

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 12 June, 1986.

Time — 8:00 p.m.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY
SUPPLY — HIGHWAYS AND
TRANSPORTATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, M. Dolin: Page 96, 4.(e) Marine Services: 4.(e)(1) — the Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: I just want the Minister to bring us up to date on where we stand with our Navy. How many have we got operating? Have we got any in drydock that have been pulled out of service? What's the one doing at Nelson House?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, outside of the Treesbank area, we have seven in the northern areas: The M.V. Charles Robert at South Indian Lake, South Bay; the M.V. Joe Keeper, Split Lake-York Landing; M.V. Edgar Wood, P.R. 234, Bloodvein-Princess Harbour; C.F. James Apetagon at Sea Falls to Norway House; C.F. Ingemar Carlson, which is operating at Matheson Island by the Community Council there; C.F. Alfred Settee Sr. at Pipestone River to Cross Lake; and the C.F. Thomas A. Mclvor, Nelson River and Cross Lake. It may be up for moving to another location in the near future because of the bridge being in place there, but they want to operate it for another year yet.

MR. D. BLAKE: I wonder if the Minister could tell the committee what hours are they operating, especially the one — is it Nelson House where they can't get across until the morning?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the Cross Lake and Norway House ferries, we extended two hours this year to 10:00 p.m., 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., another two hours instead of the 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., as in the past, which will enable them to make the bus connections. We have provided some additional dollars this year for that purpose.

The decrease in dollars here in the Salaries area, 35,000, is due to the fact that the Matheson Island Ferry was taken over by the community in 1985-86.

MR. D. BLAKE: Do these run on one shift, or do they have two shifts from 8:00 till 8:00?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: They're operated locally on 12-hour shifts. Now with the other two hours, I don't know whether this would go 14 hours.

MR. D. BLAKE: Seven days a week?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I'll just find out about how many days a week. It may vary. Some of them are seven days per week, Mr. Chairman, such as the service

between South Bay and South Indian Lake. That's a seven day per week service. The one to Norway House is seven days per week.

As far as the shifts, Mr. Chairman, there is a variety of shifts that these operate under. They may operate for 10 days straight and then have five days off and that kind of thing. But the days that they go, so far as seven days, six days a week, I believe most of them are seven days a week, except for Split Lake which is less, three days a week. The rest are seven days a week.

MR. D. BLAKE: Does this apply to the Treesbank Ferry too?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: No, the Treesbank Ferry is open till midnight, I think, or 1:00 a.m.

MR. D. BLAKE: Well with a beep of the horn, I think you can always get the old guy there to run you across if you're late.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: So there's a little different approach there, and it's not even run under this section of the budget, is it? It's through the Highways construction budget, not through the Marines appropriation. It's not one of the Northern — these are all Northern ferries, and it's not dealt with the same way.

MR. D. BLAKE: Are there any ferries that aren't in service, that have been pulled out of service? What has happened to them? Have they been sold, or are they up for tender?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well the M.V. Charlie Sinclair was relocated and renamed last year, the M.V. Charles Robert from Cross Lake to South Indian Lake, that was one that was moved, and we may have the M.V. Mclvor that we were just mentioning earlier up for relocation in the next year or so. I don't know whether we have identified specific locations for it or not. We're looking at Island Lake for that ferry.

MR. D. BLAKE: Is there any provision or any planning been done for constructing additional bridges that may eliminate further ferry service in some areas?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That's what happened at Cross Lake; that's why the Thomas A. Mclvor will be available, but I don't think there is — Mr. Chairman, it's been pointed out there are two that actually cross rivers. The rest are either operating along the east shore of Lake Winnipeg, or Cross Lake, it's a couple-hour trip, and that kind of thing. So there is only a chance, I guess, that the C.F. James Apetagon at Sea Falls to Norway House and the Alfred Settee Sr. at Pipestone River to Cross Lake where there could ever really be a viable alternative in terms of a bridge, and there are no plans for bridges currently in the budget for that.

MR. D. BLAKE: The Matheson Island Ferry just operates from the mainland to Matheson Island. They have no other route?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, the Matheson Island operates as the member described. The M.V. Edgar Wood, which operates from the end of PR 234 to Bloodvein and Princess Harbour as well, but the Matheson Island is just across from 234 to Matheson Island.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(e)(1)—pass; 4.(e)(2)—pass.
4.(f) Materials and Research — the Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Is this the area, under Materials — where would we discuss the government purchase of motive fuels? Would this be under Materials and Research, or is that under another area?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: The member was asking about motive fuels. Of course, the tax of the motive fuels is something that is done through Finance. If he's talking about the fields for equipment and our fuel bill for the department through Mechanical Equipment Services, 4.(b), we passed that some time ago.

MR. D. BLAKE: That's where the gas purchases are?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Fuel and gas, diesel and gas for our equipment, yes.

MR. D. BLAKE: I wonder instead of coming back to it under the Minister's Salary, maybe if we could touch on that. I thought it might be under Materials down here rather than Mechanical Equipment.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, in fuel for vehicles last year, there was approximately 5 million spent in that area and we're projecting 4.5 million this year. So, about a \$500,000 reduction in actual expenses there and heating fuel dropped from 300,000 to 200,000.00. So, there's a substantial drop there in the costs.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, I wasn't as concerned about that as the method of purchasing. Is this put out for tender to the various companies?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, there's a quota for various areas of the province for delivery to your tender and it'll come up for renewal this fall in December. There's escalation clauses or decreasing clauses — whatever the word might be for that — it will fluctuate with the market, red crude oil price.

MR. D. BLAKE: I wonder if the Minister could tell us under this section, or if he could tell the committee what criteria is used for government employees in patronizing certain filling stations. Is there a priority list, if you use company A, company B, company C — in that order — or what direction is given them on what station they should fill up the government vehicles at when they're out in the rural areas?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, we do get discounts that are negotiated with these companies off the pump list

price, but that is through government vehicles. That's in Government Services and it's really not appropriate to discussing that policy here.

MR. D. BLAKE: We get into that under Government Services?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Under Government Services.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(f)(1) — the Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Would the Minister have any fairly handy breakdowns on salaries, under Salary and Wages on what is senior management and what is clerical? Do you have a quick breakout on that, how many employees?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Under Materials and Research, Mr. Chairman?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Materials and Research, yes.
The Minister of Highways.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, in the 38 SY's in this particular section, one is listed in managerial; 6 are professional, such as engineers; 28 are technical or technicians, technologists and some operators in that category; and three clerical, for a total of 38.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm hearing a buzz in here and I don't think it's a malfunction of the equipment and it's hard to hear the members' questions.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: It's Storie and Maloway.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't want to attach blame.
The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes. What type of research does the staff do? Is this research on material strengths, asphalt strengths, gravel testing, things of this nature? Is this the kind of research that's carried on in this department?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, that's correct. It provides for investigating, testing, inspecting all materials used in construction and maintenance of highways.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(f)(1)—pass; 4.(f)(2)—pass.
4.(g) Traffic Operations—the Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, is this where we would ask the Minister to bring us up to date on highway speed limits? I mentioned to the Minister earlier about standardizing the better class paved roads to 100 kilometres because we're running into great difficulty. In our area, you come off the Yellowhead Route, which is 100, and turn up No. 10 to Clear Lake, which is 90 and No. 10 is far better . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think it would be more appropriate under 7.(b) which is the Highway Traffic Board, so if you'd like to hold it for that.

MR. D. BLAKE: 7.(b)? I might forget about it when we get there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, the Highway Traffic Board that deals with setting those.

MR. D. BLAKE: Maybe the Minister could tell us what the Traffic Operation covers then.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: The Traffic Operations covers traffic signals and determination of where they should be placed, as traffic counts, speed counts at various areas, illumination, pavement markings, signing. Actually, it makes recommendations for speed limits as well, to the Highway Traffic Board, but they aren't set by this section. The decisions are made by the Traffic Board, so actually we could talk about it here. There's nothing wrong with that. Accident records, traffic management, maintenance and construction zones, these are the kinds of areas that they're involved with.

MR. D. BLAKE: Maybe the Minister could tell us then, has he made a recommendation to the Traffic Board to standardize the 100 kilometre speed limit?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, we have discussed this issue and the department, through this section, has made some recommendations. I don't have the map here in the designated routes, but really it's all major PTH's at a 100 kilometres an hour over a period of time when they reach a certain condition involving the width of shoulders. They should have proper shoulder widths and generally be in reasonably good condition, although there are some that have been set at 100 previously, such as sections of the Yellowhead where they certainly need upgrading and improved surface, but they're still at 100. But that would be the criteria in the future.

Adjoining routes that are already 100, perhaps could be considered joining with other provinces and interconnecting routes that are 100. Basic criteria though is major PTH's.

MR. D. BLAKE: No. 10 is certainly a major PTH. It's the main traffic artery into Clear Lake, Wasagaming and south to Boissevain which is at 90. The road is in far better condition than many others that are 100. I'm just wondering if the Minister has made a recommendation on how soon we can expect that highway to be increased to 100 kilometres.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I do not direct or make recommendations specifically. What usually happens is that the department, once we have approved the basic overview plan for the PTH's that should be set at 100, over a period of time the board will react to resolutions and requests from municipalities in the area and from, I believe, the department to this section, recommendations. I won't make those recommendations, but they will be made over a period of time. They'll be dealt with on an individual basis over a period of years.

MR. D. BLAKE: I'm just wondering where the interested parties that are interested, such as the Tourist Association and the Chambers of Commerce, should direct their pressure to or their request to, to have the speed limits increased so that they're uniform in certain

areas. Would they direct those to the Highway Traffic Board?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: They could do that. If they sent them to me, I would forward them onto the Traffic Board for consideration, or they could send them directly to the Traffic Board.

MR. D. BLAKE: It is causing some problems in that particular area, especially now with the heavy tourist traffic. As I say, they come off a 100-kilometre route and turn on to a highway that's in as good a shape or better and, all of a sudden, they're flagged down by the constabulary. It's very upsetting to them, because they're maybe not familiar with the area. Those of us who are familiar with it don't like it, but we have to observe it because we know the signs are there, although it costs about \$36 every now and then when you're not quite as observant as you should be.

So that's pretty annoying to local people who are travelling in the area and sometimes get a little absent-minded. But if we can tell them where to direct their inquiries, that's fine.

Under Traffic Operations, I notice there's a recoverable amount of \$950,000.00. Where do we recover this out of Traffic Operations?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: The 900,000 recovery is from the district offices for sign production through the Maintenance Division. They pay for the signs that are used in their districts, and that's where this section, Traffic Operations, recovers that amount of money.

MR. D. BLAKE: Under this amount, my colleague, the Member for Turtle Mountain, is not too familiar with what these amounts might cover, this \$4.259 million, so maybe the Minister, for his edification, could just elaborate on it a little bit.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Okay. There is, first of all, an increase in the Other Expenditures this year which is some \$280,000.00. We'll get to the basic 4.2 million as soon as I get the information on all of the components.

MR. D. BLAKE: We don't need details, just general . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: But the highway illumination, for example, is up \$80,000 this year for Hydro, so that's an \$80,000 increase in there.

MR. D. BLAKE: It'll be going up every year . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: An increase in the quantity of manufactured traffic signs, \$150,000 increase there for that matter. Traffic signals that are put in would come under Other Expenditures, as I mentioned, illumination, pavement markings. I mentioned signing, sign shops, pedestrian corridors, new Community Signage Program.

We've got a few more, mostly in the sign area, new signs as well as illumination and markings that I mentioned. They're major ones.

MR. D. BLAKE: Could the Minister tell me — he mentioned illumination was covered here — if there

has been any decision made or any action taken to illuminate the junction of No. 16, the Yellowhead Route, and 10A? That's on the south of Minnedosa leading into the town. There has been a request for greater illumination there and on 10A where it comes out and joins the 355 with No. 10 on the west side of the village.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I just mentioned a number of pedestrian corridors and illumination, pavement marking, signage and so on. There are also railway crossing signs that are put up at joint expenditure of the Department of Highways and railways. They share those costs for crossing signs and warning lights.

That particular intersection mentioned, 16 and 10, has been brought forward by, I guess, the Yellowhead Association and others. I believe that is one of the ones that's intended to be done this coming year. I think that it's warranted and some . . .

MR. D. BLAKE: They're looking for illumination, rather than stop lights.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I know, illumination. Thirteen intersections are going to be done this year on that, other additional intersections.

MR. D. BLAKE: We've experienced some fairly serious accidents on that corner under various conditions. The junction of 10A, the Yellowhead Route, and No. 10 north through the town, there were a number of deaths there for years, but they seem to have that under control now. They had rumble strips and a stop light and, God knows, how many signs, and they still came crashing through there. I think there were something like 19 people killed there in the last 15, 20 years. But the last couple or three years, it's pretty accident-free, so maybe the last signage and the rumble strips have been the answer to alert them that they're coming to a major intersection.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Waking people up.

MR. D. BLAKE: I have to be very careful with them with my car, because I may lose half of it. It's pretty rough.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Certainly wakes you up.

