHREYER cont'd) government to be determining price levels that shall be offered for commercial fish within our boundaries any more than is the case in the sister provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan which also operate in this respect under the aegis of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. What is the nature of the problem? It is simply that given the price levels which applied last year, for example, and given the freight costs that are involved in air lifting fish from the lake to the packing plant and from the packing plant by rail or road to the processing plant in Transcona, those freight costs because of distance are such that it leaves a very small, admittedly very small margin indeed for the fisherman. Therefore there is need to ascertain whether the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has any new policy or proposals in mind. Even as we are speaking here this afternoon officials of the three provinces are meeting here in Winnipeg this afternoon to attempt to come forward with some new approach that can be presented to the Federal Minister responsible for the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, the Honourable Jack Davis.

It would be true to say, Mr. Speaker, that since the inception of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in 1968 or early 1969 that it has operated in a way that on balance is beneficial to fishermen, but there is nothing miraculous about the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. It cannot overcome the great disadvantage that is inherent in the freight costs that are involved in trying to get fish to market from some of the lakes that are a great distance removed, a great distance away. If one could just pick some examples. Of course the problem is complicated by great variation as between species of fish. I would think that there is no problem in terms of earning a sufficient margin or a decent livelihood if one is able to fish successfully large numbers of jumbo whitefish or large whitefish or pickerel but that's not the way in which reality operates. If the greater volume of the catch is medium whitefish or medium pickerel then the margin after transportation costs are deducted, say from the Ilford base of operation or up in Northern Indian Lake or Southern Indian Lake, then the margins that we look at are as low as one and two cents a pound; and for certain species of commercial fish that bring an even smaller price f.o.b. Transcona, the cost of freight, etc., exceeds that of the price and there is actually a negative figure.

That being so, Mr. Speaker, all we can conclude is that if there is a desire to attempt to keep pushing northward the boundaries of viable commercial fishing then there has to be a willingness on the part of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and/or in conjunction with provincial governments to bring about either a pooling of price or some kind of subsidy that will bear some relationship to transportation costs. But it would be irresponsible on the part of the province to proceed unilaterally and on its own before there has been an adequate discussion of current price levels with sister provinces that are also concerned and with the authorities administering the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. That exercise is being engaged in even as we are speaking here today, has been in the past and will be pursued with, hopefully, consistency and with some sense of urgency in the days and weeks ahead.

But many people are trying to find scapegoats why this problem should be so. There are those who would want to blame the fishermen; there are those who would want to blame the co-operatives of local fishermen; there are those who would want to blame the advisory service that is provided by the Department of Co-op Services, when all along, Mr. Speaker, the main, the principal nub of the problem is one of attempting to bring to a viable commercial level of operation a commercial fishery that may be located several hundred of miles distance, particularly those which require some airlifting of fish to the packing plant and from there by rail several hundreds of miles, in all of this is simply trying to I suppose go beyond the borders of reality. Still if for social reasons it is felt that even where it is marginally viable or even on the negative side of viability that useful social purposes are served and also that there is some advantage to the consumer, then of course it is up to the Crown, both federal and provincial, to consider relative roles of responsibility and possible involvements with subsidy.

And I say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that this matter is serious. We have been aware for some time, some considerable time, that the more distant a particular commercial fishery, the closer to the line of margin or non-viability that particular fishery is, unless of course it happens to be a particular fishing ground that is blessed, lucky in having a relatively high proportion of larger fish of the higher priced species. But by and large of course as I indicated, the greater part of the production has to do with a price level of 26, 27 cents a pound which doesn't leave enough to cover transportation and related expenses and leave enough margin for

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(MR. SCHREYER cont'd) those trying to earn their livelihood. What is particularly hard to take, Mr. Speaker, is the suggestion, implicit or otherwise, that the fishing industry even as far north as you care to go is perfectly viable, that the only problem is that of fishermen themselves or because of inadequate co-op services or some such thing.

One need only reflect back on the decades that have gone by and the fishing industry, particularly before the days of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, was always one that left very little to those that were engaged in it. There has been some improvement; unfortunately the amount of improvement has been too modest, but at least let's identify the root cause of the problem.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK, Q.C. (Leader of the Official Opposition) (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of the Premier and I must say that I think he's to be congratulated; after five years he's now determined that the fishing industry in Northern Manitoba is not going to be viable.

Mr. Speaker, the price range now being paid by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is more or less the same price range that was paid five years ago. But what has happened, Mr. Speaker is that the government as a result of the disclosure of the way in which the Department of Co-operative Development has handled its affairs is now seeking desperately to try and find an excuse for what has taken place. There are many reasons for the problems today, and I want to deal with them but I don't want any misconception - to use the Premier's words - to arise that somehow or other what the government now wants to negotiate on behalf of the fishermen should have not been something that should have been negotiated many many years ago if the problem was as significant as it is represented it is today. The problem today is that the fishermen are not prepared to bear the debt load, nor are they prepared to allow the mismanagement and waste to occur to a point where they themselves are deprived of their earnings as a result of the charges, the financial charges, that are costed to them.

It is all right for the Premier to all of a sudden indicate that this problem is one which we now must address ourselves to, but I suggest, Mr. Speaker, if we come back to the original proposition stated some time ago, it was up to the Minister of Co-operative Development to have set objectives for his department, to have set certain goals, to have analyzed those objectives over a period of time, to have examined those goals, to have determined exactly where he stood and, Mr. Speaker, if he had done that the fishermen of this province would have been protected many many years ago. Because, Mr. Chairman, if he had done that he would have realized that the margin was in fact closing in terms of their profit making, but further than that he would have also realized that there was unbelievable waste, there was mismanagement, there was extravagance and in effect the fishermen themselves were the ones who were paying for this.

So, Mr. Speaker, while the First Minister would like to give the impression that somehow or other this is a problem caused by another jurisdiction and really incidentally a problem which the government is involved in, I suggest to you that this is a problem that the government's been involved in for some time. And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that nothing would have been done even now had the issue not been raised in this House. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the government would have been prepared to have pushed this under the rug, to have covered this matter up and not dealt with it. But the fact is that they are exposed and the fact is they are vulnerable. And so now they welcome, and they should welcome, this emergency debate to give an impression that somehow or other it's the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation that's to blame. If the price is not right for the fishermen then the government over there should have been demanding that that price be changed day after day after day.

Mr. Speaker, if the price is not right then they should have been applying the pressure, they should have been acting on behalf of the people whom the Department of Co-operative Development was supposed to represent. But I'm going to say, Mr. Speaker, that one of the problems of the Department of Co-operative Development, and this is really what the nature of the problem is, is because they have blundered, because they have mismanaged, because there has been waste, because in effect the fishermen never received what they were entitled to; they were more concerned in more or less moving and maneuvering around the records and the books and the financial matters and were not concerned about facing the issue squarely. And so what we had, Mr. Speaker, I say and I say again, is an unbelievable financial bath that is going

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(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) to be taken either by the fishermen, and they can't take it, so it will be taken by the taxpayers.

Now if this is to be resolved and the purpose of this debate is to resolve it, then there are a number of things that are going to have to be forthcoming, one of which is going to be the government's admission and declaration to the fishermen that the indebtedness of the fishermen and the indebtedness of the co-ops will in fact be written off by the taxpayers; because the fishermen are not going to carry it nor are they going to fish with that kind of indebtedness or charges being made to them if in fact the facilities of the co-op are to be used in the procedures that are to be followed in the next period of time, and the fishermen are going to receive a charge against their catch for that. They having recognized, and they do, and they know the waste that's occurred, and they know who's responsible for it. It's not the board of directors of the co-operative representing them. They know damn well that it was the Department of Co-operative Development who essentially was running it, who was their godfather, who in effect was the group responsible for the management of their affairs. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no way that they are going to in any way be prepared to accept that indebtedness. So the reality is that this matter is going to be dealt with, that indebtedness, that charge cannot be borne by them; and the government will whether they like it or not have to admit the mismanagement and have to take the consequences of that.

The second area has to do with the question of who is going to stake them at this time. If one examines the financial record of the co-operatives you will find in the Accounts Receivable the moneys owing to them by two groups of fishermen, those who are active fishermen and those who are inactive fishermen. In the case of Ilford I think it's some \$32,000 or \$35,000 of active fishermen and about \$16,000 of those who are not active. Mr. Speaker, there is no way that that money, that receivable will be recovered. They don't feel they owe it; they're not going to pay it and there's no way in which that is going to come. Yet that's shown as an asset, and it's shown as an asset in Southern Indian Lake, and it's shown as an asset on every one of the other co-operatives. The reality is that they are not going to pay that and they are going to have to be staked to be able to fish this season.

Mr. Speaker, the problem isn't just the problem of the fishermen in this province. The problem is also the problem of the consumer in this province because, Mr. Speaker, why can't the consumers, the public in Manitoba buy fish at a reasonable price? Just why can't they buy fish at a reasonable price? Is it because of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation? Is it because of the waste and mismanagement by the Department of Co-operative Development? Why? These are questions that have to be answered as well in determining what is taking place. We know that the actual catch by the fishermen is much less than originally was before and much less than was originally forecast by the announcement by the Minister when he was announcing the setting up of the co-operatives and the thrust that was going to take place and the new direction. And it stands to reason, that if the catch is down and there are fish available to be caught and to be available for the consumer market in this province, it stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, that the prices will go up. So I charge, Mr. Speaker, at this time that not only have the government been wrong in the handling of the Department of Co-operative Development and have been unfair to the fishermen of this province, I charge as well, Mr. Speaker, that the government has been unfair to the consumers of this province and as a result have caused them at this particular time to be paying a higher price for fish that is available to them. And the fish that are available to them, Mr. Speaker, are not Manitoba fish, because Manitoba fish is exported then processed, then brought back and that's an extra charge.

So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that while this emergency debate may create an impression that somehow or other it is the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to blame alone in this matter, while I accept the fact that there might very well be now a need for a price change and alteration I also, Mr. Chairman, without question suggest that the government for five years stood on their hands, or sat on their hands, that they did nothing on this matter, that they weren't prepared to do anything on this matter, that when the issues were in fact raised they were more concerned at that time to hide what was taking place because they knew it reflected on their management, they knew it reflected on them and they kept quiet. And in the course of that situation and as a result of it we have the situation today where unless something is done fairly drastically in the next little while very few fishermen will be fishing in Northern Manitoba, the catch will be smaller and as a result the fishing industry's viability will essentially be

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(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) challenged. And that's why, Mr. Chairman, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is looking desperately, and so is the government, to private enterprise to try and salvage it for them.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines and Resources.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know I often think that there is value in debate even though I am not satisfied as to the fact that the Leader of the Liberal Party seems to think that we are going to resolve the problem here, that he's not satisfied that the government is going to be able to resolve it and thinks that perhaps the Legislature can resolve it.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the Legislature will not be able to resolve this problem, and if there was ever a better example of the fact that the problem is not resolved by debate it's an example that has just been given by the Leader of the Opposition who has taken what has been a good opportunity to deal with the subject and has so distorted what the problems are, has so not defined what the activities are as to make it impossible for him to suggest any practical solution. Because, Mr. Speaker, nobody on this side blamed the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. Not one word of blame was attached to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and yet the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in order to have an argument which he otherwise would not have, seems to suggest that we are blaming the Freshwater Fish Corporation; and of course if the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation is not to blame and somebody is blaming them then it makes a good argument to suggest that they are being blamed. But if we remove the premise that anybody has blamed the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation then the honourable member is left with nothing.