MR. D. BLAKE: Most of the roads that we have now, it doesn't make much difference. You can't tell whether you're on a rumble strip or not.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: He's on one permanent rumble strip, okay. That's my design to keep you awake.

MR. D. BLAKE: I think maybe some of my colleagues have a question here, Mr. Chairman. Maybe you can ask someone else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, my question may be an overlap kind of question with this area as well as the Highway Traffic Board area, so you might tell me if I'm out of order here. But I would like to know a little

bit more than I already do about the Highway Traffic Board. For instance, who are the members of the board?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that would be more appropriate under 7.(b), where you deal specifically with the board.

MR. J. McCRAE: All right, well my question is then, Mr. Chairman, the Minister talked about his department making recommendations to the Highway Traffic Board respecting speed zones and that type of thing. I believe this would fall into line with the type of discussion we were having a little while ago.

Does the department have any policy respecting which roads it would make recommendations about? That's the question, whether it has a policy or whether it acts on an ad hoc basis to make recommendations to the board.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well there are a total of currently probably, last year, 1985, a total of 2,510 kilometres in the province that were at 100 kilometres per hour. The department has a policy that would see that move up to 4,110 kilometres in total in the province. So it wouldn't quite be doubling the total. Of course, there are a number of major routes that are already 100, including No. 12, No. 6, No. 10 in the Northern areas, No. 5, the Yellowhead, No. 16, as well as all the five four-laned sections of highway that are there now, would be 100. There would be other major highways that would be included probably on No. 10 south as was mentioned by the Member for Minnedosa. Perhaps Highway 83, some sections are already 100 I believe and studies are being done at the present time. Resolutions have come in and so these are looked at very carefully from the impact that it will have and the condition of the highway and then recommendations made, based on that policy if all of the conditions are met.

MR. J. McCRAE: These recommendations would apply to specific stretches of highway and would be the subject of numerous hearings by the Highway Traffic Board or would it all be done in one hearing?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: They may do two or three requests in one year, depending on how many are before them at any particular time. One section of highway, such as No. 10, might be done in one hearing. What they would do, Highway 83, if that was being considered separately from No. 10 and so on, so it would involve . . . During the process of hearings that they have through the normal course of events for other matters, these would come up and be dealt with throughout the year. They would not hold special hearings just for the purpose of that one question.

MR. J. McCRAE: Does the department make recommendations or take any position respecting applications for speed changes within city boundaries?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: The usual process for changes in speed limits will come from municipalities, from towns and villages, cities that want the consideration made for a change. The department will then take a look at

that request and do some radar studies and traffic studies for the area and consider the traffic conditions and road conditions and so on, and then provide that information in a complete report to the Traffic Board and may or may not make a recommendation. The Traffic Board makes the final decision based on all of the information they have at their disposal.

MR. J. McCRAE: I realize, Mr. Chairman, that the board makes the decision. Just a couple of examples. I was involved, Mr. Chairman, as I said earlier in the day, with the Council of the City of Brandon and our council voted unanimously to make representation to the Highway Traffic Board to have certain speed zones reduced within the City of Brandon. In one case, what we asked for we didn't quite get, although we did get a change. In another case, we were turned down twice.

The point I'm making is perhaps I should ask the Minister in those specific instances whether the department made recommendations because it seems to me that it's almost as if the board didn't hear the case that we put to them. We were very disappointed about it and I'd like to know what part the department played in those particular applications. I can refer the Minister specifically to them if he could come up with an answer for us.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: As far as the specific situations, I would probably need to take that as notice and get the information specifically as to what the specific recommendations were, but obviously, in certain instances, the board members would familiarize themselves with the situation as much as possible from their own personal experience, but, I think in most cases, they would consider quite seriously the information and implications that are drawn from the information they get from the department, whether it be by formal recommendation or whether it be by implication, as I said, as a result of the statements that are made in the report that is provided to them and the advice they get. They obviously have to consider that very seriously, just as all people in elected positions rely on staff to provide them with technical advice.

MR. J. McCRAE: This is the point and that's why, Mr. Chairman, I asked earlier who are the people, the members of the board, where do they live, that type of question, so that I was trying to build a case that perhaps the recommendation of the city engineer of the City of Brandon wasn't given the kind of weight that it should.

If these people lived right in the neighbourhood or in the area, those people who made the decision, it might have been a little easier for us at the city council level to swallow. I believe in one case the hearings were held twice on the same stretch of road and we were turned down both times. The point I'm making is that we felt somewhat offended, I believe, that people should come likely from outside our jurisdiction, coming in maybe for an afternoon armed with perhaps a report from the Highways Department, listening to the city engineer and listening to others and elected officials from the city and turning us down.

In the other case, we weren't quite as offended because we did get some of what we asked for. In the

case of 34th Street in the City of Brandon between Victoria Avenue and Richmond Avenue, there were people who were somewhat offended by the decisions in that case. I wonder if the Minister could, when we get to the Highway Traffic Board part of the Estimates, if he will be prepared to answer in that specific instance.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: If we don't get to that before 10 o'clock tonight, I'd try to have the information available on that particular . . . It's 34th Street between Victoria and Richmond Avenue.

I think there's no doubt that they cannot please everyone all the time in their decisions and they don't take any special pleasure in upsetting people, but obviously in many cases they have to because they can't always agree with what was proposed. That's their job. I'm not saying that they do not make wrong decisions at times. Of course, that's all very subjective as to whether it's wrong or whether their decision is right, depending on the perspective that one takes.

In terms of that one specific situation, I can find out whether there was a formal recommendation made and what it was and perhaps get a report. I don't know if I can get a detailed report from the committee on it, but we'll check and attempt to.

MR. J. McCRAE: Mr. Chairman, I must admit that I'm very subjective about it and perhaps the other members of our city council were very subjective about it too. Still, I think it would be useful to know what it is about the department — if there was a departmental recommendation — what it is about that department's recommendation that makes the quality of the recommendation of our city engineer somewhat suspect or less valuable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: . . . I'd like to address a question to the Minister with respect to signage. I have a number of small hamlets and communities through my constituency, some of them that are not recognized in a major fashion in some of the signage that exists on major highways. Can the Minister tell me what proper approach I may take or who I may request that certain signage be erected that would indicate to people in my constituency that they do indeed exist, and that there is a way . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, there is a policy to identify communities on the Highways. I guess I would have to ask, first of all, whether these communities are marked on the highway map. Yet, the member is saying on no major route is the name highlighted by a sign. Perhaps it is, maybe it isn't on every route that they would like and that's where the problems come in.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to move into the specifics now by using the time of the committee to do so, but I'm wondering who I could approach to talk to about two or three specific signs that I might have in mind.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the member could, if he chooses to, write with the information and I would

certainly ensure that it gets to the right place, or he could come in and talk to probably Ross Adamson, who is the traffic engineer, or you could come and see the Deputy Minister. There are many ways, if you just try.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I don't know if this is the time; I'll ask the Minister to direct me. I'd like to move into a pretty detailed discussion on accidents on our highway system involving deaths and injuries, and I don't know if this is the proper time.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Section 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(g)(1) — the Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. D. ROCAN: The Minister indicated here a minute ago that there are 2,500 kilometres with speed limits up to 100 kilometres an hour. I'm just wondering if the Minister could tell me, using the Trans-Canada as a border and 75 as a border, Saskatchewan and the United States, is there anywhere in there at all where there is a speed limit of 100 kilometres an hour, in that whole great big area?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I don't believe at the present time, in that section, there is. No. 2 is one of the recommended routes, along with No. 10, No. 83. Highway 12 right down to the border was done, but you're on the other side. I realize that, but I'm saying that one was added this past year. So those are the routes that were recommended in the studies that were done by the department to bring it up to the 4,100.

MR. D. ROCAN: I'm asking at the present time, is there any?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I indicated that I didn't think there was.

MR. D. ROCAN: There are none, eh? I was just reading, someone was wondering if we were second-class citizens down there. We can't seem to speed along at 100 kilometres an hour.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: You know, everything is a lot more compact there. Originally this started up in the north areas where there was very little, well, not as much traffic perhaps, long distances between communities and that's where the original requests came for a consideration to go to 100 from 90. These were granted in a piecemeal fashion over a period of time, No. 6 in the north, and slowly moved right up to the Perimeter Highway by gradual extensions and No. 10 up north and so on, then moved that one south through further requests. So that's what gave rise to the department and myself looking to come to a kind of a planned approach to it from the kind of ad hoc approach that was taken before. So that is why we have taken a position on those 4,000 kilometres.

MR. D. ROCAN: I don't suppose that 276 is at 100 kilometres?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I don't think 276 will be 100 unless it's made into a PTH. The thing is that we're talking about major PTH's as opposed to PR's.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(g)(1)—pass; 4.(g)(2)—pass; 4.(g)(3)—pass.

4.(h) Government Air and Radio Services - the Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, in the absence of our critic in Highways, would the Minister care to comment with respect to the article that was in the paper, I believe at the beginning of this week, with respect to our air equipment flying around, individuals who had charges laid against them, bringing them to court? Would you prefer to discuss this area in the Policy area or in this area?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, the decisions made for the Government Air by other departments is not something that is screened by the Department of Highways as to whether that is a legitimate use of the aircraft or not. That is a decision made by the client department who pays for it. We don't have our director saying, now we don't think that guy should fly, he should take a bus, or whatever the case may be. That is a decision made by the Attorney-General's Department. The Air Division responds to the various client departments for use of that plane and charges them at the standard rate of, I think it's just over \$1,000 per hour, or so much a kilometre. I can get that right away.

The Attorney-General's Department makes quite good use of the plane, of the second jet, which is the Citation 1 that was formerly just primarily used as a Northern Transportation Program. It was purchased in 1981. It's \$1,005 per hour or \$2.55 per mile. I have a breakdown of the various departments, but the Attorney-General's Department does use this service for, not only that purpose, I understand, but also for other purposes such as judges and for court cases in the North.

MR. C. MANNES: Well, I guess I'm more interested in the policy, Mr. Chairman. The Minister seems to indicate that this jet is on stand-by and is available to any department of government and, of course, I don't know what the order of priority would be, if various departments come for it. Obviously there must be a priority. But given that it isn't being used, it is available to fly, I suppose, on a daily basis, and I guess that begs the question whether the rental rate or the charged rate to each department is sufficient to cover the wear and the tear and the actual depreciation of the equipment; so I guess that's my main concern when I begin to read reports where our jet is flying here, there and everywhere because, quite frankly, I see nothing wrong with it at times. If it were sitting idle for a month or two because it quite evidently then would not be appreciated.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, the policy is that it is charged back on the basis of full recovery based on about 700 hours of usage per year, which will pay the total cost of operating it. Last year, the operating cost was \$611,000, and recovered \$654,000, so it was 107 percent recovery.

The priority since the new air ambulance program has been here, the air ambulance has been available, the priority is: (1) to act as a backup for the Air

Ambulance Program; (2) used by Executive Council for general transport; and (3) used by all departments, agencies and commissions for general transportation of government personnel. If it is to be used out of province, I, as the Minister of Highways and Transportation, have to sign a release form for that.

MR. C. MANNES: The Minister talks about the sum of \$611,000 being the cost of generating revenues of \$650,000 this last year. Is any portion of that an allowance for the actual capital costs such as when this plane has to be replaced; or will there be a sum of money somewhere in reserve, in general reserve, that will help defray the cost of purchasing a new plane; or is it purely operating cost unassociated with the capital cost of the plane?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That may be considered in the near future. Right now we are moving to get rid of the inefficient planes and the fleet of aircraft that can be gotten rid of, and a number have been sold in the last couple of years that were very inefficient, and moving towards full cost recovery on others insofar as operating expenses. We have not included depreciation costs in as yet, but that is something that may be considered in the future. So there is nothing going into a general reserve for purchase of a subsequent aircraft in the future.

The Cessna Citation 2, the air ambulance, is fully recoverable from the Manitoba Health Sciences Commission, for example; the water bombers are fully recoverable from the Department of Natural Resources; the Citation 1 is now at over full recovery this past year; so 107 percent based on those rates, and because it was used more than was projected overall, more than the 700 — (Interjection) — no, not for the election.

A couple of the others that are there, the Beavers, the Turbo Beavers, are much lower in terms of recovery than 100 percent; and the Aztec, for example, before it was one of the most inefficient, 47 percent, the one that landed on the wrong airstrip up at Roblin; and a couple of Beavers are kind of inefficient in terms of recovery. So those are the ones that are being sold that's a lower-priority, older aircraft.

MR. C. MANNES: A final question from me in this area. What life span is left in the Citation 1?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Mr. Chairman, I don't know that there is a life span. From just general conversations I've had with the pilots down there, and I don't know whether we have any formal estimates, but I believe that a plane like that can be easily used for 15, 20, 25, 30 years if it's kept in good condition and replace the engines after a certain number of hours.

MR. D. BLAKE: I don't know whether someone asked while I was out, how many aircraft do we have now, and could you give us a breakdown on what's in the government fleet.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: We have right now, Mr. Chairman, 11 in our air force. We used to have 13 — well, a couple of years ago, we had 15 — this past year, we started the year with 13 and sold one Turbo Beaver and one

Aztec, so we're down to 11. We'll have one more water bomber coming on with the program that we entered into with the Federal Government a few years ago. It's going to be delivered very shortly, so we'll be back up to 12.

MR. D. BLAKE: The Minister mentioned replacing inefficient aircraft. Is that inefficient from the cost recovery end of it, or is there a more efficient aircraft that you're replacing it with, a faster, lighter aircraft carrying a heavier load?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: It's a combination of both of those. It's difficult to get full cost recovery from some of those old clunkers. They're basically bush planes or for fire fighting. The CL-215's are fully recoverable, the water bombers from the Department of Natural Resources, but the others are charged on an hourly basis when they are needed for fire fighting, and they're not needed all the time so that it's difficult to get full cost recovery from them. They're not really equipped for passengers.

MR. D. BLAKE: Do we have any helicopters?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Not in our fleet.

MR. D. BLAKE: Do we still have that push-pull?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That was one that was sold, Mr. Chairman, last year.

MR. D. BLAKE: That was a good move.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Didn't know whether it was coming or going.

MR. D. BLAKE: I should tell the Minister we were in that one time when we got bumped off the jet at Gimli or somewhere, and they sent that one up to bring us back. The former Member for Gladstone was sitting behind the pilot. I noticed him reading a manual on emergency landing and I thought he was preparing for his next test. But, apparently, when we got to the strip, we landed on the grass beside the strip and there were three fire wagons and an ambulance down there. I said, "Was that for us?" He said, "Yes, the wheels wouldn't come down." So I'm glad we've gotten rid of that one.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, you and the Minister of Community Services both know what it's like to come down in the wrong place.

MR. D. BLAKE: That's right. You've covered the use of the jet pretty well, I think, and the questions that I wanted to ask on that, and I can pick them up in Hansard. That was covered thoroughly enough on how the aircraft was requisitioned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(h)(1)—pass; 4.(h)(2); 4.(h)(3)—pass.
Resolution 93: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,451,900 for the Department of Highways, Engineering and Technical Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1987—pass.

Resolution 94, Item 5, Transportation Policy and Research, 5.(a) — the Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Well, not so much under (a), under the Other Expenditures, this provides grants under Southern Manitoba Airport Assistance Program. I wonder if the Minister can tell us what airports have been assisted and the amounts that they have received under this allotment.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That program has been in place for so long, I've got all kinds of information on Mobility Disadvantaged, but not on those. I think those are the ones that are some \$600 grants that go out to these and we really haven't added to the number of communities under that program, nor have we taken away. I believe that it's the same as it was in previous years and the grant hasn't changed, either.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, J. McCrae: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: There was considerable upgrading. The Erikson Airport received a grant of \$284,000 from the Federal Government. There's no matching provincial grant with that federal money they got. I think that comes under some other category of an emergency landing for larger flights across the country. I don't know how they qualified, but they got a fare chunk of money there to put in lighting. They've got a good MP there, I guess.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That may have had something to do with it. I don't know, Mr. Deputy Chairman, why they qualified, but they did and no, that was not matched. We had a Capital Program for some . . .

There was the operating grants of \$600.00 a year. There's 25 communities receiving those. And in addition to that, there was the capital portion of the grant and we haven't paid out too much in that area for some time now. There's a number of commitments outstanding. Winnipegosis is one, Erikson is another where they would be eligible for a \$4,000 grant to assist in capital improvements. Very small but . . .

MR. D. BLAKE: To lengthen the runway a bit or something.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes. Now if they were to apply, I understand that they still have an outstanding request in, or an application in, that was many years old but they've never asked for it to be paid out. So they still may be eligible for another \$4,000 under the Capital Program.

MR. D. BLAKE: The Minister had the mobility disadvantaged figures at his fingertips there so we could maybe get those now.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well that is a program that has, Mr. Chairman, grown considerably in the last number of years, particularly, the last year. We now have some 27 communities under that program. I believe about 12 were added last year alone under the program that was in place. Under that program, we have a \$6,000

start-up grant and up to \$10,000 for capital to assist with the purchase of a handicap van or bus; and then up to \$20,000 or 37.5 percent of operating expenses up to a maximum of \$20,000 to assist in the operation that is in place.

So what we've had in the last year is quite an expansion in the last three, four, five years since its inception in late '81. We've had this particular appropriation growing each year without enhancing the contributions to any one community. It has grown considerably just because there are more and more communities adding to the list. So we now have, as I said, 27, with about 12 added last year. The reason there were so many added last year is because the Federal Government did have a program to provide additional money. First of all, two years ago under the UTAP program, they shared in the purchase of six buses, that was Urban Transportation Program. That was a federal-provincial cost-sharing program and they provided some assistance to match our \$10,000 capital grant that we had. Then last year they freed up some \$120,000 which we were able to take advantage of under our program, coordinate it, so that the Federal Government put up \$10,000, we put up \$10,000, so we've actually provided \$20,000 towards the purchase of a bus. And they cost around \$30,000-\$40,000 now so it was very significant assistance for those communities.

So that's why it expanded so much the last year and now we're faced, of course, this year with contributing to the operating of all those additional franchises, if you want to call them that. But Arborg, Argyle, Boissevain, Brokenhead, Carman, Dauphin, Deloraine, Elkhorn, Emerson, Gimli, Glenboro — I've been everywhere — Hartney, Lac du Bonnet, Minnetonas, Minnedosa, Morden, Neepawa, Pilot Mound, St. Pierre, Selkirk, Souris, Steinbach, Stonewall, across all political lines, Stuartburn, The Pas, Thompson, Winkler, Winnipegosis, have all been included in this program up to now.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Did the Minister ever work for Greyhound in the ticket office?

MR. D. BLAKE: I wonder if the Minister could tell me what changes in driver qualification have been made. I understand that these drivers are all volunteer drivers and the handivans never really leave the towns or villages. I understand they now have to have a Class 4 licence to drive the handivan.

Now in our particular area there was a lot of retired railroaders or Kinsmen volunteers, and whatnot, that were driving the handivans and some of them were a little reluctant to apply for the Class 4 licences; if they failed that they thought they might lose their Class 5. So they just retired, they wouldn't drive any more, so they were pretty stuck for drivers there for awhile.

When did these new requirements come into policy and what was the reason for them?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: There hasn't been a change, Mr. Chairman. My understanding in the requirement for Class 4 licences since this program began, it's a requirement under The Highway Traffic Act, that anyone driving for compensation, or the service receiving compensation, must be a Class 4 driver.

So that hasn't been tightened up. But obviously it will become more and more identified as a problem because the program is expanding so much throughout the province that there will be more instances and cases where individuals are perhaps reluctant to volunteer their time and to help out because they're afraid perhaps by going for a test they'll not only not get the Class 4 but they'll lose their Class 5 licences, if they bungle it up, too.

So actually it's not a bad system in a way because I don't know how you can argue against that. The fact is that the people should be qualified to pass a test at any given time and if they happen to not be quite ready, I'm sure they would make it the next time if they are competent drivers. So I don't know how you can argue against that and say, well under no circumstances should they lose their Class 5 licence regardless of how bad they drive.

So I have to support that system although I know it causes some perhaps lack of volunteers in some areas; although I don't know how widespread. I've heard about it a couple of times, got some letters on it, we've answered letters on it and we just haven't seen how we can change that system. But it is not something that has become more stringent.

I just want to mention one other thing about this program before the member asks another question; and that is, we have just set up an advisory committee as well for this program, made up of users groups, handicapped groups, operators, community boards or advisory boards in the various communities that are operating these. Members of those boards are representatives of these boards, seniors and so on, to come together in an advisory committee that can provide some advise to the department, and to myself, on the way this is operating and in ways that it can be improved.

They will have their first meeting coming up the 24th of June. So I think that's going to be an important addition to this program.

MR. D. BLAKE: I just wondered, is Ms. Theresa Ducharme on that advisory committee?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: No, this is a Rural Handicapped Transportation Program. Theresa Ducharme has made her views known quite well in the urban area and has come into see me on numerous occasions, certainly as a strong voice for the handicapped people.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, back to the driver situation with the handi-vans. Is that requirement for licensing known when the community receives a handi-van? I was just thinking, we've had people driving for quite awhile with a Class 5 licence and it's maybe fortunate we didn't have an accident or something.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, I imagine so. Did you want to give us some names? We have the Registrar of Motor Vehicles right here and we can fix that little problem up pretty quickly.

Wes Graham is here and he's working as the person responsible for this program over the last couple of years and I'm sure, when requested, he or other staff would — they do go out on numerous occasions to

meet with local councils and interested groups and talk about the requirements and the way it's set up in other communities. I don't know if that's one of the set pieces of information they give, I'm sure he does, so that is provided to the communities then and probably is a matter of course.

MR. D. BLAKE: He'll be sitting with us through the next section or couple of sections of the Estimates? There are some questions we'd have probably under the Licence Suspension Appeal Board for him.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Under the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, we would have the Registrar of Motor Vehicles and I don't know if we'll have the board chairman around at that time. We could, if the member wanted to ask some specific questions there. — (Interjection) —

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item 5.(a)—pass . . .

MR. D. BLAKE: No, hold on.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: I'm just getting the Member for Turtle Mountain fired up here. He's got questions about tag axles and a few things . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. D. ROCAN: Mr. Chairman, I'd ask the Minister, could he elaborate a little bit more on the policy that we now have in place for tag axles?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: First of all, I'm not trying to get away from answering that, but I'm just trying to see where that should be. Traffic Inspection is where it should have been included, but . . .

A MEMBER: It's under Policy there.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That isn't the kind of policy that is developed by this section, I don't think. — (Interjection) — Yes, more a federal-provincial policy, the sub-agreement policy on major transportation programs or developments like the free trade area, deregulation, freedom to move — changes in there — and rail and trucking policy and things like that.

MR. D. BLAKE: Where would be the proper place to discuss this tag axle?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well we probably missed it, so we can discuss it under Driver and Vehicle Licensing. I think it's probably peripherally involved there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next item, Item 6. The Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. D. ROCAN: Mr. Chairman, where would we then hit up about — I mean we have our semi's and our pups and now we're coming out with these three trailers. Where would we touch on that?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That probably would have come under the Traffic Inspections as well, but we have a weights and dimensions study which is really associated with driver and motor vehicle licensing.

We've actually missed the best opportunity to deal with that, but since we're not being hard to get along with, let's deal with it now.

MR. D. ROCAN: Just what is our stand right now? Is anybody contemplating what we're allowing right now, three trailers to be hauled behind a truck?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Not in Manitoba that I know of.

MR. D. ROCAN: Nobody's looking at it?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: No, there's a weights and dimensions study that's being conducted by RTAC, which is Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, and that is funded by all of the provinces and it's been ongoing for the last couple of years — a major study on weights and dimensions with an objective of attempting to get some uniformity in this area across the country.

Right now there's all kinds of different weights allowed and configurations allowed, from one jurisdiction to another, and the idea is to get some uniformity into that system. So that is being undertaken by all the provinces in Canada together.

It's funded 50 percent by all of the provinces; 25 percent by the Federal Government; and 25 percent by trucking-related industry; a total cost of \$3 million over a number of years. It's a major research study on this whole area and recommendations should be made probably this next year. They're finishing the study this year and making recommendations to the Council of Ministers by next year.

MR. D. ROCAN: The Minister talks about uniformity. Would I touch on here also now — I believe I talked to one of his people here the other day about wide loads travelling on Saturday. Wide loads coming, say from Ontario, using Manitoba as a corridor on through to Saskatchewan. Would I touch on that here now?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Move your mike in a little closer there so they hear you. Well, the one thing I would just say on a point. If we're finished Transportation Policy and Research, we could maybe let the gentlemen that are involved here go home and move on and deal with this issue under Driver and Vehicle Licensing, or whatever, if you're finished with what they're here for or if there are other questions. I just ask for that in terms of the staff that is here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, the Minister had referred us elsewhere, when he was talking about policy dealing with rail concerns and I'm more concerned about some of the policy that this department of government might be involved in with respect to grain movement costs, transportation rates. I believe Mr. Ray used to be part of this department and maybe still is, and maybe . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: That's the appropriate place to talk about that. I didn't refer rail and so on elsewhere. I said this is the place to put it, to discuss it.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'm curious as to why this government, up to this point in time — either this Minister or the Minister of Agriculture — haven't really taken a major lead with respect to the Federal Government's initiative to increase the cost of transporting grain to eastern ports. I feel, from where I stand, and some of our farm organizations, particularly Manitoba Pool Elevators or the new Keystone Agriculture group have sort have been left on their own to fight this argument, although I'm aware how the government stands or at least the comments that they've made in public.

However, I really believe that it's incumbent upon them to take the lead in developing a quantitative argument in support of the rates and in support of the system that is now in place; or at least an argument that is in opposition to what the Canadian Wheat Board unilaterally indicated they would like to see some several months before now.