Mr. Speaker, he did that with the Corporation and he did that in about six other areas. He said, Mr. Speaker, that the problem is that the agents appointed by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, some of whom happen to be co-ops, are charging so much for their administration that the fisherman is unable to get anything when that administration charge is made and he blames that on mismanagement of northern co-ops in the Province of Manitoba. Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not recall getting any complaints from fishermen as to the prices that they were paid by northern co-ops. Now I'm not saying that that means that the northern co-op was paying a completely adequate price or that they are able to get adequate prices from the northern co-ops, I am merely saying that I do not recall a single complaint from fishermen about the price that they were getting from their northern co-ops. But, Mr. Speaker, I recall complaints from fishermen from prices that they were getting from agents doing exactly the same work who are not northern co-ops. The problem is not confined to northern co-ops; there are agents in Northern Manitoba who receive an agency fee from the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, who charge their administrative costs and who then pay a balance to the fishermen. Mr. Speaker, the only ones that I can recall, and I admit that I am relying on memory, are those that are received from people who had nothing to do with northern co-ops. So for the honourable member to identify this problem with the existence of some northern co-ops in the Province of Manitoba is to first of all deny the facts of the issue which he chooses not to look into and, secondly and what is more important, Mr. Speaker, to deny all history.

When did the fishermen in the Province of Manitoba not have a similar problem to what they are experiencing now, and not only in Northern Manitoba but in all of Manitoba. Why is it that the Conservative administration introduced legislation to bring about the orderly marketing of fish in the Province of Manitoba? If fishermen on Lake Winnipeg and on Lake Winnipegosis and on the other northern lakes were operating well under what he says was the free enterprise system, then why did his free enterprise government say that there has to be legislation bringing about orderly marketing of fish in the Province of Manitoba? Because the honourable member knows that the price to fishermen of their product was not a problem that was created in the last two years or the past three years but has been one that has existed for a lengthy period of time and, Mr. Speaker, exists to a much lesser extent now than it existed previously. Mr. Speaker, can we at least in talking about the debate identify that there is something to the suggestion. The honourable member won't give it much weight I can see because he is intent on trying to make an issue out of something which he has not been able to make an issue about in the past four weeks. Mr. Speaker, is that not the truth? Did he not go to Brandon and talk and say that the press has not done its responsibility to me in making a proper issue out of the subject that I have raised relative to northern co-operatives and

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(MR. GREEN cont'd) other problems in Northern Manitoba.--(Interjection)--Well, Mr. Speaker, that is the way the member was reported. That is the way the member was reported. And, Mr. Speaker, he would now have this House believe that the transportation problem between South Indian Lake or between Ilford and the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation at Transcona and the market does not exist, that that is not to be considered, that it has nothing to do with the issue. He did not raise it in his remarks, Mr. Speaker. He did not mention it. He did not give any credence to it because he would have, Mr. Speaker, that it does not exist.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us face the facts. There are people all over this province engaged in all kinds of occupations and I am not faulting any of them who say they do not get enough payment of services for their work. On Lake Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, we set up a quota system and we set up a managed lake. The fishermen immediately came in to see me and said that they could not work at those prices. They could not work with those quotas, they could not work with those limits, that there would be no fishermen on the lake. We retained the prices; we retained the limits; we retained the quotas, and Mr. Speaker, the complaint was that we limited the number of people who wanted licences, that rather than fishermen not fishing we had more people fishing or who wanted to fish than we could allow. Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not thereby suggesting, I am not thereby suggesting that there isn't a problem. The honourable member says that the problem would not have been dealt with unless he uncovered it. If he wants to have a big head; if he wants to have a swelled head; if he wants to have a feeling of self-importance, let him think that, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that we have been discussing the problem of agencies and the price paid to agents and the return to the fishermen in our Department in the fall of 1973 before the Honourable Leader of the Opposition even raised the question of northern co-operative. So if he needs, if he needs for his ego this feeling of self-importance that he has been the one that has inspired the government to act, then as his psychoanalyst, Mr. Speaker, not as his fellow member of parliament, I say let him have it. If that makes him feel better I will feel a little happier. But let him only have it as the basis for solving his neurosis. It is not the truth.

The second thing he says, Mr. Speaker, he wants - I say that there is a problem in Northern Manitoba and I say that it can be solved in two ways. The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, whom we have not blamed, can say that they will make the transportation costs something which will be pooled and they will pay the same to fishermen wherever they are. If you do that, Mr. Speaker, then some fishermen will not get as much as they are now getting, others will get more. And I assure, Mr. Speaker, that many fishermen will be dissatisfied by such an arrangement. Or you could do the following: you could say you're going to maintain the price of fish that is now paid and you're going to give a subsidy to people in a different area. Now you can do that, Mr. Speaker, but if you do it do it knowingly and then do not say that you are buying votes in those areas where you're giving the people a subsidy. Because that will be the next statement. They will say that it is not viable but you're giving them a subsidy. Or, Mr. Speaker, you could find a better market for the fish.

Now let's look at the duplicity of the Leader of the Opposition. He blames both the problem of the price to the fishermen and the price to the consumer, on the government. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation operates as a business and they are seeking the best price that they can get for their fish, and I would venture to say that if their marketer knew that he could get 20 cents a pound in Minneapolis and 15 cents a pound in Winnipeg he would sell it to Minneapolis. And then the Leader of the Opposition will say that we are penalizing the consumer in the Province of Manitoba. Because that's what he said. He said that the people in Manitoba can't buy fish at this rate. Well if we are to say that they must sell the fish at a lower price to the people of the Province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, then how - Mr. Speaker, then how is he going to--(Interjection)--Well the Honourable Leader of the Opposition . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. GREEN: . . . you know he and his kind have always had one solution to the marketing problem. If you're not getting enough for your product then the thing to do is work ten times as hard and get more and then you will get enough. That is the solution that they had for the wheat farmer for years, that is the solution that they had for every other kind of producer. They do not like orderly marketing so they say if you're not getting enough work ten

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(MR. GREEN cont'd) times as hard, produce ten times as much and then even if the price goes down by 50 percent you will get more money.

A MEMBER: You don't know what you're talking about.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has just said. He has said that the solution to the marketing problem is that if you're not getting enough per pound harvest more fish, get less per pound then you will make more money. My answer, my answer, and you know with due respect to the Leader of the Opposition, is to do the same thing that John D. Rockefeller did. He said - yes here we go again. He said market as much as it's economic to market, do not market the balance and get a price for your product. That's right. (Applause)

A MEMBER: And in the process, take the fish and we'll produce more fish. That's your idea.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Honourable Mines Minister that though I was not in the room I did not miss a word of his speech. Mr. Speaker, I think that the - yes, Mr. Speaker, it was that remark by the Honourable Mines Minister about his relationship with Mr. Rockefeller again that prompted my immediate return. Because, Mr. Speaker, he is leaving me with the unquestioned impression that he has something going that we don't know about. Mr. Speaker, he said - oh, Mr. Speaker, we knew which Rockefeller he meant because--John D. Mr. Speaker, the Mines Minister said that no purpose will be served by debate or rather that the problem will not be solved by debate. Mr. Speaker, I disagree. I believe what's happened so far today has been productive. However, I think it's time to get a little more positive about it and stop trying to attack and defend but rather deal with what action ought to be taken immediately.

The Mines Minister said that the Leader of the Opposition didn't discover the problem, that he's been discussing it in his department for some time. Mr. Speaker, that may be true enough, and I'm sure it's true; but that's why we're debating today because there's been too much discussion and no action or too little action and action is needed now. We started the discussion at 2:30 by stating there was a problem, that it was urgent, that there were reasons for the problem, there were results flowing from the problem and that there was a remedy for the problem. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't seek to lay out an indictment against the government, but one thing is true. The fishermen have made it abundantly clear that they are not at this stage ready to commit to a season of fishing. They are not prepared to hit the lakes. I don't really care whose fault it is, Mr. Speaker, that's for another day, but it is urgent that we deal with it; because if no steps are taken now within days, perhaps even hours, but certainly within the next few days, there is a distinct possibility that there will be no season this year. If that happens, Mr. Speaker, the economy of Manitoba is wounded, the consumers of Manitoba will be impaired and certainly those people who depend for their living on the fish will be on welfare and not receiving income and therefore we taxpayers or the rest of the taxpayers will have an additional burden if they are not able to earn anything toward their own keep.

I said there was a reason for the problem and that reason I think is - there's some degree of unanimity on the reason or the cause. That cause is that the fishermen feel as has been indicated to me by both the lay fishermen and those who are associated with the processing and marketing end, is that there is an air of uncertainty, an air of fear, an air of reluctance to commit, to commit time, to commit effort, to commit money because there is doubt as to price. That isn't the only problem, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that the government of the day who has charge over this aspect of it will know. I'm not sure whether it's the co-ops, I'm not sure if it's the department, I'm not sure if it's the Mines Minister under whom fishing comes. I don't know. And again I stress that that isn't the purpose of this examination, to attach blame. But there is reason behind their alarm and it is up to this debate and statements made during this debate for those fears to be brushed aside, and assurances to be given, the government to take a strong active position on the issue to assure them that their efforts will not be wasted, that their efforts will be decently rewarded, and that's all we seek in the debate. --(Interjection)-- Mr. Speaker, the First Minister asked me a question. --(Interjection)-- No, no, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is a matter of unilateral action by one level of government at all. But, Mr. Speaker, I'll deal with that briefly.

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(MR. ASPER cont'd)

Mr. Speaker, I said in the debate over whether this debate was in order that there is a broader group in society who will be victimized if action is not taken now. The taxpayer of course who will have to pick up the cost of welfare, the cost of social assistance, to those who do not earn a living this year fishing. But even that isn't the most serious. We are facing an inflation in this province, cost rise escalations, and there are two political parties in this country who agree on the cause - that is the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party have both through their economists agreed, as opposed to the Progressive Conservative economist theory that there is a problem of supply, and that unless we encourage supply, production, creation of more goods as opposed to putting more dollars in the hands of consumers, supply is causing our inflation problems.

Now here we have an exact case. If the fish are not caught because the fishermen don't hit the lakes then there will be a shortage of supply. If there's a shortage of supply those who have some sort of supply at the retail level will get more and therefore the consumer will be charged more and we will have contributed to the cost of living escalation in the fish, which are one of our hopes for replacing higher cost other foods during this next year when foods costs are expected to rise by as much as 15 to 25 percent. So that's why we have to move now.