So I would entertain, or at least I would like to hear what the Minister has to say with respect to what his department is doing in presenting the case and building the case for Manitoba grain producers. No doubt, a year from now, not starting in the next fiscal crop year, but it may be a year from now, 1987-88, they may find themselves faced with significant increases in rates of transportation.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, it's a very technical and broad question. It deals with the new policy that was announced by the Wheat Board, apparently without consultation with their Minister, which is something that I find quite amazing, that they would change the base point for calculation of initial price from Thunder Bay to Montreal, I think, the eastern point, which has the effect of increasing the price of transportation costs for Manitoba producers particularly.

When this was first put forward by the Wheat Board, we reacted immediately against it. I guess there's a different philosophy in terms of approach as to whether it's incumbent or whether we should feel it's incumbent upon us to develop an alternative and say, this is a compromise or this is what we'd like to see. I guess what we've been saying so far is, we think what's happening now is fair and that it should not be changed.

So if you look at that as taking a non-leadership role, that's fine. It's mainly Alberta that stands to benefit the most, and have been pushing the Wheat Board on this matter. I'm sure that's where this all came from in the first place.

I was rather startled though that there wasn't a better communication, how this announcement ever got out there in the first place. It requires a change in the act, I believe, for either barley or wheat, one or the other. The other one requires an Order-in-Council by the Federal Government, and I have every confidence that Charlie Meyer is not going to be one to be bringing that forward. If he does, he's going to be hitting his own farmers very close to home right here in Manitoba with a big increase. I don't think, from the point of view of equity in the system, that Manitoba farmers should

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be paying more, even if Alberta thinks that it should be.

The Keystone Agricultural Producers have taken a slightly different position. They say that they would like to develop a position. They've actually come in and met with our staff and Agriculture staff on this issue at about the time it was first raised. I don't know if there have been subsequent meetings. I think they've been trying to develop, and they've indicated to me they were trying to develop an alternative position.

We have offered our staff, in any way, to assist, but we haven't devoted and directed a tremendous amount of our staff's energies which are spread so thin at the present time because of the tremendous changes taking place in the area of free trade and deregulation and all of the modes that are keeping our people very busy in developing the positions.

So we haven't directed our energies, and The Western Grain Transportation Act, those costing formulas and, with other provinces and studies, we're very wrapped up in all those areas and have not then directed them away from those areas to develop this.

I would say that's kind of doing the Federal Government's job for them. If they want to make a change they should come up and give some good rationale as to why it's equitable to do so.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I agree with parts of what the Minister has had to say. Firstly, I think his explanation with respect to what staff is doing at this point in time and how busy they will be or are, when it comes to looking at all the various items that are before them today, I can accept that type of argument.

However, I would question whether or not it might be prudent for the government to at least lend some type of support, monetary if necessary, to whichever of the organizations in Manitoba they see fit as having some expertise available to work towards an alternative approach.

For the Minister to say, well we think what we've got now is fine. What we have in place now is fine and, therefore, we'll play it along on that basis, reminds me of the government's argument on the Crow rate issue. I know the argument there was, well let's keep what we've got, and we'll go down swinging and if it changes, it won't be because we've allowed a consideration for some type of compromise plan.

The Minister also states that the Federal Minister will have to, because he's from Manitoba, or at least he infers that he'll have to do his own explaining to Manitobans. Although, I point out to the Minister, as he's well aware, there are many Conservative members from all across Canada, many of them from Alberta also.

He points the blame for this to some degree on Alberta, and I share that direction of casting the blame with him. But the point is, I believe that there could be some very legitimate arguments from a Manitoba perspective as to why the theoretical model laid before us by the Canadian Wheat Board really should not be accepted.

Part of the arguments in opposition to that Wheat Board initiative may be involved in looking at the actual costs associated with moving grain West, rather than the rate charges. The Minister is aware of these

arguments, but I really can't understand why he doesn't believe that the Provincial Government has some role to play. Again, I accept his statement that his staff is approaching being overworked, but there are other resources out there in the private industry who have gone through the whole transportation debate over the last 10 years who have some understanding of the issues, broad and specific, and who I think could help to bring forward a well-documented Manitoba viewpoint on the issue and one that would serve us all and one which would, I think, allow our present Federal Minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board, to also make a stronger representation for all Manitobans in Cabinet.

Mr. Chairman, we must remember the Canadian Wheat Board, we're very fortunate to have it located here in Winnipeg, in spite of the fact that only a very small percentage of actual grain producers are Manitobans. I think we should not take it for granted that the commissioners of that fine institution would — well the Minister laughs.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: We don't take them for granted, don't worry.

MR. C. MANNES: . . . would not in some cases be prepared to move very readily to the detriment of Manitoba producers.

So that's what I want to leave on the record, and I would hope the Minister would take my comments seriously.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well I think they're very legitimate comments. It's, I guess as I indicated earlier, a matter of priorities and hope that there would still be sufficient time to deal with this issue if it does begin to heat up in the future, because we have so many others on the table at the present time. However, there is always the chance that we could consider having a consultant work in this area, maybe an organization that is interested in doing the work with some expertise, and work with them on it. I would consider that.

Certainly, I think the suggestion that the Member for Morris makes about defining and quantifying the actual costs of moving grain uphill as opposed to downhill should be something that should be dealt with at some point, because it stands to reason that it is more expensive to move to the West Coast. But that has not been done in the past and it's one area that should be looked at.

Of course, the alternatives of Churchill should be looked at for some portions of these grains as well because we have, through some of the initiatives taken there, found that there is definitely a cost-saving to producers that have not been accepted because of political powers elsewhere.

The Wheat Board, of course, has to battle with those and that's why I smiled when the member was talking about taking the Wheat Board for granted, because certainly we have never done that and we find that they are subjected to a lot of pressure from other areas of this country, shipping interests, grain interests, that obviously have dictated to a certain extent some of the policies and practices over the years and I think that was evident in that particular announcement.

We have been saying that the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board should be taking a stronger role,

a more interventionist role, when dealing with the Wheat Board and that's why I was so appalled to learn, unofficially, that it was done pretty well autonomously by them, this announcement. I think that is symptomatic of the problem that we have that we should have more direction from the Ministers who are willing to take hold of the Wheat Board and get involved in some major policy questions.

However, I will take those comments made by the Member for Morris under consideration and discuss them with the Minister of Agriculture. It's in his Estimates as well and I don't know if this has been discussed with him, but the question was asked in the House and I'll get a report as to what work has been done recently on it.

As I indicated, we have so many other items going, especially this deregulation one as it applies to trucking primarily right now, because the tabling of The National Transportation Act amendments is to take place in Ottawa any day. We have been working — our staff's involved in that whole area very much, to putting forward Manitoba's position and also in developing alternative positions.

So we don't always sit back and wait for someone else to do the work, certainly, but it's a matter of priorities and that's why we haven't taken a real initiative in this area, thinking that we probably have a little bit of time and what we think is an inequitable step, will not be taken in the near future.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, I suppose this would be the spot where the Minister could bring us up to date on the lighter hopper cars that are being tested for the Churchill line, and the rail bus.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes. The lightweight rail car, which has a low centre of gravity and is articulated in the centre and has an extra two axles under it for better weight distribution, was manufactured in Transcona, unveiled last June a year ago, tested over the grain-hauling season to all ports, to the West Coast, to Thunder Bay, to Churchill, and throughout the system. And from the preliminary technical reports, we understand that it was very positively received.

Unfortunately again, because of some of these political, small "p" or large whatever it might be, reasons, a lot of this positive dialogue or comment about this rail car may not come out in the public, but privately there's a lot of good things being said about it to officials who have been involved with this car in terms of the loading and unloading capabilities and certainly its suitability for the job that it was built to do.

So we are at the stage now of trying to get a positive response from the Federal Minister on the manufacturing of say 30, or 40, or 50 of these cars to test the unit train of them, because we think that it's been so positive initially, as the technical reports have indicated, that we should go to the next step; or the manufacturing of the total production run, going right to that step.

There was some \$38 million in the sub-agreement for rolling stock. Only \$6 million was spent on rehabilitating boxcars, so there is some \$32 million that could be spent on the manufacture of this car, at

between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per car, and in Manitoba at the Transcona Shops, which was the whole idea in the first place.

But there's a lot of other problems associated with that. There's eastern car manufacturing companies who would want to get this business and we certainly wouldn't want to see that happen with Manitoba money involved. So there is that consideration.

There's also the other interests, as I have said, who would like to see this whole project scuttled and that it would not actually take place, that there would be this secure rolling stock for Churchill in the future. But I think it's to C.N.'s advantage as well, because they can use these on branch lines.

But those are all questions that are to be answered by the economic analysis that C.N. is to be doing and they've been delaying on releasing that economic analysis for the last number of months. It was supposed to be ready last October, then it was supposed to be ready in February, in March, now it's supposed to be ready the end of June, and that's been holding it up. Apparently the Federal Minister is waiting for that report on the economic analysis.

On the rail bus, there's been delays as well. There are two rail buses up at Thompson right now ready for testing but they need to have final CTC clearance because they had a real problem there with knowing whether to call these rail buses a train or bus, or what kind of vehicle they should be. They didn't have proper definitions to know whether they should have a bell on them, or a horn, and how many drivers you had to have, or engineers. There's all kinds of technical things that had to be sorted out. Apparently it's getting to the point now where they're going to be sorted out and we should be able to begin the testing. It was supposed to be scheduled for earlier in June already, the date, and then it's been pushed back.

We are waiting to get officially under way with the testing of both the MCI bus, Motor Coach Industries — well, a forerunner of inter-city buses — which was developed here in Manitoba; and the rail bus from Leland from Britain, Leland Bus, the rail bus, which is built for rail. Of course, it's proven technology and the only thing that hasn't been proven in the climatic conditions that we have here in Northern Manitoba, or in Canada, so that's one of the reasons why it should be tested, not only in the summertime, but also under winter conditions, to see how it will hold up.

But we met with Via Rail this morning and they seemed to be very anxious to get the rail bus in their fleet. Unfortunately, they are already leaning more towards the British Leland bus than the one developed here in Manitoba. It's like comparing a Model T with a Cadillac or a modern car because one is developed for that purpose and the other is just a first prototype of a converted inter-city bus. So it's really an unfair comparison at this time, but that's where we're at. We're hoping to find maybe a place for both of those technologies in Northern Manitoba and remote services.

MR. D. BLAKE: The rail bus, does that have the black box on the back, or do they have to have a conductor?

A MEMBER: Do they have one of those?

A MEMBER: They've got a trainmaster.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: They still can't get used to the idea that they should just get on this thing and drive it like a bus and look, ma, no hands even, you know. So they've got to have two crew on there and a trainmaster yet.

I think these things will change a little bit over the years as they become more familiar with it and get rid of some of the old train regulations and requirements for this rail bus, but it's still so new that they're having difficulty applying the old rules to the new technology.

MR. D. BLAKE: What is the capacity of the hopper cars compared with the hopper cars they're using now?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: 107 tonnes, I believe, versus 100.

MR. D. BLAKE: 130?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: 107.

MR. D. BLAKE: For the new light one . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes.

MR. D. BLAKE: . . . and the other ones are about 130?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: No, 100. A 100-tonne hopper car is your standard hopper car.

MR. D. BLAKE: It's the standard, okay. This one's about 100, so your 7-tonne . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: As a matter of fact, the new lightweight rail car is about 7-tonne capacity greater than the standard hopper car.

MR. D. BLAKE: Greater?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Greater, because it's two sections articulated, you add them both together as one car and you've got slightly more capacity.

MR. D. BLAKE: I thought this was the problem on the Churchill line that you couldn't carry that weight. Is the distribution that much different on the new cars that they're capable of carrying it?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Yes, the difference is that it's a lower centre of gravity so it'll get less sway on uneven track, and it's articulated and it has the two extra trucks in the centre. Therefore, you've got weight distribution over one, two, three, four axles rather than two. So that tends to distribute the weight more evenly and make it possible to have more weight because it's distributed more evenly. So the combination of the two makes it suitable for an uneven line such as the Churchill line is at times.

MR. D. BLAKE: Just discussing the rail traffic to Churchill, and hopefully it can be developed, has the Minister any studies at his disposal on the possibilities of two-way shipping traffic into Churchill? I realize that probably needs warehousing facilities, but what studies

have been done to encourage or to enhance two-way marine traffic in and out of Churchill?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, we've worked extensively on a lot of different leads in that area. There's not a chance of having two-way grain traffic, it wouldn't seem, but there may be two-way traffic with other commodities imported such as liquor, which isn't a large potential because we just don't have enough volume there despite the efforts of perhaps a lot of people to help out, but there is the fertilizer — what's the name of that fertilizer that we were talking about?

MR. D. BLAKE: Potash.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: No, there was the one that we were going to import, looked at with Cargill for importing from the Soviet Union.

A MEMBER: Is it a phosphate of some kind?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: It was urea, and they export a lot of urea. It would be compatible with grain for use in the new lightweight car as well. There is the possibility of, at some point, the alumina being brought in through Churchill for an aluminum smelter, which is still a high possibility for the Province of Manitoba in the future if the aluminum market shows some strengthening in the near future. Obviously, that is a consideration, particularly with the possibility of exporting potash through the port with the Russell area being, of course, in one of the primary Churchill catchment areas. From an economic point of view, it is closer to Churchill than any other port. So there's that possibility that it would not only be grain being exported out of the Port of Churchill but also potash and perhaps something like urea or alumina in its partially processed form into the country.

We've been exploring the possibility of corn from the midwest States, from North Dakota. Their transportation institute has indicated there may be some cost advantages to shipping, exporting corn through the port, particularly once we have the firm hydro-electric source of energy for the port, because right now they dry this corn on the fields with the gas and it's quite expensive. It could be perhaps partially dried there, shipped by rail, and then finally dried and loaded at the same time up at Churchill. Of course, that would mean that it would retain a higher grade of quality because corn tends to lose its grade from breakage when it's dried.

So those are some of the things that we've been looking at, and there's a major study on other commodities that we've just received under the sub-agreements. There's one, as well, on season extension, another on tourism, and a couple of others on utilization of the season, also the grain comparisons of cost of moving grain through the Port of Churchill which really are very promising, over 600,000 tonnes per year. It's much more economic.

The worst thing we can do is continue to have the port open and only haul 300,000 tonnes or something like that per year through. Then it's going to lose money, and it's always going to be something that people can criticize and say it's just a drain. If they would use it

properly, it can pay dividends and benefits to not only the producers in Western Canada but has potential for other uses as well.

MR. D. BLAKE: Is the Minister getting any more encouragement or support from the Prairie Pools on the use of the Port of Churchill?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Well, you know, this is all part of the system; the grain companies and the pools are no different in terms of where their interests lie right now, with their major cleaning facilities and elevation services at the Lakehead, they want to see them used to the greatest capacity. But the fact is that the Member for Churchill will not put up with that and will fight that tooth and nail. He's going to go down fighting, he says, right to the bottom of the Hudson Bay. So the Pools have kind of resisted getting in and I think endorsing what they should endorse on behalf of their members and saying something positive about it. I think it's because they are controlled by the senior people, eastern interests that are, I guess, dictating that they don't get off that wagon of support, or the anti-Churchill lobby groups, you know, and get on with what is really best for their members.

There is no denying that there are some savings there from a large area of Saskatchewan for the producers, and it's hard for me to understand just from a common-sense point of view why they don't, but it's obvious that they are influenced from other sectors and for other reasons. That's one of the things we have to fight against in the future. The Pools have not come out and stated that they are in favour, and I believe that they are doing a disservice to their members by not doing that.

MR. D. BLAKE: But there is no warehouse facility at Churchill now for temporary storage of, say, container goods or anything of that nature?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: I think there is some warehouse space particularly for resupply operations and for a considerable amount of grain. There would have to be some alterations but not tremendous expenses to provide for more storage facilities there if there was an interest. So, no, there has to be some changes made to provide for the modern containerized shipping at the port.

MR. D. BLAKE: Has the Minister had any discussions with the other governments or with other departments on making Churchill a supply point, a distribution point for the North more so than it has been?

At one time, it was a fairly active jumping-off spot for northern transportation or the supplies. Have there been any further discussions to further encourage that or is that operation pretty well moved to Edmonton?

HON. J. PLOHMAN: It's kind of interesting that the Member for Minnedosa has mentioned that right now. Because of the downturn in the oil industry, and the fact that the activity at the Beaufort Sea has slowed down, leaving a lot of surplus equipment, ice-strengthened equipment — barges and ships and so on — there has been an interest by other shipping

companies to resupply operations, to move perhaps into Churchill to supply other areas of the North that currently aren't being supplied by — is it NCTL or — NTCL, Northern Transportation Company Limited, or whatever it is, that has been operating out of there for the last number of years but in a very limited way. So they are also interested in expanding their operations, a company that is there. Another competitive company is interested in moving in as well and we want to encourage that.

I think one of the biggest deterrents there is the C.N. rates on the rail. The Hudson Bay Company, for example, tried shipping through redistributing through the Port of Churchill and sending up their goods by rail. They found they could do it cheaper by resupplying out of Montreal, and it was because of the prohibitive rail rates that were quoted by C.N. On the other hand, C.N. is telling us all the time that they are prepared to negotiate and to offer developmental rates with new companies in lines such as Churchill and yet when it comes right down to it in practice, it doesn't seem to be happening.

So we want to be involved closely in any discussions, and we've offered the services of the department to assist in discussions with C.N. because when we meet with the C.N. officials they are always quite receptive to those kinds of ideas. Yet we're not sure, when it comes down to the nitty-gritty of it, in negotiations that they are offering lower rates to assist in ensuring that Churchill is viable, and accepting Churchill as a fact and deciding on their part that they might as well make it work rather than trying to scuttle it all the time.

That's the kind of point of view we're taking with them and saying, look, Churchill's going to be here, it's a matter of policy and it's needed for sovereignty reasons and strategic reasons as well as for grain as a complementary port to Thunder Bay, especially when there are breakdowns through the St. Lawrence, and you might as well get on and see how you can make it work rather than to see how you can kill it.

I think if they change their attitude in that regard they're going to get a lot of business out of the power developments — Limestone, Conawapa and who knows what in the future — they're getting a lot of traffic out of that on the southern portions of the Churchill line. I think they have more reason to be putting some effort into ensuring that their operations to Churchill can be efficient by increasing their volumes. It's because of their low volumes that they're having the problems.

MR. D. BLAKE: It makes you wonder about some of the decisions. They have a rail line right into the Snow Lake area where there are two or three operating mines in there, and they jacked the price up so greatly on hauling the concentrates to Flin Flon that it was just prohibitive. So they just scrapped it and they're trucking it out and they are knocking the hell out of the highway with these ore trucks. You meet them six and eight at a time with big tandem pups on the back and going full force, so they're not helping the highway system. But the rail line was there, the rolling stock was there, I can't understand why they couldn't compete with the truck transport.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: We found that to the hydro development, the rates are now about 60 percent of

what they were in the early 70's. If we put a highway into Churchill, I imagine we'd find lower rates too, but it's an awful price to pay.

MR. D. BLAKE: That happened with the water rates at Grand Rapids. The road got in two years quicker than they expected and they had a contract to haul everything up there by water. Anyway, those are all the questions I have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 5.(a)—pass; 5.(b)—pass; 5.(c)—pass.
Resolution 94 — Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,334,900 for Highways and Transportation, Transportation Policy and Research, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1987—pass.

Now, on Item 6, Driver and Vehicle Licensing, Resolution No. 95 — the Member for Riel.

MR. G. DURCHARME: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, just one quick question on driver testing. I wonder if the administration, through the Highways Minister, has any consideration been given to reviewing a probation period for the motorcyclists?

My concern right now is that a 16- or 17-year old can go out on a beginner's licence, hop on a motorcycle, especially the first 90 days, and get on a motorcycle and go 130 miles an hour. There doesn't seem to be any control on the type of motorcycle that they do get for the probation period. It's not like an automobile where an automobile they usually have somebody with them when they are beginning.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: We have looked at that in the past of stipulating certain maximum horsepower or cubic centimetres, whatever it might be, for beginners, or until there is a certain number of years of experience. I believe there is provision made even in the amendments to The Highway Traffic Act when the legislation was passed for having that in, a regulation made to govern sizes, and the Registrar is looking at that whole issue at the present time.

We have, of course, provided a new educational thrust in this area with the Safe Rider Program. It hasn't been put in place as a compulsory program as yet but that's another thought. We wanted to start with a voluntary program, and it has been in place and quite successful the last year, for all new riders to take the Safe Rider Program in addition to a safety motorcycle course that's offered, both of these by the Manitoba Safety Council on behalf of the government. We're looking at that area at the present time to see whether there's a feasible way to put certain restrictions on size and power of motorcycles for beginners.

MR. D. BLAKE: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to just talk briefly to the Minister about disabled drivers and the testing of disabled drivers. I know he's received a copy of the brief from the Minnedosa area branch of the MLPH, the Manitoba League for the Physically Handicapped. I won't read the brief to him but it's on behalf of all the members of the Minnedosa area branch of the League.

They are totally in support of stands taken by Souris and district and Beautiful Plains and various others,

protesting that the type of driver testing is done only in Winnipeg. They go on to state the problems that they have. They're often scheduled early in the morning and it requires the additional cost of coming to Winnipeg. They very often have to have another driver with them and inclement weather, things of that nature, make this quite a serious — (Interjection) — handicap to them. They're asking the government to place equipment and personnel in the Westman area for the testing of disabled persons who wish to obtain drivers' licences.

They go on to say, we have no quarrel with the equipment and personnel being located in Neepawa, Minnedosa or Souris. We would have been quite happy to have it in Brandon and we urge the government to act on this as soon as possible. Signed by Jack Rudy, the Chairman of the Minnedosa Branch, with copies to the Premier and myself. I don't know whether the Minister got one or not. He probably did.

Has anything been considered? I know I've spoken to people before and they give you the various reasons for it being in Winnipeg. But I recently had two reasonably young people who were quite disabled, both with strokes — young men — and one had a tremendous time in getting his licence. I had to intervene and with the good cooperation of the people over in the department, we were able to overcome the main obstacle which appeared to be people in the medical end of it, not the driver testing, and once we overcame that all we were asking for was a restricted licence in daylight hours within about a three mile radius just to enable him to come from his home uptown for the mail and take his son to the rink and things like that. When we got all the obstacles cleared and he got in for a test, they asked him why he wasn't applying for a full licence, why he was only applying for a restricted licence. Now mind you, he'd improved a bit in his condition in the meantime.

(Mr. Deputy Chairman, J. McCrae in the Chair.)

The other one had to make a couple of trips to Winnipeg and received his licence reasonably quickly, but it was the problem of having someone drive him in and going through the rigamarole. I just wondered if any consideration had been given. It doesn't seem as if it would be that costly; and I know they'll relate it back to the medical test or the medical requirements.

HON. J. PLOHMAN: We had given that a whirl this past year, but of course with having to make decisions overall on budgets, in the final analysis it didn't get through; but we certainly realize the need and will be considering that again in this coming year, for an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist to be located in Brandon, that could service that area through the re-hab centre. We estimate the cost to be about \$42,000 to do that. So if we put it relative to total budget, it's not that big; but when you have to try and meet certain quotas, it gets pretty difficult to add that. So that's why it hasn't been included this year, but it's certainly not something that we're ignoring, we'd like to see.

MR. D. BLAKE: I thank the Minister that he's cognizant of it. I might make a suggestion to him that, when Mr. Anstett's contract expires the end of this year, that it not be renewed, and we take that \$55,000 and . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: Okay, we'll give that a shot.

MR. D. BLAKE: . . . use it for that purpose because the people in the Westman area, of course, are very near and dear to my heart and we don't like to see them treated any differently out there than in the City of Winnipeg or those that have easy access to the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Chairman, there's going to be a considerable number of questions from some of my colleagues, and one in particular needs a little more time than we have tonight, and didn't wish to start on it until next sitting.

So if it would be the wish of the committee to call it 10 o'clock now, rather than go through the charades of us keeping you busy for another four minutes . . .

HON. J. PLOHMAN: No, I don't think you have to do that. I would agree to call it 10 o'clock.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is it agreed? (Agreed)
Committee rise.

SUPPLY — AGRICULTURE

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: Committee, please come to order.

We were considering Item No. 3, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation — the Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. E. CONNERY: Yes, I'd just like to ask a question. I don't know who has control over all of the land, but just an incident that happened out in the Portage area alongside the Portage Diversion. There was a piece of land that for some reason the farmer got the first tax bill on it and paid it, and so the R.M. kept on sending him the tax bill. He kept on paying the property taxes and the province didn't find out until he left the country that they owned the piece of land and should have been collecting rent. Is this typical with a lot of the farm land?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture. Is this relevant?

HON. B. URUSKI: Possibly, if the member provided me with those details. We're not aware of that situation at all through MACC, but if he provided the details, it may be somewhere within the department. I don't know the situation. If he provided me with the details, we'd be prepared to look at it. I'm not aware of the situation that the member speaks of.

MR. E. CONNERY: It was along the Portage Diversion area and a fellow by the name of Brian Moffatt had land alongside and somehow in the shuffle whoever — I don't know if that was MACC land or who all would have it. Just a concern that you make sure that the government knows where all their parcels are and collects for them.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, we'll look into it because there are several departments that may have had land. I say this not in jest. For example, when the province purchases right-of-way for, let's say, the

Portage Diversion or any major project sometimes, they may end up, in fact, agreeing to take the entire parcel. Then, it's left in the hands of the department. He's given me the name of someone nearby. We'll have this run down to see where that situation is and which department has it and — (Interjection) —

MR. E. CONNERY: This guy's flown the coop now. He's not there now.