Mr. Speaker, I would rather see and I'm sure all members opposite would, subsidy, price stabilization, income guarantees which will cost us less than welfare. In social terms, in economic terms, that kind of support is far less debilitating on our community, far less damaging to our social fabric than to say don't worry, don't fish, stay at home, we'll look after you. Because I'm sure the Mines Minister has gone through the same villages that I've gone through and seen the dehumanizing effect of having nothing to do in the fishing communities in the early 1970s as we began this decade. Twelve hundred families were not able to get on the lakes through pollution and the absolute decay of their own community because of it. The demoralization. So, Mr. Speaker, we must create the incentives, we must create the programs to get the fishermen on the lakes, and we've got to do it now and discussion time is over.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the government's got a solution; are they floundering? But I do know this. The fishermen have indicated that they've lost confidence, they've lost confidence in the co-ops. They've lost confidence, rightly or wrongly, I don't know who to blame for the loss of confidence, I'm sure honourable members opposite will have their own ideas. They'll say the Opposition destroyed confidence or the Progressive Conservatives did it. We'll say they did it. I don't care, they have lost confidence. They're afraid to hit the lake because they don't know about price, they're saddled with debt, they're afraid they're going to have their proceeds from fishing grabbed, garnisheed, used to pay bills from the fiasco of the last year, from the failure of the experiment of the co-ops.

Mr. Speaker, I say the government is floundering and a restoration of confidence is needed now or there won't be a season; and we may do it this afternoon yet. The remedy, Mr. Speaker. I ask the government to announce an immediate - and this is what this debate's all about. Forget the rhetoric, forget the carping and the criticism - I ask the government to consider and respond to this.

(1) Announce an immediate, yes unilateral for the moment, very short term for a matter of days, an immediate price base for the year, and of course concurrently negotiate with the federal partner in this project to ask for the same kind of thing. Now there's reason to believe that Ottawa shares that approach in some of the other actions Ottawa's taken in the past year on the inflation side. But at least announce a base, gamble; the cost is peanuts in dollar terms compared to the game that can be won.

(2) That's not good enough. We must also at the same time assure those fishermen of relief from the financial cloud that hangs over them and the co-ops. Just say, you will be relieved, you will not pay for our experimental mistake, or whoever's mistake it was. And that's the million or whatever it is, million eight, that they're afraid will be garnisheed and taken out of their pockets.

(3) Set up an immediate program to stake them to get on to the lake so they can buy their supplies. Which is no risk because we will have an assignment against their catch. So we don't take a risk, it's simply--and, Mr. Speaker, I hear the Mines Minister saying that program exists. He's right. But he's got to confirm to them that it's going to go on existing because they have lost confidence.

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(MR. ASPER cont'd)

(4) Work immediately toward and give an assurance that we are moving toward price stabilization for fish, just as we've done for hogs, just as we've done for - and I'm not talking about orderly marketing - I'm talking about price stabilization.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member's time is up.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, in one sentence conclude. What is at stake is crucial because it means a way of life, it means an industry that may not be self-sufficient financially but it's spared us millions of dollars of welfare payments and social assistance payments and human destruction costs and is well worth maintaining even if we have to depart from the book for a few days, for a few weeks, for a few months, depart from the doctrine and save it.

Mr. Speaker, we urgently look forward to response from government on these proposals.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. SAMUEL USKIW (Minister of Agriculture) (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Chairman, it's a strange thing to find that we couldn't have had this kind of debate more appropriately during the estimates yesterday if members opposite would have addressed themselves in the proper way, that is not trying to get beyond the rules of the House but still making the same points.

I want to say that it's indeed tragic today, Mr. Speaker, that while we have a sincere, supposedly at least, I'm sure the Member for Birtle-Russell is sincere in expressing his concerns about the plight of fishermen. But we have a tragic diversion here, Mr. Speaker, in that the Leader of the Opposition was quick to seize on the opportunity to debate the problems of government rather than the problems of the fishermen and to try to score some political points in the process. And I really now wonder whether it was the real intent of the Opposition in introducing this debate, that is to come up with a solution here today as they so pleaded before you, Mr. Speaker, in presenting their motion, or whether they really wanted another chance to score political points. And if it's the latter, Mr. Chairman, then we have wasted an awful lot of time, an awful lot of time insofar as the fishermen are concerned. Maybe there is something to be gained for the political people on the other side, and I rather doubt that, Mr. Speaker. Because the Leader of the Opposition should have been here during the course of the estimates and he would have had some of the answers, some of the answers that he was looking for; and by the way he should be here right now listening to some of the comments that we are making on this very subject. But he chooses, Mr. Speaker, to dart into the House, make one or two headline statements and then walk out, because he's not really interested in the subject matter. Mr. Speaker, his name really should be Headline Hunter Spivak, that's really what he should be. Because that is as far as he's prepared to go in dealing with any problem of society. That is the extent of his contribution to this Chamber.--(Interjection)--

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell state his point of order.

MR. GRAHAM: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it's unfair of the Minister to make allegations of that nature. We know that all members of this House have a very busy schedule and sometimes it is impossible for members to be in the Chamber.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, had the Leader of the Opposition been here yesterday or any time during the time when we considered the estimates of the department, he would have learned that we have had ongoing discussions with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation with respect to agency fees and with respect to the price of fish and all of that has already been debated as between this government and the federal agency, many many months ago, in fact, ongoing for the last number of years. We have tried to impress on the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation that there is indeed a need to adjust prices. And I don't know, Mr. Speaker, whether or not it will mean in the end to satisfy the needs, the basic needs of fishermen that fish are going to have to be a delicacy. I don't know whether that is the end result but certainly we have to be prepared as consumers to pay the costs of bringing those fish from Northern Manitoba to southern Manitoba if we want to consume fish or, we have to face the prospect of not having the fishery in Northern Manitoba and vastly reducing the number of pounds of fish available on the market. You know these are the choices we have to make or, we have to decide that society shall subsidize in some form the fishery in Northern Manitoba in the remote communities because of the high cost of the remote communities, in order that it would be a consumer subsidy, Mr. Speaker. Let's not say that we are going to subsidize

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(MR. USKIW cont'd) fishermen if that is what we are doing; whether we write off loans or whether we have a direct form of subsidization as is suggested by the Member for Birtle-Russell, in the end it will be tantamount to a consumer subsidy.

Now first of all, Mr. Speaker, I think it's incumbent on the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to do what it can in the marketplace in order to satisfy the fisheries not only in Manitoba but throughout the three prairie provinces in the Northwest Territories. And you know it becomes a question how far one can go in this respect because one can imagine introducing new remoteness in the fisheries, if there are such things and I'm not sure that there are, but the further north you go the greater the costs are in transportation and so on. And therefore you have less viability unless there is something done either in price or by way of public input.

To give you an illustration, Mr. Speaker, I have for example some interesting returns to the fishermen. For white jumbos for example the returns to the fishermen are some 15-1/4 cents a pound. Now that's a far cry from what the consumer price is. The large whitefish - 10-1/4 cents. But the medium, Mr. Speaker, is most interesting, the fisherman gets 1-1/4 cents a pound. And that is the bulk of the fishery, it's in the medium category. So you have costs or revenues of 26 cents a pound, costs of 24-3/4 cents a pound to deliver those fish to Transcona. The fisherman gets 1-1/4 cents a pound. I don't care who you send, heaven above, God himself will not correct the unviable position of the northern fisheries under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker. So if we want to eat fish, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we have certain things that we must consider, and I think that the debate is worthwhile, in particular in view of the fact that we have today - and this has been in the process for some time - arranged or in fact we are meeting today with the Province of Saskatchewan and Alberta who have the very same concerns as we have with respect to their northern fisheries and whether they are going to be operating this year. And who want to approach the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and indeed the Federal Government together on the same subject because this is not unique to Manitoba. We have to work collectively in trying to bring a resolution to that particular problem.

So while I respect the intentions of the Member for Birtle-Russell, Mr. Speaker, in introducing the subject matter and welcome this debate, because hopefully this debate will add to the effort that we put forward in our negotiations with the powers that be in trying to bring about the necessary adjustments, I would hope however, Mr. Speaker, that we can strike from the record in this debate the political aspect of it which was attempted by the Leader of the Opposition who did not really contribute one iota in his commentary here this afternoon as to the way in which we may resolve our problem, but only to try to point out that we have some problems in government departments with respect to northern fisheries. We've been all through that debate many times before and to no one's satisfaction I might say, Mr. Speaker, because it was a whole pack of nonsense on the part of the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, the final comments of the Minister of Agriculture were characteristic. He now wishes to expunge from the record statements that have been made in this Chamber whether he agrees with them or not. The fact is that statements that are put on the record remain there and notwithstanding his desire to leave on the record only those things which he believes should be on the record, I'm afraid that he's going to have to live with what was said in this Chamber by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister adopts an attitude that is characteristic. There is more than one side to this whole question and certainly it ill behooves the Minister of Agriculture to suggest that anything that comes from this side of the House is unworthy or has some dark, deep, sinister motive. The Member for Birtle-Russell who initiated the debate did so as a result of attendance of a meeting in Northern Manitoba in which he became fully acquainted with the problem that existed in the northern fishing areas and felt that the matter should be brought to the attention of the government. I think that his actions were proper and motivated by the best of intentions. The Minister of Agriculture may doubt that but there's no doubt in my mind that he and indeed the Member for Thompson who we have yet to hear from but I'm sure we will. I will outline that position in clear terms.

If there's one thing that we are doing today, Sir, if nothing else we're having some experience with this rule. I believe, Sir, that this is the first time that we have ever had an

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(MR. JORGENSON cont'd). . . . opportunity to debate, under the standing order that provides for such a debate, this is the first time we've had that opportunity of doing so, and if nothing else I participate in this debate simply because I wanted to be a part of this exhilarating experience.

Now, Sir, I want to say at the outset that I know nothing about fish other than being on the receiving end of fish occasionally at the table, but that does not in this Chamber prevent a member from discussing the subject. All that does, Sir, is place me on the same level as the Minister of Labour who very frequently debates in this Chamber and knows not whereof he speaks. And I say this perhaps unkindly, Sir, because the Minister I notice is not in his seat. But there are a few matters that I believe should be brought to the attention of the House. The Minister of Mines and Resources attempted to make the point that we on this side of the Chamber because of statements made by the Member for Birtle-Russell and the statement by the Leader of the Opposition that we are inherently opposed to orderly marketing. Well, Sir, if what we're experiencing in the fishing co-ops or with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board is a sample of orderly marketing then indeed there is a good argument and a good case to be made against orderly marketing. Because in my view it does not represent, at least to the fishermen of Northern Manitoba, what they would consider to be orderly marketing.

There are as was pointed out by both the Mines Minister and the Minister of Agriculture several courses of action that are open to us. One of them would be to equalize the price of fish across - well I would say perhaps not only across Manitoba but perhaps all across the area that is encompassed by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. That is one course of action. But as he pointed out, there would be some violent objections to certain fishermen if that were to be the case. We've had the same experience in the marketing of grains, that although it may benefit a certain group there are others who take violent exception to that kind of orderly marketing. And well they might. They feel that if they're in an advantageous position then they should have an opportunity to capitalize on that particular economic advantageous position, and I don't quarrel with that concept.