HON. B. URUSKI: I appreciate that. I appreciate the information that the honourable member has given, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: The last line under 3. there, Special Farm Assistance, \$6.5 million. What would you like to tell us about that line?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the \$6.5 million is for this year intended to be used in the Farm Aid Program, as part of the Farm Aid Program recently announced by the Minister of Finance, and will be used primarily to assist farmers going through the debt review panel process.

Some of these farmers going through this process are considered good managers and are in severe financial situations, as a result of circumstances beyond their control. MACC assistance to these farmers could be in the form of guaranteeing that portion of their debt they are unable to service at the present and which lenders have agreed to set aside, bearing no interest until such time as their financial circumstances improve. In my discussion with the lenders, quite frankly, they are — at least in the main — a number of them have indicated that they are prepared to do those kinds of set asides.

Secondly, refinancing farmers in cases where the outstanding debts have been renegotiated with lenders through the panel process, but where the lenders will not continue as creditors. For example, they're saying, all right, we'll take our write downs and our shots, but we're out, we're finished. Somebody else has to finance them. This money may be required, in some form, in terms of special lending programs.

In addition, the government is not only considering but has recently amended its policy of leasing and is considering leasing back properties to farmers whose properties have reverted to MACC by way of quit claim. This would include farmers who have gone through the panel process and have been refinanced by MACC.

Basically what we're saying is that if management is reasonably good, the financial circumstances were desperate — and rather than chasing the family off the farm — we revert into a quit claim and release the land and give the family another opportunity at a start into farming.

Again, qualifying farmers would have to have demonstrated good management in the past and, of course, are in severe financial difficulties due to circumstances beyond their control. We will be discussing this money as to earmarking. We have not definitively earmarked the money for any specific program, other than what we think will be required. I

have given a commitment to both farm groups and the lenders, that as we're establishing our process, pursuant to the legislative package, we will want to hear representations made from lenders and hear their views as to what they'd be prepared to accept in terms of the entire process, whether it be by write down set asides, or whatever.

So we have deliberately not said this is what it will be used for because there may be circumstances in our negotiations that we have not come across to this point in time and there has to be some flexibility in terms of meeting the financial requirements of farmers who, we believe, could and should be saved.

MR. G. FINDLAY: You mentioned that this package would be available to farmers of all ages. Are there any limitations in that respect?

HON. B. URUSKI: No, there would not be any age limitation, as far as I'm concerned. We would look at each situation. But I know, for example, in our discussions, the first one I said guaranteeing a portion of the debt is one that I believe clearly identifies some of the negotiating stance that we've had with some financial institutions and what they're prepared to do today. This area would be certainly one of the areas, most definitely, that some of that money would be used for. There's no doubt in my mind, in terms of the set-asides.

Where we go from there in terms of other financial instruments, that we will work through as we begin the process of renegotiating the panel process, the reports, and see how far and how consistent the negotiating system becomes.

MR. G. FINDLAY: If and when the act comes into place and the boards and panels are appointed, is it the intention to have regulations written before any activity of those panels and boards commences?

HON. B. URUSKI: Before any of those boards and panels are actually functioning, yes, we will have to have the regulations written. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I have solicited the views of farm groups. We've had one or two meetings with some of my staff and those groups, as well as the financial institutions, to hear their views, for example, on the process that is working in Saskatchewan.

We've gotten views from the administration as to how the process is working. We also want to solicit the views of the financial institutions as how they see that process working in terms of the moratorium legislation in Saskatchewan.

The process — I want to tell my honourable friends — we have not set ourselves on a particular course of action dealing with the panels. There are a number of options that we have and we want to use the consultative process in the structure of the panels, the mediation board and the panels, in consultation with the farm groups, and try to have as flexible a system as possible that really works, that there will always be accusations of bureaucratic mumbo jumbo in any kind of a system that gets set up.

We try to have as streamlined a system as possible, recognizing though that if there is little or no cooperation

in the process, that if there is no cooperation in the negotiating process, we will ask the courts to not agree to by-pass the legislation. That's basically what we're coming to.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: With respect to the special farm assistance amount of money that's being laid aside, the Minister mentioned two things, one that in some cases where no one would go into the moratorium state. Would you then be buying out the banks and lending it through the MACC vehicle?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the moratorium only is on foreclosures. There is no moratorium on debt. All that the moratorium will do is say that, before a financial institution can foreclose, there is a notice to be given, (a) to the court and to our Central Mediation Board, which gives what I would call a cooling off period, an investigative period in which the board then, through the farm — and here's where the process is not defined specifically, because we want to discuss with farm groups and financial institutions which might be a better process.

But I'm going to give the members one scenario that could be possible. That is, when that notice is given — right now, the financial institutions do not have to give notice to anyone before they start foreclosure proceedings. Under the legislation, notice will have to be given. That gives the Central Mediation Board an opportunity, either in conjunction with or directly to the Peer Advisory Panels to start meeting with the farmer, getting all the circumstances, both from the farmer and from the lender, and getting both parties together and see what is the situation, what options might there be available and, in that way, prepare the report to the court.

It is my hope that, during this — I think it's 90 days — process period, serious negotiations actually will take place. In fact, there will not be a need to actually end up in a court hearing, that the negotiations take place.

Now in terms of the honourable member's question about MACC buying out, in terms of negotiating and refinancing packages, we are doing that right now. That's an ongoing negotiating process with farmers coming through on MACC, where the bank has said we're no longer interested in this client; we're on our way out. The farmer comes, look, can we in fact have a refinancing package?

If viability is not there, basically we end up saying at what stage is there viability in terms of the debt load. In some instances, the negotiations take place, and the financial institutions says, all right, we'll take our lumps. We'll take a write-off of a portion of our debt, and we're going to get out. If you're prepared to finance the rest of it, you're in and we take our lumps, and the farm is saved. Those kinds of negotiations go on all the time.

MR. L. DERKACH: To the Minister again, in cases where a farm is leased back to a farmer where the farmer couldn't meet his commitments, by owning the land, and MACC then takes over the land and leases it back

to the farmer, is there a point in time, if the farmer continues to lease this land, when that farmer can actually enter into buying that farm back again?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, we're just working, because we are moving from the one — we were only into the one-year lease period up until this month. We are just preparing the guidelines in which a farmer who leases land back from the corporation will have an opportunity at any time to exercise his option to purchase between the beginning and the termination date of the lease which, in most cases, would be five years. That's really what will be in the guideline. The exercising of the option can occur at any point in time.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Is their intention to save everyone?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, as I spoke on the Legislation, there is no way that we would and can, in fact, save every farm operation. I would be fooling everyone in the Province of Manitoba if I said we could. We cannot, and there are operations and operators, in terms of management ability and/or financial mess — let's put it that way — far beyond anything that anyone would be prepared to go short of, in some instances, possibly even an 80 percent or 90 percent write-down, total write-down of accumulated interest and principal, in terms of management capability may help. I can't give — (Interjection) — the honourable member asked me to give him a specific, I can't give him a specific but I'm giving him the kind of range. No, as difficult as the situation may be for some families, I want to indicate to my honourable friends that we will be attempting to use what resources the Province has in terms of assisting people to make the transition out of farming or into other areas, if at all possible. Or there may be cases, for example, in the settlement that the home quarter, or at least the home and the farm yard, is left out of the settlement so that the family is not forced to move away, given the age and the circumstances of the situation. So there's a range of options, but we will not be able to save every farmer.

MR. G. FINDLAY: The Minister has commented briefly in this direction before, but I'd like to ask the question again. Because of the tremendous responsibility and powers of the mediation board, in particular, but also the onus that's on the peer advisory panels, is it the Minister's intention to have broad spectrum of representation on the appointees on those boards, such that they're really all-party representatives there to prevent the criticism that comes when only one side of the spectrum is appointed?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate to my honourable friend that the present peer advisory panels, when we discussed the setting up of those panels with farm groups and the financial institutions, the financial institutions did not want to be directly involved on those panels. They came out very clearly saying it really should be farmers in the area that should be involved on those panels. They generally said we do not want to be involved directly and that we will make our case to them and have our facts known but, in general terms, they said this is a peer advisory panel, it's farmers working with farmers.

Now, I did at the time that we were setting them up, ask for recommendations from all members of the House, and farm groups, and I want to say, I did receive recommendations from people, from MLA's. Whether or not those people ultimately were asked to serve, I don't know because, for example, normally they worked in groups of three. There may have been 10 or 15 people in a particular region and had there been only two or three hearings, maybe nine of those may have been called, or it may have been the same three that were called at the same time. So that I can't tell the honourable members. But know that I sent letters to probably 30 or 40 people initially when it was set up, whose names were submitted to me, thanking them — I had staff approach them, and basically thanking them for serving, having them sign the Oath of Secrecy, because all those matters were to be kept confidential. That's how the panels were struck.

It is my hope that the central mediation board, and we've not finalized it, may have representatives of all sides, that the financial institutions would be involved. My word still stands, when I introduce the bill, that if you have names of people who might be prepared or could be contacted, who might be considered on those boards, I say this to all members of the House, get those names in because within the next, I would say, 60 days, barring the Session moving along, that we will have to start making those considerations and at least making those decisions and seeing all the names that get involved or get recommended, and see how many we can appoint and balance this whole process out.

I leave that to all honourable members. Each of you know people in your areas that may be prepared to serve; let's have those names. That doesn't guarantee that they'll all be appointed, I want to tell you that.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Can you guarantee that one will be appointed?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I say that in the peer panel process, I would think that unless we have such a large number of recommendations — the last round I don't think we left one name off. Every name that was provided to me, in fact, was appointed.

MR. G. FINDLAY: I thank the Minister for that offer. We will certainly be offering names for his consideration.

You're intimating that there's some other group of people that are making the decision as to who is doing the work, and I'm wondering where this other group of people is or who they are.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, in the present voluntary process, if a farmer's communications with his lender cease, in other words, they're not talking, they're not negotiating, they're not doing anything, he's been involved with our farm management specialist or our ag rep trying to do negotiations and everything falls apart.

What happens is he may want to have this matter reviewed by a panel and see whether there are any options or, if there were options and the financial institution wouldn't accept them, we would hope that the power of persuasion by the panel group might assist in that process.

The farmer then calls the department. One of my directors, who is responsible for this, would then set up and go through the list of names he has in each particular region, and ask those to serve. That's what I mean by someone else that makes the decision as to who serves.

The process isn't run out of my office. I'll tell you, Morris Deveson is really in charge of the whole process of setting up the panels. When the farm management specialist or the farmer calls, whether it's myself or anyone in the field or the Deputy or someone in the office, the request goes over to Morris. His role is to go over the list, set up the panels and let the review begin.

MR. L. DERKACH: To the Minister, with respect to the mediation panels or the review panels or the peer panels, is there any criteria as to the qualifications of the people that sit on these panels or in terms of their financial standings, as well?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that there was any written criteria when I made the offer with the peer advisory groups. I mean, what we've tried to do is to say, all right, is this individual in the farm community? How long has he been farming? We didn't ask the financial circumstances of each individual who has had, generally from the knowledge of people around, generally good management knowledge.

We've tried to make the appointments on a geographical or regional basis, because there are five regions in terms of agricultural regions, so we've kept the northwest, the southwest, central, eastern and Interlake in terms of the various regions, because the boards generally work through the regional directors and the farm management specialists in each region.

Given the type of operation, we try to have a mixture, or at least a cross-section of representatives of producers in various farming enterprises on each board, so that if in fact it was a mixed farm or a cattle operation that was in difficulty with the panel, there would be someone could be selected on the board, at least one or two of those members would have a working knowledge of that kind of a farming enterprise. That's basically the criteria that we've used.

I want to tell you that I did not know most of those people who served on the board, but I did meet with a kind of a representative group of several of the boards coming out of each region. I think it was about 10 or 12 of the people who were on the boards. We met just to get a working knowledge and an explanation to me how they felt.

I want to tell you that, in terms of the cross-section of people who worked on those boards, a number of those had been in financial difficulty themselves and were experiencing financial difficulty, but were what I would say the typical producer, keeping everything to themselves. One of the major reasons why this piece of legislation is on the table today is primarily because of that. We're hoping that we highlight the process and get people to come out of the woodwork before it's too late. That's really one of the major aspects of the legislation, getting it to the forefront and getting people to come out before the receiver is at the door. If we can at least accomplish some of that, we will have done

something, because many of those units — I venture to say that we could probably negotiate and I think, with some consistency and flexibility on all parties, we could save a lot of them.

But I tell you, when the receiver is at the door, chances are that more than half of the cases it's very difficult to save the unit at that point in time. We've had some successes, even under the panel process, but the successes are not consistent.

MR. L. DERKACH: My question to the Minister is whether or not the people on the panels have to be active farmers, producers, or can they be the wives or the spouses of producers whose names could be submitted for consideration?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I would ask members that, to me, it doesn't matter whether it's the husband or the wife, they are equal partners in the farming operation, but I would hope that, in terms of some knowledge of the whole financial structure of the farm unit and the financing aspects, that whoever is put forward that members will consider their basic abilities and knowledge of reading financial statements and understanding financial aspects of farming, so that the discussions that do take place — because they will be meeting with the farm person who is in financial difficulty. They will be meeting face to face, and they will be having basically a very intimate and direct discussion as to their farming operations.

What we've tried to do is, of course, have those groups of people meet right on the farm of that individual. So I think a working knowledge and understanding would be of prime consideration but, whether it's one spouse or the other, Mr. Chairman, I have no difficulty at all, because I believe that in many instances it is the wife who does the books, quite frankly, and is probably the most knowledgeable in terms of where the dollars are going and the financial aspects of that operation.

MR. L. DERKACH: In many cases, there are women in many operations that are the more knowledgeable and certainly sometimes more compassionate.

My last question in this area, the cost of operation of the panels and the mediation board is going to be sizable because of the number of people, the per diems, the travel; is that to come out of the \$6.5 million?

HON. B. URUSKI: No, we have a start-up budget in the Technical Services Branch of \$60,000 in another section. I could have put a stop to the discussion, but I felt that the discussion was very good in terms of the issue, even though MACC won't be directly responsible for the panels because they will be a lender; they will be another lender in the whole process. So they may be before the panels, as well as any other lender, in terms of the relations with clients. So there will be no difference of treatment as between MACC and any other lender. They are subject to the process as any other lender.

But monies to cover the panels, we've budgeted — I may as well tell the honourable members now — within the . . . I was just looking through the book on to the next appropriation. It's not directly shown, but

we've budgeted \$60,000 to start off with in terms of the setting up of the panels. The per diems would only be paid when members would, in fact, be working. It would be per diems plus out-of-pocket expenses. That's what we've been doing with the present panel structure now.

The workings of the board, of course, would be far more intense. The main mediation board would be the one that would be drawing in from all the panels, and they would be the ones that would, in fact, be more active than the actual regional panels, because one region — mind you, in terms of work, they'd all be funnelling in, and that's how the process would work.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Does this whole process require a secretary or a manager or a permanent employee to make it function? Is that part of the expenses?

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, it would require basically what one would call an anchor person, a staff person to be like the executive secretary of that board to make sure that all the information that is provided is consistent in terms of process and make sure, in terms of applications, that they're handled and the hearings are handled and all the information reports are provided, so that if the matter does go the court, all the steps are followed to make sure that the administrative structure works.

MR. L. DERKACH: I'd like to thank the Minister for answering my questions with respect to the topic we just covered. I have only one more question and that is: would the Minister tell me who the chairman of the board of MACC is at the present time?

MR. G. CUMMINGS: He can't be as good as the last one.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the members know who the last one was. I should tell them, it was my colleague, the new Member for Swan River, the Minister of Natural Resources was the previous Chairman of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, and I want to say, has done a very excellent job in terms of chairing that corporation.

The present chairperson of that corporation is Ollie Sigurdson. Ollie Sigurdson is a registered seed and grain farmer from the Arborg area. He was the former chairperson of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for a number of years. I should tell the honourable members, he served many years on the Canadian Cooperative Society in terms of Central — (Interjection) — Yes, he was on the Credit Union Central as well as an elected member, but he was also on the Interprovincial Cooperative Board. He has a long history of credit union and co-op involvement, as well as being the chairman of MPIC and being on the board when it was originally set up, so he's very experienced in financial and, of course, active farming.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Niakwa.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have no intention of prolonging the proceedings, Mr. Minister. I just have a couple of very minor questions

to ask. The choosing of the people that are going to serve on the panel. It seems now that it's a change of policy for the Department of Agriculture, inasmuch as at one time it was quite selective and possibly the best people were not chosen for the particular positions.

If the Honourable Minister will just think back a little while, when we did have a particular person who was appointed, or had worked on a board — it was on the Crown Lands Appeal Board — and I had suggested to the Minister that that particular person . . .

A MEMBER: Did an excellent job.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Well, he was doing an excellent job, but the Minister — whether it was the Minister or whether it was policy of the Department of Agriculture, I don't know, but that man was replaced. I'm not going to make any remarks concerning the person that replaced him because we got into quite an argument. Where the Minister now states that he is going to hire the best person, or appoint the best person for the panel, is it because we are lacking people to serve on that panel, because the way it worked out before, it wasn't — to my acceptance it wasn't — the best person that was chosen to serve because of this particular replacement. I may be a little bit prejudice because this chap happens to be a personal friend of mine and his name is Bill Tkachuk and he lives in Menisino and he really did do a good job and the Minister agreed, but he was replaced.

So can the Honourable Minister tell me whether it's a change of policy in choosing people serving on these panels, or is the best person going to be chosen?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I place a separation in terms of appointments, and I say that to the honourable member so that he understands, the appointments to boards and commissions that the government has, generally, in terms of the dealings with those boards, it has been ministerial prerogative and, with changes of governments, those appointments were made and, in fact, in some instances, some were kept on and there are boards who I haven't changed ever since I've been here — appointments that were made before my time by your administration. But there were some boards who I felt that the board structure of the time, that people on the board should reflect the wishes of the Minister and be, quite frankly, closely aligned to the government. I've made those decisions and I took some flak over it.

I want to say that, in the case of these boards, we have felt that a cross section of Manitobans, without consideration of alignment or non-alignment to the government, because we are dealing with the broad cross section of farming community. I don't know all the farmers, for example, in the Member for Virden's constituency, I don't know all the bankers. There may be a banking person who might be considered, for example, out of your constituency to serve on the main board. This type of a process that we're setting up is much broader than the type of appointments we've had in other boards and that's the reason for, in my judgment, that we have gone far beyond the normal practice of appointments in terms of people who are more closely aligned with the Government of the Day.

MR. A. KOVNATS: I accept what the Minister has just stated and I congratulate him on looking to see that this is done in a proper manner, rather than on a political matter and it doesn't have to be.

A MEMBER: It will always be political.

MR. A. KOVNATS: Oh, there's no doubt about it Bill, I'm not really saying that it's non-political but that's not the main criteria on how these people are being selected. I just didn't want our people to go through the motions of suggesting people to serve on these panels and, just for the sake because the Minister says, look I'm a nice guy, please send in names and you know what happens with the names? They get ripped up and thrown in the basket right away. I just want them to be considered and I want my people on this side to know that they are going to be considered, and the Minister has just stated that they will be, and I accept that, and I thank the Minister for that.

HON. B. URUSKI: I appreciate the member's comments. I just want to tell him — I should have said it earlier — in terms of his comment on best qualified. That's the most difficult sort of, what I would say, the qualifications for the best is always in the eyes of the beholder, isn't it, and that's always the most difficult situation of considering who is best. But as I said to the member's colleagues, Mr. Chairman, that every name that was submitted to me under the peer advisory panel was appointed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. 3 - the Member for Niakwa, just one more sentence.

MR. A. KOVNATS: That's all, Mr. Chairman. But the Honourable Minister really had no difficulty in knowing who the best person at Menisino for this board was, because I had told him who the best person was and there was no doubt in my mind. Would the Honourable Minister, at this point, reconsider Bill Tyachuk — he's a little bit political, but he certainly is very very qualified and he is the best man for the job. If you don't believe me, ask him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. 3—pass.

Resolution 8: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,106,800 for Agriculture, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1987—pass.

Item No. 4.(a), Agricultural Development and Marketing Division, Administration — the Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could ask the members' indulgence for about three minutes till I go to my office and get my other book. I did not think we would finish MACC this evening, if I could get my other book. Give me about two minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1), Agricultural Development and Marketing Division, Administration, Salaries — the Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I begin my remarks on this division, I'd like to introduce for the honourable members, Tom Pringle, who is the Assistant Deputy Minister in charge of this entire area. Tom, has been, as many of you know, been in the department in Room 20.

Mr. Chairman, programs and activities in the Agricultural Development and Marketing Divisions are complementary to the Farm and Rural Development Programs by providing provincial planning, resource development and coordination of activities and services which are provided at the farm and community level. The Division Program activities include the support in communication of agricultural research, industrial liaison, development of extension education and resource material, productivity support services in farm business management, crop and livestock production, and marketing, soil and water conservation, and management, and 4-H and home economics. These activities are carried out through the Animal Industry Branch; Veterinary Services Branch; Soils and Crops Branch; Technical Services and Training Branch and the Marketing Branch.

There are a number of activities that I would like to highlight for honourable members, and I think I should in all the areas and that would give honourable members a bit of an overview, in general terms, of what is happening in each area.

In the area of farm business management, co-operative priority setting has placed research into farm income stabilization as a top priority of departmental farm management research support. Teaching of farm business groups by ag reps, home economists and regional specialists required a significant amount of staff training. Cost of production guidelines for livestock and crops have been distributed to staff and farmers. During 1985-86, 300 farm families were identified as having a serious cash flow problem. Staff working with these farm families and with the financial institutions' co-operation, approximately one-half have been maintained as viable farmers.

In 1985-86, livestock products, production and marketing, a beef cattle home study course was provided to 1,570 registrants through eight lessons with regional follow-up. Farmer evaluation of this course was very positive. Staff obtained and provided farmers with research information from across Canada and the United States. Specific examples of priority-supported research at the University of Manitoba included trace mineral requirements and the interaction in beef cattle; cereal pastures for late season grazing; canola utilization by dairy cows; year-round production of market lands. Most livestock services to farmers in industry can be divided into genetic improvement, health and environment, nutrition, regulatory and marketing.

Results from genetic improvement activities include a 10 percent more hog marketed, placing in a 102 grade index, purchase and sale of livestock semen to 4,000 farmers, support of bull testation such as the one at Douglas, including progeny testing and semen collection for artificial insemination.

Results from health and environment activities include the purchase of veterinary drugs in volume and distribution to veterinarians, resulting in a \$1.9 million saving by Manitoba farmers; veterinary medical laboratory backup services; provision and maintenance of 30 public animal hospitals or the clinics in co-

operation with municipalities which reduce veterinary practice overhead by about \$1.5 million.

Results in nutritionally-related services include 5,000 feed analysis samples from feedlot owners, dairy, hog and poultry farmers.

Regulatory services include the testing of milk and dairy products for bacteria, antibiotics and contaminants — 98 percent of all milk samples met quality standards; hatcheries and hatchery supply flocks are inspected for disease control.

Results in the marketing area included the assistance to producer boards and commissions and WISSCO, which is the Weanling Improvement Sales and Services Cooperative, I believe that's the words for it. I'm sorry it just slipped my mind. Domestic and international promotion has resulted in breeding stock being sold to Mexico and Japan and meat and poultry products to the United States and Japan.

In the crop production and marketing area, crop research is an ongoing activity that is required to find solutions to new problems and to increase production efficiency. Examples of priority-supported research at the University of Manitoba includes: variety development of canola; wheat and corn; crop rotation studies; forage crop breeding; economic entomology of sunflowers; cost of leasing farm machinery; seed and fertilizer placement, as being a number of examples.

The Canadian Forage Seed Project, which is coordinated by staff, distributed 5,550 kilograms of foundation forage seed to 87 growers in 1985-86. This translates to 6,800 acres of forage with an annual seed harvest value of \$1.25 million for 5-8 years. In 1985-86, staff assisted in development and coordination of the Prairie Livestock Drought Assistance Program. The Elite Seed Potato Farm in Portage la Prairie is now supplying the major requirement of Manitoba potato growers. The plant pathology laboratory diagnosed 2,258 samples of diseased plant material, and 5,000 samples for the Dutch Elm Disease control. Staff, in co-operation with the University of Manitoba carried out 20 chemical control demonstrations in 1985-86. Data from these demonstrations is used for registration recommendations for herbicides used in forage crops, onions and soya beans; 28,000 copies of the Guide to Chemical Weed Control were distributed to staff and farmers.

Wheat fairs organized in 1985 had 100 exhibitors with 2,200 farmers attending. Grants of \$333,956 were paid to wheat districts in 1984 and '85.

Soil and water conservation and management and land use. The soil testing laboratory provides a service to farmers with respect to fertilizer requirements for specific crops, 26,640 samples were tested. A soil and water management strategy for Manitoba was developed, in cooperation with Agriculture Canada and the Department of Natural Resources. Conservation activities, under the Agri-Food Development Agreement, include the development of five prototype locations for conservation demonstrations and eventual development of conservation districts.

Examples of conservation-related priority supported research at the University of Manitoba include crop loss production due to erosion; secondly, the measurement of erosion losses due to water; thirdly, herbicide residues that carry over and transport in soils.

4-H programming: 4-H clubs operate in 22 different types of projects involving approximately 6,000 rural

youth. During 1985-86, the Manitoba 4-H Foundation was organized with industry support. It has a target of raising \$250,000 by 1988 for new 4-H programs.

Also in 1985-86, 250 volunteer 4-H leaders received leadership certificates from the Manitoba 4-H Council. I want to take this opportunity to put my personal congratulations to all the hard work and effort that is consistently being put into this program by the hundreds of volunteers; in fact, by now, it's thousands of volunteers who have served the rural youth of this province over the previous decades.