The second alternative and what appears to be the great problem is the transportation costs, is to subsidize those transportation costs. That suggestion has been made and whether or not it is a feasible suggestion, whether or not it is one that is acceptable to the government is a decision that the government itself is going to have to make. The debate has, if nothing else, focused attention on what the alternatives may be. One of the things that I have been unable to understand, I raised this during the course of the period of time that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation was brought into being, and I raise it again, is why a system of allowing the fish handling agencies who were in existence before the time that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation came into existence, why they weren't just simply left to remain in existence and be appointed as agents of the board with commissions to handle the product on behalf of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. It seems to me that that kind of a system operated very well with the grain handling companies under the Canadian Wheat Board when they took over control of the marketing of grain. And instead of centralizing the entire operation into one area of this province it seems to me that a more effective job of redistributing the income from fishing could have been achieved by a system of proper commissions to those who'd be handling the fish plus the establishment of a pricing mechanism on the part of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation so that producers would be aware of the prices that they would be receiving for their product.

Sir, I don't think that the debate, contrary to the statement made by the Minister of Agriculture, is one that has been entirely lost. I think it's a debate that at the present time is well worthwhile, it is one in which the various shades and opinions and points of view of members have had an opportunity of being aired in a way that can only be helpful, we hope, to the fishermen of Northern Manitoba who as we understand it are now in the process of attempting to make a decision as to whether or not they're going to continue in that profession or give it up entirely in the light of existing circumstances. One thing that is certain, we do have fish on our markets from the west coast, from the east coast and from other parts of the world. Apparently transportation costs are not that much of a factor in bringing those products to our markets. If that can be overcome then surely the transportation costs from an area as near as Northern Manitoba should not be an unsurmountable one under the circumstances.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

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HON. RON McBRYDE (Minister of Northern Affairs) (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into this debate, not to be a part of a historic event but to express some concern for the situation facing the fishermen in Northern Manitoba and hopefully to throw some light on the situation as it exists. We've heard I believe from about seven persons already, five of whom seem to have some idea of what they were talking about, one of whom admitted he didn't know what he was talking about and the other who wanted to pretend he knew what he was talking about. And I speak specifically in that case of the Leader of the Conservative party, the Leader of the Opposition, who as the Minister of Agriculture stated, rather than expressing or attempting to come up with some ideas to assist the fishermen and to look at the problem as it really exists today in Northern Manitoba attempted to use it, as is his style, for some hopeful political gain on his part.

I think it was a little, I suppose a little strange for me to hear from the Member for Morris, his willingness to consider a subsidy for the transportation of goods because I always assumed that he was one of those who stuck quite firmly with the belief that the less government involvement the better off things would be.

But I think what the Premier said, Mr. Chairman, and what was completely ignored by the Leader of the Opposition Party, I think the important point to be made, that even if some of those co-operatives in the far northern part of Manitoba were starting fresh today, or this fishing season, there would still be a problem in them marketing those fish at a profit or at a break-even point. I think that the private agents that are still in the field, the co-operative agents that are still in the field, I think anyone who has any understanding of the fishery at all would realize that that is the present situation today. If there were no debts, if there were no past history in relation to these co-operatives or these fishing operations in the far northern part of Manitoba there is some doubt whether they would start now, whether they would be economically viable.

I think to talk on that, Mr. Chairman, it might be worthwhile just to trace a little bit of brief history of the situation in the fishing industry in Manitoba and in northern Manitoba. In the days previous to 1969 we had a situation in Manitoba where there were a number of private independent fish companies who bought fish from fishermen or who hired fishermen on a salary basis to fish for them to bring the fish in. That situation, Mr. Speaker, was a pretty tough competitive situation. Survival of those private fish buyers was limited. Only the more aggressive and the more willing to stretch the rules and regulations and those more willing to take advantage of the fishermen were able to survive under the tough competitive situation that we had in regard to fish buying and the fishing industry in the Province of Manitoba. In order to survive, it is my personal opinion that the way they manage to survive was on the backs of the fishermen, by giving the fishermen as little as possible and therefore they were able to eke out a profit and continue their existence as fish buyers and fish marketers in this province. In those days the previous government, it was the Conservative Government, realized the situation facing fishermen in many parts of Manitoba and assisted them to organize fishermen's co-operatives in order to increase their bargaining position with people who bought fish. At that time those who did succeed in organizing co-operatives were in a pretty good position because they could bargain with their catch and get reasonable prices for their catch. The neighbours who still depended entirely upon the private fish buyer were not in a position to do the kind of bargaining that the co-operatives were and were not in a position to get the kind of prices that the co-operatives did.

I think it would be worthwhile to point out in fact that the Fish Marketing Corporation when it came into existence was not so great a benefit in fact for those who are already organized into co-operatives because they were able to get a fairly reasonable price for their fish. The people who benefitted initially were those who were not organized into co-operatives and in fact got an increased price for their fish when the corporation was brought into existence. Because of that situation I just described of the tough competitive situation with the fish companies and the fish buyers and the fact that their only way of survival was to really take advantage of the fishermen who were fishing for them, the previous government had discussions with other governments in Canada and the Canadian Government and agreed to enter into an agreement to establish a Fish Marketing Corporation to act as the marketing and purchasing agent for the fishermen in this and other provinces.

When we were elected to office we agreed with this approach and passed the bill, but I can remember quite distinctly at that time the Member for Lakeside indicating that it was in fact a

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(MR. McBRYDE cont'd) bill that he had drafted and a bill that he supported and we shouldn't try and claim any credit for bringing that matter about.

The situation then when the - I think this will answer one of the questions that the Member for Morris asked - the situation that occurred there is that we then had a new ball game. We had a Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. The decision then facing fishermen was one, should their co-operative become an agent for the new Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, should they form themselves into some sort of agent for the Fish Marketing Corporation or should they continue to relate to their former fish buyer or their former fish agent and have him become an agent for the co-operative. I think it's pretty hard for me to explain the feeling of fishermen towards the people who had previously been their agents, but I can recall the first time that I was threatened to be sued when I said in committee that one of the fish agents wanted to be paid for his goodwill in the industry and I said that that would be satisfactory because he would end up owing us money if we paid him for his goodwill.

I think that was the situation that we had, and I think to answer the Member for Morris' question the reason that a large number of fishermen opted for a somewhat unknown thing, the co-operative, or some other agency method, was just their strong dislike for the people that they had been dealing with before; and the attitude that they had always been cheated, the fish had been culled out, they weren't given correct weights, that they were always being taken advantage of by the former fish buyers. And this is a pretty general attitude. I'm not saying that it was entirely correct because as I pointed out it was a pretty tough situation those fish buyers had to operate in at that time. So a number of the fishermen opted for creating their own co-operatives, perhaps at a time before they were ready to understand the full intention of what a co-operative was or how it had to work or how it could work or before they had the full management skills and ability that would enable them to be agents on their own, that they opted for this approach over the traditional agent approach at that time. But the situation is still that the fishing as you go further north becomes increasingly marginal. I think my own constituency is a good case of that; at the southern end those fishermen can make good money. As you go further north and you get into Grand Rapids where they're still on the highway there they can get by. As you get into Moose Lake it becomes more of a less viable proposition because they have to water freight or air freight goods out from that community. And as you get into the community of Ilford or South Indian Lake and the Island Lake areas the problem becomes even a little bit tougher in terms of their situation. And in fact what we're talking about, what we're proposing if I understand the Member for Birtle-Russell who I think has been pretty fair in presenting the situation as he saw it and had good intentions in bringing it forward, what we presently have is some subsidization for the fishing industry. We have subsidization through assistance from the Department of Co-operatives, we have LIP and PEP grants that have been used to harvest ice. We have Mines and Resources people assisting fishermen with their harvest methods in providing training. We have Special ARDA IIIB which provides some communities with equipment on a grant basis. But the situation is because you have a - where the price increases as you go north because of transportation - the cost increases as you go north, you have a situation where the pressure is on to over-harvest the southern lakes and under-harvest the northern lakes and it becomes a poor method of resource management when the fishermen on Lake Winnipeg are all anxious to get out there because they know they can make good money on the fishing, but as we get into the areas mentioned in the debate so far the fishermen just aren't sure they're going to be able to break even in that situation.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would say that there have been a number of problems and situations where the fishermen have been close even if the ice harvest, like it was cancelled, the LIP grants for ice harvest were cancelled this year, where the fishermen almost decided to quit then because their situation was so marginal. So we have a situation where some further subsidy is probably going to have to be looked at if we're going to assist the far northern fishermen and we have a situation where the Leader of the Conservative party contributed nothing to this debate.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Thompson

MR. KEN DILLEN (Thompson): One night last week, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to discuss this question with the Member for Birtle-Russell and I gave him my assurance that I would support him when this question came to the floor of the House. But if I'd have known then that the type of contribution that was going to be made by the Leader of the Opposition while the member was out of the House, I would never have given this type of assurance. I am sure that even if the Member for Birtle-Russell had been in this House to see the performance of his Leader, that I'm sure he would have taken his shoes off and thrown them at him.

A MEMBER: Do it, Harry, do it.

MR. DILLEN: You know, Mr. Speaker, when we decided, or when it was decided that we should discuss the question of the viability of the fish harvesting in northern Manitoba, I think this is the only place that those fishermen can get the attention that they deserve. Not only from the press but from the members of the Opposition who really, and have admitted so, don't know anything about fishing; and certainly for people on our side of the House as well who may have a limited knowledge of the fishing industry. But here we are today to bring attention, to draw attention to the fact that it is not the question of mismanagement, and it is not the question of the involvement of the Co-op Branch that is bringing about the problems of the fishermen in northern Manitoba. If you haven't got any money to start with and you're going to end up going in the hole by going on the lakes, you're going to have a deficit situation at the end of the year, how can they possibly, how can they possibly get up the initiative and the encouragement to go out on the lakes knowing that at the end of the season they're going to lose - and to suggest that a subsidy is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the fishermen are now receiving subsidies in one form or another, and I can list four of them. They are receiving subsidies in the amount of equipment they receive through ARDA IIIB in some cases. Ilford unfortunately I do not believe had an opportunity to take advantage of that particular subsidy. They are being subsidized as well through the Local Initiative Program by the Federal Government, and indeed the PEP Program of the Provincial Government also assists in the establishment of some of the facilities that they require for the carrying out of their business. And on top of that the administrative assistance that is given by the Department of Co-op Development does not reflect in the cost of their fish, but it's also an assistance that is given and is also a form of a subsidy.

All of these things have been done in the past in order to try and show some form of return to the fishermen. But now we're into the situation today that even with these forms of subsidies the fishermen are in worse trouble today than they were a year ago or two years before that. The Minister of Northern Affairs has just pointed out a few minutes ago that the 90 - that the Local Initiative grants for this season in the Ilford area to put up ice was denied to them for some unknown reason. Now they have to go to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation for an advance on their summer catch to pay for the cost of harvesting the ice, which is a bill-back on the number of pounds harvested to somewhere around four cents, which is a further reduction in their return, and they will go further in the hole.

And I want to take issue with one point that the Leader of the Opposition raised in that somehow as a result of the involvement of the Co-op Development Branch that this somehow reflects in the cost to the consumer. And yet it's the same type of fish that are being sold in the City of Winnipeg today. If you go 50 miles up Lake Winnipeg, which is a very short distance, it's still the same price on the shelves of the stores in the City of Winnipeg as they are if they're brought in from Ilford or South Indian or the Island Lake area, or anywhere else in northern Manitoba. And it just seems significant to many people here that those co-ops that are experiencing the greatest amount of difficulty are in the main north of the 54th or 55th parallel.

So I wanted to come before this House today to show that, you know, maybe there is something wrong with the method that is being used today for the harvesting of fish. You know, the same gill nets were used in biblical times that are being used in northern Manitoba today. Surely to God that there's somebody in our employ, or in the employ of the Fisheries Branch of the Federal Department, who have that type of knowledge that can come up with some other means of harvesting fish. Surely there is a method of selective harvesting. You know, we can put men on the moon and yet we can't selectively harvest our fish in the lakes in northern Manitoba. Why is it necessary to kill off the species in order to get just the ones that are

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(MR. DILLEN Cont'd) chosen as export quality? Why is it necessary to --(Interjection)-- Thank you, Mr. Speaker - why is it necessary, you know, where the lakes are so far away that it makes it impossible to transport them into the processing plant. If we take an example that I pointed out yesterday, that 600,000 pounds of edible product, edible fish are being discarded up into the bush, and if you take the centre of this room and place 600,000 pounds of fish in it you'd have the depth of about four feet in this room.

A MEMBER: It's going to be stinky.

MR. DILLEN: That's just in my opinion a criminal act. And yet by the same token there has to be some justice in this country where if a person goes out fishing with a hook and line and catches one fish more than his limit he is subject to a penalty, a fine, a loss of his equipment, or boat and motor, or car, or whatever. And yet this situation is happening in Northern Manitoba where we are discarding that number of pounds of fish - from one co-operative, and there are four. There is many questions that are unanswered. Is it still feasible to continue to use Second World War vintage aircraft in the transporting of fish from some of the communities? You know they just can't carry the weight to make it economical to transport fish by that method.

I made some reference yesterday to the cost, and today as well, to the cost to the consumer of the fish that are marketed in this country. But only 97 percent of the fish harvested under the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in all of the provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and the Territories, only 97 - I'm sorry - only three percent is consumed in Canada and the balance is exported, and that Manitoba is the largest producer of the fish through the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. And when we talk about subsidies I can't help but feel that the consumer is not getting any benefit from the subsidies that I had mentioned before. The only people who appear to be benefiting from the subsidies that are being given at the present time in one form or another is the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. And if the fishermen in northern Manitoba are experiencing any problems at the present time, let the blame rest squarely on the people who are responsible for the marketing of those fish.

MR. SPEAKER: We are now at the question period. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of clarifying the record and probably straightening out our - this is on a point of order, Mr. Speaker - straightening out a problem that may exist for the House, I believe under the rules instead of asking that the House adjourn for a matter of urgent public debate, I should have asked that we set aside the ordinary business of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Correct.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order then I think that the whole debate should be expunged from the record.

MR. SPEAKER: Anyways it is agreed that the motion was not written in its proper form and we consequently do withdraw the debate at the present time, at least the motion. Not the debate.

We are now in the question period. (Dispense) Very well.

ORDERS OF THE DAY - GOVERNMENT BILLS - BILL NO. 43

MR. SPEAKER: Adjourned debates. Motion proposed by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Bill No. 43. The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. GEORGE HENDERSON (Pembina): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was hardly prepared to go that soon. I certainly thought - although I am very glad that for once we have shortened that question period right up.

I'd like to say something on this Farm Machinery Act and it's been covered fairly well by the former speakers but the one thing that I want to criticize the Minister of Agriculture for is that this bill was even left so late in the season, because he must be aware that at this time of the year the farmers are just really getting down to seeding time and that the dealers are very very busy, they've made a lot of commitments during the winter and there's a lot of servicing to do on implements. I know that I have been contacting many of these dealers and they say, well we're so busy we haven't hardly time to study the Act and I say well try and come

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(MR. HENDERSON Cont'd) in. They say how can we come in? We've got so many farmers coming in every day that want to see us. If the Minister of Agriculture was all that concerned about helping the farmers and wanting to put this Act in a form that would be more beneficial to the farmers and the dealers, he certainly should have been having it tabled in this House much sooner. I'm sure that the dealers resent the fact that it's coming along now, and also many farm people who'd like to hear something said on The Farm Machinery Act and to be able to take a small part of the action are disappointed in it because right now they have to be home making their preparations.

In looking over the bill there's parts in it that I don't believe are too bad but I think this here extra percentage that we have to pay on account of getting a full warranty should be made optional. Because I find many farmers saying, well they don't want to pay this extra for this special warranty. They'd like a choice of it, and I think probably you'd find that they in many cases respect their dealers and have a lot of faith in the machines even they're buying, and they'd just as soon buy it at a discount than to try to have warranty which really in reality just covers the - that's beneficial to the people who are awful hard on machines, because we find many farmers, like every other group, that there's hardly any machine that's made strong enough that they won't abuse it and have breakdowns. So for the sake of a few, it seems as if the bulk of the people are going to have to pay more.

And I think this clause that's in this Act that states on repossession that when it's put up for sale that if it sells for more the dealer has to return it to the farmer. I think that's proper. But the very fact that if it should sell for less that - no I said that the wrong way. If when the machine is put up for sale it sells for less, then the dealer has to make it up. I don't believe this is right. I believe that it's got to be a two-way street. So that part I'm not in favour of.

The other thing that I'm very much concerned about is this here \$300,000 fund and how it's to be used, and who's going to administer it. And I think that this probably going to be explained but as we look at the Act it's just one of the things that really makes you wonder, and how this fund's going to be kept up, and how it's going to be used, and whether it's going to be used in salaries for the men on the Farm Machinery Board, or who's going to get it, and how it's going to be divided and controlled. This is a very big concern.

I also think that possibly too many regulations when Manitoba represents such a small part of the market of these here large machine companies. When we have so many regulations, I think that even though we think we can crack the whip on the large corporations we just can't because we haven't enough of a percentage of the business, and they actually could by-pass us in years like this when they have sales and we'd be left without machines altogether.

So I think that while we think that we can crack the whip on the machine companies, I think that we need to look at it more realistically and come out with something that's proper. I really hope that by the time we're through with this Act this time that we'll have come up with an Act that's far more acceptable because I was in favour of The Farm Machinery Act, and I had heard complaints, but really nothing like the complaints I've heard since we put the Act in, so it seems as if in trying to bring up the cure we had something that was worse than the disease. So I hope this time when we're through that we will have an Act that the people will respect and think it's good for them.

I haven't anything further to say on this. I just hope that in between now and the time that we have the public hearings on this that we can give the farmers and the machine people a real opportunity to come in anyway, and not have a debate on this any other time but possibly in the afternoon when people who are in business can come in, or farmers can come in and take part in it. Because let's not get into speed-up and be debating this at three or four, or after twelve in the morning, because that'll just eliminate them altogether. I hope it isn't going to be put through just for the sake of putting the Act through, you know, to get through with the Act. I hope that we're really approaching the Act in a way that we're going to make it so as it's more beneficial to all the people concerned, and have an Act that we can live with. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. MORRIS McGREGOR (Virden): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Souris-Killarney, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

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MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 44. The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, may we have the matter stand? (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 46. The Honourable Member for Virnden.

MR. MCGREGOR: Stand? (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture, that Mr. Speaker do not 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 of Supply with the Honourable Member for Radisson in the Chair.

SUPPLY - DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. We are dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Highways. The Honourable Member for Roblin has -- (Interjection) -- Yes, that's right. The Honourable Member for Roblin just got up and he has some 28 minutes. The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. J. WALLY MCKENZIE (Roblin): Mr. Chairman, I was rather unhappy with the introductory remarks of the Honourable the Minister regarding these Highway Estimates because I thought that we would get a statement of policy from this government that would give us some idea as where we're going in this province with our transportation system. I am very unhappy to find out that apparently the government hasn't a policy for transportation in this province. At least, if they have, I didn't hear it. He mentioned something that they're planning three years in advance, but planning and telling us what's going to happen to our transportation system are two different things, and of course it's very uneasy that I do draw this to the attention because first of all, we're facing a rail abandonment in this province next year in 1975, where miles, hundreds of miles of our railroads are going to be abandoned by the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific Railways, and with our economic base in this province being basically built around an agricultural economy in the rural parts of Manitoba, I'm surprised that the Minister hasn't given us some insight of what type of a transportation system are we building to pick up that vacuum.

And it's a foregone conclusion in this province that a meeting was being held with the Canada Grains Council, which the Minister of Industry and Commerce is quite familiar with, that there's no stopping the railroads today, they are going to abandon these lines. Is the Minister of Highways going to try and make us believe that with these huge trucks that's going to be needed to move this commodity, the producers of agricultural products to the marketplace with an old archaic system such as the highways we have in this province today, it just won't work, it just won't work. And I am very disappointed that the Minister hasn't come out with some understanding of what kind of a transportation system we're building. I look at the spending programs he's got on Highway 83, which is one of the few north-south routes that we have in this province, that goes from north to south, and I find the expenditure of practically no moneys at all for that, and that is an artery that's going to be needed because the commodities in this province are going to have to travel from a north to a south direction, from a south to a north, because the main lines of the railroad run east and west. So we're going to have to build a transportation system in this province especially from north to south if we're going to get the products to market.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'm very unhappy with the statement of the Minister of Highways for the future of Manitoba that he hasn't got a policy as to where we're going with our transportation system when these rail lines come up for abandonment next year. I think the future of Manitoba, and I think our people deserve a policy from the government, and I hope that the next time that he rises to his feet that he will spell out, where are we going, what kind of money are you going to spend to build up a transportation system that will take up the slack when these rail lines are abandoned in 1975?

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Pembina.

MR. HENDERSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In looking over the Estimates I must say that I'm fairly well pleased with them. I think that possibly the Minister of Highways could have got a larger share of the big increase we had in the budget this year because I always look on road improvements as an investment that will save you a lot of

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(MR. HENDERSON Cont'd) money indirectly, because if you have to go places, if you've got a good road and can go out and go without abusing your truck or your car, your vehicle lasts much better and you have less repairs, and you're able to do it at your convenience, and this means a lot to rural people. I never hear rural people complaining about the money that's spent on roads. It's certainly different to the way you hear them talk about the government spending money on all the different types of programs they have, and on the guaranteed incomes, and all this sort of stuff. When you hear them talking about the money that's spent on roads, they're always very thankful for it, and they're never complaining.

And I must say that I'm particularly happy that they've decided to do something in my area on No. 3 Highway where it goes through the town of La Riviere because this is something that's been kicked around for years and because of a difference of opinion between some of the people it got actually set back a number of years. But I'm glad that the government finally made up its mind and said they're going to go through in a certain place, and I think they'll find that the people are very happy to see that the road is being fixed.

And I think sometimes when we're talking about roads it always depends on where the people live and what there, you know, how it affects them, and so you can't get total agreement. You never can get total agreement. I just hope that in a few other instances that I know of that the government and the people in the Highway Department will take the responsibility of coming out with a decision. I know that politically it's rather difficult but I think it would certainly be appreciated by many of the people in the areas, and in this case I'm thinking of the highway that runs south of Portage joining No. 1 and No. 2. Because in this particular part of Manitoba we haven't got a main highway joining one of the -- a paved highway joining the two main highways, namely No. 1 and No. 2. So I just hope that the government uses this same strength when they have to make the decision there, and that they make the decision and go ahead and do it. And I know that there will be a few people that won't like it but I still think they should do it.

And I wonder when the government's fixing roads and they have to let out contracts and it's possibly a distance of maybe 15 miles and they only do about 7.2 of it, I just wonder if it wouldn't be better to, shall we say, do the whole 15 miles at the one time, because whoever gets that contract and they come in and they get all their machinery moved in and their trucks and their equipment and everything's ready to roll and going, I feel that that other seven or eight miles could be done for a lot less than the first seven. So I would like to see them when they're doing something like that to do larger stretches, and then the next year the other area could get the whole stretch, rather than trying to keep everybody happy all the time and just doing a few miles this year and then a few miles a year later. I know that politically that you get in trouble, you know, this way, but I still think it's the right decision. I think if governments and people make the right decision, you know, that the people will see through it even though they'll grumble a little bit.

And I know that the day's coming with the amount of traffic you see that there's going to have to be more asphalt roads in between these main towns and areas, and I think the government should be planning to try and do away with the old gravel roads that connect these as quick as possible because it's going to cost money but we're spending lots other places and I said before, money spent on roads is invested. And when we have these here gravel roads where stones are flying and there's all the dust, and I know that anybody that drives in the rural area is changing their seal beam lights, and they're changing windshields every once in a while; they're costing the farmer some and they're costing Autopac some, which is really the people that are driving cars, so I think that these gravel roads pretty well have to go. I hope we work towards that.

And the other thing that I would say is that I keep hearing from people in my constituency that the provincial trunk roads aren't kept up as good as they used to be, and I've been at a few of the different meetings, and it isn't that there isn't more gravel goes on them and it isn't that they aren't maintained just as often and oftener, it's the very fact that the traffic is, you know, that much more than it ever was before because you'll see a road down to, connecting some areas and there never used to be cars on it years ago but you'll see cars and trucks going on it a lot now. So I'd like to see the government working towards the idea of these here provincial trunk roads to become paved as soon as possible. In between I think possibly they're going to have to spend more money to keep them in better shape

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(MR. HENDERSON Cont'd) because somehow or another the people in the area, and the local municipalities, seem to think they're in worse shape before the government took them over.

That's all that I have to say. I just wish that the Highway Department could get a larger share of the budget so that they could do more of this, and I'd be one of the ones who'd be very happy to go along with that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to be very brief to the Minister of Highways, and it's regarding the Sturgeon Creek situation and Portage Avenue and Ness Avenue, and where there are bridges, and the Hamilton Street Bridge and the Saskatchewan, the old Saskatchewan Avenue Bridge, culvert, that the Member from Assiniboia touched on yesterday. Certainly there is some responsibility to the Provincial Government to the city for repairing the roads that were damaged by floodwaters, and I think in this case the responsibility really rests upon the province to probably pay more than 50 percent of making those bridges and putting in new culverts under Portage Avenue larger than they are at the present time. The reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is that I believe that the Minister if he checks with the Manitoba Water Resources Commission, or Board, you will find that they have been emptying water from Omand's Creek and Bruce Creek and draining water into the Sturgeon Creek from all parts of the north of Winnipeg here which has expanded Sturgeon Creek's water volume considerably. And one of the reasons for the backup on Sturgeon Creek was when they were diking they were saving Portage Avenue and it backed up the water and caused some trouble with the residents along Sturgeon Creek.

I believe that if the province is going to start diverting a larger volume of water into Sturgeon Creek, the province has a responsibility to take on the financial responsibility as well for putting proper bridges or larger culverts, under Portage Avenue, and also for probably raising the level of the bridge at Ness Avenue. I'd like the Minister to comment on that.

He may have to check with people in the water resources to find out if that's happening, but it certainly is happening because the volume of water going down there is getting more every year and it's understandable, Sturgeon Creek is capable of handling a large volume of water much more than the old Omand's Creek or the Linwood Creek or Bruce Creek, as we call it in our area. But the capacity of the culverts and the bridges over Sturgeon Creek were built to handle a lower volume and if they've got to handle a higher volume because of a decision by the Water Resources Commission or Board, the government should have some responsibility in that respect.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID BLAKE (Minnedosa): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't really think that I should complain about the highways for my constituency because my colleague from Virden tells me that I'm getting them all this year, but I couldn't miss this particular opportunity, especially with the Deputy Minister in his place to suggest to the Minister it might be a good time to do something about the furnishings in the office of his deputy because they are of extremely poor quality, I find. I hope that I have no highway problems in my constituency because I'm going to be very reluctant to visit his office again unless I remain standing the whole time that I'm there.

I don't want to belabour the points that have been passed on by my colleagues, Mr. Chairman, but I do want to reiterate some of them. I also feel that southern Manitoba should be getting a greater share of the highways' budget, or I should say the highways' budget should probably be increased because I certainly agree with what's being done in the north in the way of roads but I'm afraid that some of the complaints that I get from the municipal people are along the lines, as my colleague from Pembina covered already, of maybe more maintenance or more dragging would be in order because the roads are being travelled that much more, and with larger trucks hauling grain now they're just being pounded and hammered that much more. So I would certainly support any influence the Minister might have in squeezing a larger budget for the Highways Department out of his colleagues and maybe he might have to steal it from some other departments that I may consider could give up some of their budget.

A MEMBER: Which ones are you thinking of?

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MR. BLAKE: I wouldn't want to go on record as stating any particular department because we might maybe have covered that and we might be coming to some of them yet.

But, Mr. Chairman, I wouldn't want the estimates to pass that quickly and in case I didn't have an opportunity to speak, I just wanted to go on record as saying that we're certainly happy in the constituency of Minnedosa for the roads that we are getting and are hopeful that we're going to continue getting many more.

I should mention, one complaint that I have received on two or three occasions is for a light or a warning signal of some type at the entrance to Minnedosa off the by-pass on the western side -- I guess it would be the junction of 254 and No. 10. The Deputy Minister would know; it's the highway that leads out past the Agristeele complex there. It's a badly lit corner and on extremely dark nights there is some difficulty in traffic turning, especially traffic coming from the north down the hill, turning into Minnedosa on that particular section. It's rather poorly lighted and it could cause a serious accident at some time. That's one complaint that has been brought to my attention on two or three different occasions, and I just want to take this moment to bring it to the attention of the Minister.

But I don't want to complain unduly, Mr. Chairman. I know there are other speakers that have 30 and 40 minutes to get off their chest and I'll just let them carry on at this time in order to give the Minister time to prepare his answers.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Chairman, I'm glad if the Member for Minnedosa has nothing to complain about, I'm glad he's going to permit some time for those of us who intend to complain. One reason why I'm able to do this, Sir, is because the Minister, unlike Ministers in the past, tabled the road building program for the members just as he is making his opening remarks. My understanding is that in the past they had a much more subtle way of getting estimates through. The Minister would keep the road program in front of him and whenever a member of the Opposition got up to complain he could visibly see the Minister stroking out those road programs that were located in the constituency of the member who was complaining. --(Interjection)-- But no, it was even prior -- the Minister of Education said it was under the administration of the Conservative Government. I want to remind him it was even prior to that time.

But it seemed to me from the Minister's point of view it was a heck of a good idea and in those days there seemed to be some desire to get through the Estimates, which is unlike the phenomena that we see in the House on this occasion.

Mr. Chairman, there are several points that I want to raise. One of them is in connection with the road building budget itself and I think that has been drawn to the attention of the Minister. I am somewhat perturbed to note that the total road building budget, that is for the construction of provincial trunk highways, provincial roads and related projects, in the year 1975 amounts to \$26,500,000, while in the 1970 budget I notice that amount was \$25,437,000. Sir, that is just a little over a million dollar increase in the total road building budget for the province, and I don't know how the Minister can be satisfied that the road building program in this province is being kept pace with in the light of the demands, in the light of the increase in construction costs and in the light of their statements that the road building program is increased to such a large extent in Northern Manitoba. We don't quarrel with that. But if the increase in the total budget is only slightly over a million dollars and if the increase is taking place in the north, if the roads are being built in the north to the extent that the government says they are, and if the costs of road building have almost doubled, then there must be portions of the province - and I suspect it's in the southern part of the province - that are suffering grievously from lack of road construction and maintenance. And **one** only has to travel those roads to see evidence of that fact.

It seems to me that the Minister must have been missing a few Cabinet meetings when the road budgets were struck because I don't know how - perhaps I'm missing something and perhaps he can explain it to me - I don't know how you can increase a road budget - and I'm not one that continues to ask a government to spend more money - but it seems to me that the creation of an infrastructure in this province in the matter of road building, it seems to me that the government's much touted program of rural development or what did they call it? - stay option, a large part of that stay option program would be the construction of a network of communications. And yet we see in the budget an increase of a million dollars. That won't

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(MR. JORGENSON Cont'd) even come near paying the cost of the increase in salaries or those who act in administrative positions in the Department of Highways. And yet on the other hand we see that under the Motor Vehicle Branch the total budget for the Motor Vehicle Branch in 1970 was \$1,866,000. Today it's \$7,390,000. Now there's somebody in the Motor Vehicle Branch who must be screaming pretty loud, and I find it difficult to comprehend the reason why such a tremendous increase must take place in that particular branch of the department. It would seem to me that the construction of highways and the moneys allocated thereto would be far more important than simply increasing the staff of the Motor Vehicle Branch, or whatever costs are involved in that rather substantial increase over a period of four years.

Now, Sir, I want to deal with, as you might expect, with a couple of projects that I believe I have perhaps denied myself now after my criticism, I've denied myself the right to get from the Minister, but I believe the Minister is a fair-minded person and notwithstanding my criticism that he will listen carefully to the suggestions that I'm about to make and that we will be seeing some action in the coming year.

Now the Minister knows that Highway 75 is the only major route from Manitoba, it's one of two that has 24-hour ports of entry in this province; and the major amount of the traffic that is coming through from the United States, and the other way as well, comes through the port of entry at Emerson and used Highway 75 as a means of entering into Canada. There is a tremendous difference, and one need not have to read the signs to know that you're entering Manitoba, when you come from the well constructed four-lane highways that you find in the United States, the State of North Dakota, as opposed to Highway 75, which I know the government are attempting to upgrade by blacktopping those portions of the highway that have deteriorated so badly that truck traffic is at the - to say the very kindest thing you can about them, extremely hazardous. With the short wheelbase trucks that have to travel that road, the spectacle of those lights bouncing up and down like that continuously leads one to believe that driving truck transports on Highway 75 is something of an experience.

Now government have completed two portions of that highway: One beginning from Emerson and ending at the junction of Highway 14, which is just south of the constituency of Morris. And then they completed that other portion starting from St. Norbert to Ste. Agathe, which is coincidentally just north of the constituency of Morris. Now I know that the Minister, I know that the Minister did not do that intentionally. That happens to be a coincidence that caught the attention of a lot of my constituents and they've been drawing my attention to it. I have argued that the reason for that was very simple. That the need for repairing the highway in the first instance from Emerson to Highway 14 was the greatest; the second greatest was from St. Norbert to Ste. Agathe, and that this year there is evidence that that remaining portion indeed it's contained in the road building program, that they intend to complete that portion from Morris to Ste. Agathe.

Now the suggestion that I want to make stems from the experience that we've just had in the flood. Highway 75 now has been closed for a period of over a week and it appears as though it will be closed for perhaps another few days at least. The reason for the closure of that highway is because there's a small portion, less than a quarter of a mile, immediately north of the bridge across the Morris River that is below the level of the bridge at Morris, and water is running over the road at that point. Now it just doesn't seem that it makes sense to have a situation where you're going to close a major road such as Highway 75 because the water had risen to the level that the highway has to be closed. Now if the water reaches the level of the bridge and above then not only will it be closed at Morris but it will be closed at several other points along that road, so there seems to be little point in raising the highway all along the road in order to take care of flood situations that may be in excess of what they were in this year. But it does seem to me that since the road is going to be rebuilt in any case, or at least it's going to be blacktopped, that it would make good sense to raise it to the level at least of the bridge. Now the water control people may argue, and I want to disabuse the Minister of that argument right away, that that low spot in the highway is necessary in order to allow the water to run across. That doesn't make sense at all, because at the time that the water rises it's difficult to tell whether the water is flowing east into the Red River or whether the increase flows from the Red River are pushing water back. So there is not that volume of flow at the time that the waters are rising and it

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(MR. JORGENSEN Cont'd) makes - I'm no hydraulic engineer - but it makes absolutely no difference at all to the flow of the water, or the impeding of the flow of water whether that highway is 18 inches higher or two feet higher or ten feet higher. Absolutely none. So if they attempt to argue with the Minister that this can't be done I want to assure him that he has a forthright and a good argument in rebuttal - it makes no difference. The width of the bridge, the height of the bridge allows for more than adequate flow of water from the Morris River and there is no need to use the highway as a means of allowing the water to go over. All one has to do is to watch it as the water comes up, watch it as the water goes down to know that this is not the case. I'm sure that the people representing the water resources branch who are in the flood fighting committee at Morris will be able to verify that particular statement.

Secondly, Sir, I want to deal with the problem that we're experiencing in the volume of traffic that is now using Highway 75. The Mayor of Emerson and communities along the road have I know petitioned the Minister concerning the advisability of making Highway 75 a four-lane road. Now I don't think that that is a great problem. Along most of the stretch of the highway the only area in which there would be a problem is right at Morris itself, and if it was ever decided to make a four-lane highway out of that route, as I indeed believe it should be at one time and preferably real soon because the volume of traffic is the Minister knows increasing with each year, the bottleneck at Morris would pose some problems and I leave that to the engineers to decide as how they will overcome it because it would require the constructions of some structures over the Morris River that might entail some considerable expense. But if it were decided to allow the highway to pass through Morris as a four-lane highway then I would suggest that it might be timely to take into consideration making those approaches to Morris, and I'm not sure the Minister will do this, will raise the level of that highway to begin with, but while he's raising the level of the highway that portion that is being raised will also be made four-lane so that he would not have to do that over again when they finally four-lane the highway.

In lieu of that and as an alternative, Highway 330 which runs parallel to Highway 75, a little bit further west, could provide an alternative route to relieve some of the congestion on that road. Now that road is already partly paved from La Salle to the perimeter. My understanding is that the base of that road from the remaining portion at least to the junction of Highway 205 to La Salle is constructed, its base is there and ready for paving. That is no further grading is necessary in order to start paving that road. It seems to me that at the time that that road was constructed that possibility was taken into consideration.

I wonder if the Minister when he replies would give the people of that area who have long been looking and asking from some kind of an outlet, the assurance that - I see it not on the road program - would give those people some assurance that consideration is being given to either the four-laning of Highway 75 or as an alternate route the possibility of extending Highway 330 around Morris so that it could be an alternate route for taking care of the ever-increasing volume of traffic that we're experiencing in transportation between the City of Winnipeg and points south.

I know that the Minister has many demands placed upon him and in looking at the total road budget in the light of the costs that the government is facing in increased construction, it would seem to me that the Minister has to pick and choose very carefully what he considers to be his priorities in road construction. I can assure him that very shortly, if not now, the upgrading and making provision for the increasing of the volume of traffic coming from the south and into Winnipeg must be, if it hasn't already become, an urgent priority with the Department of Highways, and I hope the Minister is prepared to give some assurance that engineering studies have already been made or will shortly be made to insure that that volume of traffic will be taken care of in the near future.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. GEORGE MINAKER (St. James): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too would like to make a few comments at this time while we're dealing with the Highway Estimates, in particular with regards to what would appear to be the present attitude of the Highways Department dealing with the construction of roadways in urban areas and their policy towards financing these projects or sharing in the cost of these projects, in particular in regards to the City of Winnipeg. Having had the opportunity to sit on the new City of Winnipeg Council

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(MR. MINAKER Cont'd) in the capacity as Chairman of Works and Operations we had the opportunity from time to time to discuss transportation services for the City of Winnipeg with the government and one of our personal concerns to date has been the fact that since the infamous committee that was set up by the former Highways Minister, Mr. Borowski, some three or four years ago and which I think a two or three page report was presented at some point indicating that freeways were no longer taboo and that the province should not share in the cost of same, there has been little policy come forward from the province, or indication from the province what particular type of transportation facility should be, or what they would like to see in the urban areas. So as a result for the past three years I believe that committee sort of met a quick death, either because of the embarrassment it created for the government at that time or it was no longer felt to be useful. Since that point there has been more or less hide your head in the sand attitude from the government in regard to assisting the City of Winnipeg in its transportation problems. We acknowledge, and as a city member welcome the increased transit grants that were in the Budget this year. However that approach in my opinion is not the answer to the problems that presently face the City of Winnipeg and other urban centres in our province; that we cannot hide our head in the sand and say that we're no longer going to build roadways, that dial-a-bus is the answer, or monorail is the answer. Because, Mr. Chairman, in my opinion these are not the answers, that in the interim period the population, or the car population, in our urban centres has continued to grow and spiral in numbers, and even with the energy crises that we had before us and with us today that I am sure the technology that we do have in this time that we live in, that other forms of energy will be found that will provide the energy needed to transport individuals from A to B, so that we will still need roads, even though we may have a different form of energy to propel us through space and along roadways.

In particular this year the City of Winnipeg put forward in its capital estimates projects that they felt were needed, in fact some of them were felt to be long overdue, and the policy of the government was to say, well hold the line we want to have a look to see what kind of transportation facilities we feel are right for the City of Winnipeg. But another year goes by, and roughly three or four years have gone by, and some of the major roadway systems that are anticipated and needed probably today, and will be needed in the very near future, are not even on the drawing boards. I can understand and appreciate the government's position because with their present policies they are committed to 50 percent of the capital cost on those particular throughways which are considered regional streets in the City of Winnipeg. I can understand the concern that when these moneys are invested in a permanent structure that they will be in the right location and in the right method of satisfying the present transportation problems and future transportation problems. However this sort of stand-still no-action approach can only lead to massive capital spending at some future date to try and resolve a problem that already exists with you.

I was happy to hear the Minister say that the department was proposing a three-year program and we hope that under this program that there will be some kind of policy emanate for urban areas and the sharing of costs for the transportation roadways that are needed in our urban centres. However I would think as a step towards getting some co-ordination, or better co-ordination between the two political bodies that there should be some kind of administration committee set up between the urban centres and the senior staff of the Highways Branch to deal with this problem, because, as I indicated earlier, the car population, vehicle population, are continually growing in number yet our roadways are not growing in number in the urban centres. Because of the lead time that is involved in the design of such roadways - there's probably a year in design and then there's several years in construction of completion - that the problem will only compound and at some point could choke off our major centres.

I think that the City of Winnipeg has indicated what type of transportation systems that they favour at the present time, and that is one of relatively low speed in the 40 to 50 mile an hour; they're no longer looking at the freeway, expressway type of roadway but one that will provide a reasonable flow of traffic across your city to an approach of more river crossings rather than the very exuberant or very wide expanse type of freeway river crossings that were proposed in the WATS Study. I think that the fact the city has indicated the

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(MR. MINAKER Cont'd) general guidelines of the types of arteries, traffic arteries that they are proposing, that it would be in the best interest of the province and of the City of Winnipeg if some kind of committee was struck both of the administration, technical administration and the political, to resolve this present problem that exists, and there is a problem, which is one that every April or every March the City of Winnipeg strikes a capital budget for its transportation systems, the major ones, comes to the Minister requesting to share in these costs, and then the Minister and his department have to review this and try and evaluate whether in fact they should take part in the cost of these projects.

I would think that if we don't want to be faced with a major problem in the City of Winnipeg, and possibly in other areas like Brandon, that there should be some kind of a committee struck that can work in co-ordination. I'm not suggesting that the province takes over the responsibility of designing such roadway systems for our cities, but I'm suggesting that they would be informed of what is happening in our cities, and they would be more closely connected with the preliminary designs and preliminary criteria that is set up. Because I think it's only fair that if the province is taking a part in the financing of this that they should be aware from Day One if it's possible of what their partner is proposing. Yet I believe that the City is - whether it be Brandon or Thompson or Winnipeg - is more close to the situation of planning their own city and knowing the problems of the city than the province would be, and for this reason I would think that the City would still have to have the major say in the planning and design of the roadways.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that a continuation of transit grants, whether it be for dial-a-buses or subsidizing transit to a greater degree, or even maybe eventually providing free travel on the buses, will not be the all-end solution to this problem that we have, because the vehicles still require some roadway to move on. You also have your transportation of vehicles such as trucks and transports that have to travel through your city and across them and around them, and these vehicles will still be required even if we try and encourage a better use of transit, whether through free bus rides or dial-a-bus.

The other thing that the City of Winnipeg found out in quite an extensive report that the dial-a-bus is not necessarily the end-all answer for bus service and getting people to use buses, because it costs somewhere in the order of about a dollar per passenger subsidy in order to run these vehicles, so that you can see that it's not necessarily the most economical from an operating point of view, and when that is compared to capital costs or roadways I would question whether or not it would be more economical. In any event you still need these major roadways for these vehicles to travel on. I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the monorail is not the end-all answer as well because I personally do not favour such a mode of transportation, primarily because the environmentalists and the planners in the City of Winnipeg spent many dollars to have the railway tracks or street car tracks removed from the centre line of some of our major roadways in Winnipeg, as well as the telephone poles to try and create an open and enjoyable atmosphere in our city, and I cannot for the life of me visualize a monorail structure down the centre of Portage Avenue with concrete abutments filling in where we have taken out telephone poles and other obstructions. So that from an environmentalist point of view I would think that it would be a very hard item to accept as a mode of transportation.

The other think is that the monorail has its best usage where you have a high density of commuters going from A to B with no stops in between. And we realize that this could not be achieved on Portage Avenue because of the fact that we would have to make several stops and as a result the monorail would never ever get to its top speed. It would be starting to accelerate when it would have to decelerate, so that there are operation problems with the present monorail systems that would not probably make it feasible at this time. So because of these various programs that are being looked at, and because of the sort of attitude of the government at this time that, do nothing, we're against freeways, we don't want them, that the thought is that we won't have any problems. But every year that we wait before we make the decision or assist the cities with these problems, we compound that problem when it does occur and we will end up with a city somewhat, we'll say, like Chicago or New York where they do have traffic problems, and up until now we have been fortunate with -- and I have to credit the former Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg - we have been fortunate that they had a good transportation division and long-range thinking, and as a result

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(MR. MINAKER Cont'd) we can relatively travel, or we can travel with relative ease through our city, but every day it starts to congest more.

So I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the government has to come forward with some kind of a policy for our urban areas, and I would suggest that one of the first steps would be to assemble a committee that would be composed of the urban municipal government people as well as your own people to look at this problem, and it might be incorporated into your three-year program that you're talking about, and that when the City of Winnipeg or Brandon feel that they require a bridge or a crossing or a roadway, that you will be aware of it far enough in advance and understand their problems that you will not have to necessarily rely on the municipal board to say yes or not to the capital investment, that you can look at it from a design point of view as well as from a financial point of view, and indicate that you are prepared to invest your share of the moneys towards these projects. As a result we should arrive at a more efficient method of planning the future for our urban areas in the transportation area and not be faced with some kind of a catastrophe that only millions of dollars spent in one year or two years will partially correct, so that we get out of the present program, which is a relatively do-nothing type of program, which is an extreme to the vigorous program that was proposed under the WATS Study that, as we know now, is outdated, and that the City of Winnipeg has not come forward with general guidelines of the types of roadways that the city feels is required. They are a low speed roadway, they are not big freeways. There is more bridge crossings, not large freeway bridge crossings; and further that the railway relocation that is presently being reviewed by the City of Winnipeg can be incorporated into the long-range plans of transportation development because the major portion of the projects that were not approved by the municipal board this year, my understanding is, did not involve the railway relocation, or would not be affected by railway relocation other than probably the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass, but the remaining major projects were not, or would not be affected by any railway relocation. I would suggest that we cannot continue to operate, the City of Winnipeg, or at least the City of Winnipeg cannot continue to operate in this fashion for much longer without having a major transportation problem on their hands.

MR. CHAIRMAN; The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. LLOYD AXWORTHY (Fort Rouge): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to provide some comments based upon the statements that have been made by other members of this House in relation to the activities of this department because they prompt certain underlining and emphasis that I think is required.

The first area that I'd like to direct some inquiries to the Minister relates to the issue brought forward yesterday by the Member from Portage la Prairie concerning the situation presently in the City of Winnipeg in relation to the operation of the taxicab system in the city. The member yesterday mentioned that we are experiencing increasing difficulty in providing for a reasonably efficient and effective system. I think the Member from Portage la Prairie was being extremely kind and beneficent to the Minister. In fact the system has virtually between the months of November broken down. It just doesn't work. This is of particular consequence for those many numbers of thousands of people in the City of Winnipeg who rely upon cab systems as virtually their only means of transportation that there are a large number or people who are elderly, who must use cabs to visit doctors, to move around, to shop, to visit friends. The same thing is true with people with particular physical handicaps.

It's also increasingly true for people who have taken some recognition of the difficulties of driving an automobile in the downtown area, as the Member for St. James has noticed, and have tried in the alternative solution of using transportation based upon the cab system and found it almost nonsensical to attempt to make any kind of reasonable plan, or make any kind of reasonable schedule, based on the estimate that they could expect a cab to pull up to their door within a half hour, because it certainly - and I can speak in this case, Mr. Chairman, from direct experience because unfortunately during the periods of January and February my old car will not work and so I am forced upon other means of conveyance.

Over a period of time just as a matter of curiosity, I ran a little test. So for a period of two weeks steady, I attempted to use the taxicab system to go to work in the morning, and found that the waiting period would range anywhere from 45 minutes to sometimes an hour and a half virtually to get a place, and I'm not in an inaccessible location. It simply goes back I think, Mr. Chairman, and I'd really welcome the Minister's comments on this, to the deal

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(MR. AXWORTHY Cont'd) that was made a couple of years ago when we set up the new Unicity Taxi system in the City of Winnipeg, because I just happen to think it was a bad deal. I don't think it does much good for the taxicab drivers; it certainly doesn't do any good at all for the consumers who have to use that service.

I think we have to start out by examining what went into that deal because I don't think, while it was a noble experiment, not a particularly good one in terms of the way it's worked out in practice. But I gather having talked to some people who are presently working under the Unicity arrangement that the driver-owner before he can do anything else is required to pay a minimum of \$126.00 a week payment back in simply to cover sort of the capitalization and other maintenance costs, before he can make one red cent, he'd got to be making \$126.00 in fares in order to provide any kind of return for himself. Now that requires a particularly onerous kind of burden on those drivers. The second part of the arrangement which, and I think the only ones who benefitted in fact from that financial arrangement were the original owners of the original taxi companies. They're the ones who have walked away with financial security and surety. It's not the drivers, and it's not the consumers, the only ones who benefitted from that deal were the guys who owned the companies. And I find it somewhat ironic that a government that proclaims itself on the side of the little man, in fact ended up negotiating a deal which is on the side of the big guy.

The second part of the problem in that deal was the fact that the driver-owners are assigned specific vehicles, and the vehicles they acquired in 1972 were vehicles that already had been on the road for well up to a year, plus all of the maintenance facilities that again have to be paid for and supplied by the drivers. Therefore it simply becomes a real serious problem, the drivers become very concerned about the ability to operate their vehicles in bad weather. As the Member from Portage la Prairie pointed out, if you have any hope or aspiration of trying to get a cab in this town when it's snowing, raining, hailing, icing, or any other conditions which are quite common in the winter months, then you might as well forget it, because it's not going to happen it's purely because the gods are looking kindly on you at that particular time, not because the system is designed to meet that particular issue.

Now I think that this is something that really requires the government to go back and renegotiate and revise that deal. It's a bad deal, and we saw the symptoms of it - it was last fall when the drivers marched on the Legislative Buildings asking for an increase in fares. Well the only problem with their protest is that they didn't have along with them five or six thousand sort of citizens of the City of Winnipeg who are the other victims of that bad deal that was made.

So I would simply like to know from the Minister if at the present time his government, or he himself and his department, are now prepared to go back and renegotiate and refinance and reorganize the taxicab system in this city. They spent a good deal of money two or three years ago developing a very, I think, exhaustive report. They came up with a solution which was not the right one. I think that if we are going to satisfy ourselves that we are going to have to have an effective taxi system in the city then we can't any longer tolerate the present arrangements that now manage and direct the way the cab system operates.

And I think that that is particularly important, Mr. Chairman, because of the requirements, the increasing requirements for that kind of service to be provided as it becomes more and more difficult to operate automobiles, and where increasingly the onus and burden will be put upon the cab system in the City of Winnipeg to provide a major component to the transportation system. It isn't simply a luxury service any longer. It is an essential vital component of the transportation system, and in fact is virtually the only component that is available to large numbers of elderly people and handicapped people, as well as others who don't drive automobiles.

If we are to increasingly try to develop a system that discourages the use of the automobile, particularly in the downtown area, then you have to provide an effective alternative, because you can't expect people to completely give away all convenience. So if we are going to move as we have to move, and here I take some exception to the position of the Member from St. James, if we're going to move to discourage the use of the automobile in the city because of all the extreme costs of energy and fuel and roadways and parking facilities, which are becoming so exorbitant, that the automobile is now becoming sort of a monster in its own right, but a very convenient monster and one that has served us well, but nonetheless

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(MR. AXWORTHY Cont'd) a monster in its own right, then we have to provide an alternative. If we're going to provide that alternative, the taxicab system is one of those elements, and therefore we're going to have to provide and make sure that it's a good system. I think there's certainly been enough evidence demonstrated in this city over the past year that it's not a good system, and therefore I would hope that the Minister could give us some assurance in this debate on his estimates that he will not allow it to become any worse, but is now prepared to undertake the reorganization of that system. I would obviously think he would do it in close consultation with the driver-owners of the co-op arrangement and have to perhaps even go back to the original parties to that arrangement. But certainly it must be done, and done soon if we're going to develop an effective system.

That simply leads me, Mr. Chairman - I see I have three or four minutes left before the afternoon closes - to just comment briefly on the comments by the Member for St. James which I found a little bit disturbing because I think it still, while he obviously had taken as a city councillor, to heart many of the critiques that had been raised concerning the disadvantages of the WATS system, we're still talking about a transportation system that is geared to I think basically an outmoded concept of what's required in the City of Winnipeg. We're still talking about sort of one group of people who have to be served. We're still not talking about a full integrated transportation system that balances off the automobile, public transit, taxicab systems, and other forms. I believe, and again I'm asking the Minister for information, that his predecessor while in office took some opposition to the WATS proposals, and I again would take some exception to the, I think, somewhat sanguine position of the Member for St. James when he feels the city has changed its position. I'm not so sure it has because when I look over the Capital Estimates I still see that they're buying land on the original routes that were ascribed to the WATS System, and even though they may be scaling down the speed from 70 miles to 50 miles an hour, that still is not necessarily any more of a benefit.

When he talks about the alternative now is to develop a number of new accesses and bridge crossings, I'd like to bring to the attention of the Member for St. James, and other members of the suburbs, that those bridge crossings happen to be crossing through a number of neighbourhoods and communities in the downtown part of the city. And when we talk in those glowing terms about getting a nice flow going across the city, well that flow is coming through my backyard, and through the backyard of many of my constituents, and frankly I don't want it, because I don't think that that is necessarily the way we should do it. That really is an issue that has not been changed, and therefore I would like to ask the Minister whether that study that was commissioned by his predecessor - I believe he brought in some fellow from the east again to analyze the provincial position on major transportation systems - has that study been completed? Has the Provincial Government now established their position on its support system for urban transportation? Has it evaluated and assessed the concept of arterial and freeway and expressway systems, and are we now ready to make some commitment or set some guidelines from a provincial point of view? Because I'd like to point out, and this is very important, that increasingly in this country the responsibility for urban transportation systems has to be taken in large part by the Provincial Governments. Certainly the Province of Ontario over the past two years has radically transformed the approach to urban transportation in that province by taking the leadership, not by responding, not by holding committee meetings, but by taking the leadership, and this is not just simply in the case of developing high speed public transit but they have virtually stopped the building of arterial roads and systems catering to the automobile, because first they realized that they can no longer afford it in their cities, and that maybe we're reaching - have to reach that stage in Winnipeg very soon.

So the . . . I'd like to ask the Minister is this: First, does he still have responsibility for it? One thing that has been confusing myself, and I think other members of this House, is who is now making decisions on urban transportation in the government? Is it the Minister of Highways or is it the Minister of Urban Affairs, or is it some committee back there that we don't know about? So let's first clarify responsibility.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The member will have an opportunity to continue after the supper break. The hour being 5:30 I am leaving the Chair to return at 8:00 o'clock.