The Home Economics Programs: In 1985, the Home Economics section offered the Home Economics Financial Management Home Study Course called, "Only you can mind your money." This was offered for the second time and 500 participants completed this course.

One-to-one counselling by home economics staffing in families with budget and financial crisis, continued. The home economists interviewed any person in their area that had contacted the Federal Bankruptcy Office. Results were very positive, with 15 percent to 30 percent reduction in bankruptcy rate compared to other provinces. There's no doubt, in terms of the counselling, that is, we have used the team approach in terms of the financial counselling and crisis management with our home ecs and our farm management people. I have read it into the record, if you'd like a copy, I could have one of the pages copy it and provide members with a copy.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I guess we're starting out in Administration. I presume they're in Winnipeg. How many are involved in that category?

HON. B. URUSKI: Two staff years. It would be the Deputy and his secretary that would be involved in the Administration Branch.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1) — the Member for Portage.

MR. E. CONNERY: I'd just like to make a couple of comments, Mr. Chairman. I've had an awful lot of experience with this particular department, or certain sections of the department. I must say that we are very privileged to have an excellent staff. The only time we have problems in Agriculture is when we get to the top, so I guess we can — (Interjection) — I came in here to speak the truth and I think we should do that.

I'm pleased to see also that the Minister has maintained a direction of helping all farmers of all size because at one time the Department of Agriculture, some years ago, directed the staff to basically work with the very small growers and not do anything with the large growers. — (Interjection) — Four years before the Tory days, Al. Maybe you can't remember that far back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Members will address the Chair.

MR. E. CONNERY: The member wasn't sitting in the House, I believe, Mr. Chairman, at that time. Thank you for reminding me of my responsibilities.

Anyway, I'd just like to say to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, that it is an excellent staff and the province is well served by them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1)—pass; 4.(a)(2)—pass.

4.(b)(1) Animal Industries Branch, Salaries; 4.(b)(2) Other Expenditures.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, just for the information of honourable memers, this section has 50.4 staff years. It would be from Branch Administration, livestock protection, the provincial sheep specialist, livestock nutritionists, dairy section, milk inspections, beef section management, beef program specialists, ROPB, swine management, swine program specialist, poultry and feed analysis and management, poultry disease, feed analysis laboratory, that make up that 50.4 staff years.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Can we discuss the feed lab under this section, the testing lab? Could you give us some idea as to the number of samples coming in there over, say, the last three or four years, to determine whether there's an increase or decrease in usage? These are samples from farmers.

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, I will give the member — how far back does he want to go? I have statistics back to 1978. Go back five years to 1980?

MR. G. FINDLAY: Five would be good.

HON. B. URUSKI: Okay. 1985-86 is an estimate yet, because we don't have the final statistics, but the estimate is 6,600 samples, which would provide 25,000 number of analyses. You see, there would be a number of tests done on each sample, for a revenue of roughly \$70,000.00. 1984-85, there were 5,558 samples, almost 21,000 analyses, \$47,000 revenue. 1983-84, 6,462 samples, just under 22,000 analyses, for a revenue of \$40,500.00. 1982-83, 5,883 samples, 21,200 analyses, for a revenue of \$27,000.00. 1981-82, 5,067 samples, just under 19,000 analyses, for a revenue figure of \$23,500.00.

MR. G. FINDLAY: When you give the amount, that is the amount paid as the fee by the person who sent the sample in?

HON. B. URUSKI: That is correct. The revenues would relate to the specific type of analysis that was provided and, of course, the more detailed and extensive the analysis, the higher the fee. So if that's why the revenue figures are all over the place, because it really depends on what type of analysis was done, or more of one analysis was done in any particular year.

MR. G. FINDLAY: What percent of the total cost is covered by those fees that are paid?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, somewhere around the 25 percent to 30 percent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: With regard to fees for feed analysis, how often does the department adjust the fees? Is it annually, or is it semi-annually? Can we have an explanation on that?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman we've generally done them every second year or thereabouts. The last change

was in '84 and I'll give the Honourable Member the charges of what is being charged. The grain analyses may include dry matter, protein test and weight is \$10.00. Complete feed analysis may include dry matter, protein, calcium and phosphorous - \$12.00. Roughage analysis, which would be hay, straw, silages include dry matter, protein fibre, calcium, phosphorous - \$12.00. Individual nutrient analysis of test may include trace minerals, salt, fat, nitrate, urea, prussic acid, or other single test available at \$5.00 per test.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(1)—pass; 4.(b)(2)—pass.

4.(c)(1) Veterinary Services Branch: (1) Salaries; (2) Other Expenditures — The Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, this section has a complement of 43.15 staff years, a branch administration of 5, and under that branch administration you'd have reporting to them the Veterinary Medical Board, the Veterinary Services Commission and the Veterinary Science Scholarships, that's for the students that we have in the veterinary college in Saskatoon. We do provide scholarships for four students from Manitoba who, in return for the scholarship, agree to practice (I believe that's the criteria) agree to practice in rural Manitoba in return for the scholarship. Then we have the animal health specialists under there and the diagnostic services lab. I'll give the breakdown of animal health specialists 3.51 staff years, I said branch administration of 5, diagnostic services laboratory 24.16, drug centre administration 6, and the A.I. section administration of 4. That would be the complement in this entire section.

MR. G. FINDLAY: The 24 in the lab, that would be out at the University lab there, is that the idea? Now in the drug centre, you're employing 6 people there. What's the volume of drugs that move out of there and are they all strictly to clinics?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the cost of the drugs for '85-86 is estimated at \$4,159,000 and the projected revenues on those would be \$4,458,000 with a gross margin of \$299,000, salary and other expenditures of roughly \$240,000 to \$250,000 for a net return just on the operations of \$59,000.00. That's what is estimated for this year. The estimation of cost saving to farmers on those drugs would be in excess of \$2 million. \$2,200,000 would be the actual saving based on industry charges and the discounting that goes to the vet clinics in exchange for a set mark-up. The veterinary clinics cannot mark up more than the prescribed range based on what we allow them in terms of commission so that there is a direct cost saving to farmers. If, in fact, the mark-up is more than normal and we find out, then I can tell you that there are some difficulties in the relationships between the centre and the veterinarian. But we have not had any negative relations at all with the veterinarians. It's been generally working very well because it's been negotiated and agreed to in terms of the terms and the commissions in exchange for the set mark-up the veterinarians can charge.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Can they charge less than the specified mark-up?

HON. B. URUSKI: Absolutely.

MR. G. FINDLAY: How many clinics are in operation right now around the province and what's the dollar figure for the support and is the support the same for all of them or does it vary by a formula?

HON. B. URUSKI: As I indicated in my remarks, I believe I did, there are 30 veterinary services districts and we could say 116 rural municipalities and towns out of 140 eligible have chosen to participate in the program that's in the veterinary services districts. These serve over 80 percent of Manitoba's agricultural community. The balance is served by private clinics and hospitals located in Boissevain, Brandon, Carman, Portage, Stonewall and outer Winnipeg. The 375,000 total municipal dollars matched with 375,000 provincial dollars are expended to maintain and operate the 30 hospitals and were necessary to supplement veterinary income.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Where clinics are located, are municipalities required to be members or participate in that clinic that's closest to them or do they have a choice of where they might line up?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the municipalities and the clients that the clinics serve join by agreement. There is an agreement that is struck normally when the municipal governments would get together and agree on the setting up of a clinic. Then they would participate on a board that would operate the clinic with representatives from each participating municipality, they would join by agreement. There were, for example, occasions I would think in some municipalities, where the municipality could, in fact, depending on the size of it, could in fact be a participant in two separate veterinary districts where people may, in fact, who are at one extreme of the municipality, participate and use one clinic, and the rest of the population in the other extreme of the municipality could, in fact, use another clinic. But generally speaking, if that was to occur, the municipality should be into an agreement in both districts, however, that's not always the case so that people who might be closer to a clinic in another district may end up, when they require the services of the veterinarian to come to their farm, may end up paying additional charges because of their municipality not being there and paying — I forget what the actual mileage charge is — generally speaking, they would not pay additional charges for the service per se for the medical service but the cost of transportation may be levied in a different way than citizens living within the district would.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Because over time, the developments of roads change and people's trading patterns change because businesses close up in a town and they move, start going doing commerce in a neighbouring town, so commerce patterns change. Is it possible for, particularly in the case where the municipalities are split supporting one in one direction and one in another direction, can those municipalities opt out of one and move to the other in whole or in part?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, yes, they can, but there is, by agreement, a set procedure which a

municipality would have to abide by. There is a process of notification and giving notice before a move can be made, and there would have to be a public hearing to deal with the requests of the municipality in terms of its desire to get out of one clinic and possibly go to another or just get out of a district.

MR. G. FINDLAY: What is the procedure to give notice and to follow that system? What is the procedure to give notice to opt in that direction?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, notice would have to be provided to the Veterinary Services Commission in writing that a municipality wishes to consider getting out of the clinic. The Commission then would hold hearings and make a decision on whether or not to grant the application for getting out of the clinic.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Obviously, if a municipality chose to make such application to the Commission but were refused, what options do they have available then?

HON. B. URUSKI: I guess, Mr. Chairman, I have broad shoulders. I suppose that they could appeal to my office if the Commission denied their application. I believe there have been applications and discussions going on for a number of years in several areas, but I have not had one such case.

MR. G. FINDLAY: What is the procedure for licensing these clinics and keeping them up to specs?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, there is an annual inspection of each clinic by the Veterinary Services Commission. Their staff do the annual inspection. There is no specific licence for the clinic, but each veterinarian of course is licensed to practise in Manitoba by the Veterinary Medical Association and of course, by virtue of the professional association bill that they have, would have to meet their by-laws and their regulations as to the professional standard and conduct under that act.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Have there been any situations where there has been failure to qualify or to maintain their licence?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, there have been cases where clinics have been allowed to run down. Prior to continuing on with our share of the agreement, because there is an agreement between the province and the district board, improvements and repairs have had to be made in order to make sure that the clinic is up to an acceptable standard so that we could continue with the contract and that it not be run down.

There have also been cases, primarily cases where complaints have been handled by the Veterinary Medical Board against complaints against practising veterinarians for, I guess, what one would call professional misconduct. I can tell my honourable friend that I guess I've had, if anything, a manuscript of letters with one individual for over a year who happened to have — and I give the general circumstances — had his dog, which he felt was mistreated by a veterinarian in the Province of Manitoba. The citizen happened to have been from south of the border. This matter did

go to the Veterinary Medical Board. They considered all of the evidence, and of course I guess the individual felt that he was still mistreated. We have tried to be, I guess, as unbiased for one thing, but as well, as courteous as we could. I can share with my honourable friend, we've had quite a few letters and exchanges on this one. That, to me, is probably the most longstanding case that I've ever been involved in.

MR. G. FINDLAY: When there are improvements requested because of inspection, who's responsible for paying the costs of those improvements?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, this would be worked out by agreement. Some of the funds that we have here may, in fact, go to improvements. So it would be an arrangement that would be worked out as the case dictates in terms of circumstances. I don't know whether there have been any cases — I guess maybe in some areas a municipality may in fact do some of the regular maintenance work and the like out of their budget. But if there would be something major, there'd be some fairly in-depth consultations and discussions in the upgrading of a veterinarian. I recall just the latest one, we did provide some financial assistance to the St. Claude Veterinary Clinic about a year ago. As a result of the storm, the roof was extensively damaged, and there were not sufficient funds in the area to pay for those repairs. We did assist in repair work to that clinic. Those are the kinds of things that we've involved in.

MR. G. FINDLAY: The basic annual grant for the 30 clinics is the same?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, no, they are not the same, and they're not the same because there are two different plans under which municipalities can operate. There's the, I think, it's the Selkirk Plan, and then there's the basic agreement, the Manitoba Plan. The majority of the districts are, I believe, under the Manitoba Plan. Of course, it also depends on how much the municipality is prepared to put into the district there.

I was trying to see whether or not we had some figures on the amounts per district, but the maximum amount would be, I believe, \$10,000 per district or maybe more. This was in the annual report. We're just getting it out of there. We will check, Mr. Chairman, if we can provide some useful information for the honourable member. The list of districts is in the annual report. What we'll try and do is give the honourable member, if not during the Estimates, sometime in the process, I'll provide him with information on kind of an overview of the districts and who is involved and how much money is involved in each area. We'll try and provide that for him.

MR. G. FINDLAY: I've had the odd person commenting to me that because the clinics were started with old buildings from an air base, MacDonald, maybe it was if I remember right. They're old buildings and in some cases have been there awhile and they start to feel that because they're responsible for a fair bit of the funds for the upkeep of those buildings, they feel that the lifetime of those buildings isn't all that long now and is it better having placement in some cases as

opposed to continuous repairs for adequate upkeep to meet the standards? What I'm looking for, is there any program or plan or any design that somewhere within the next five to ten years some of these clinics need to be replaced with more modern buildings, probably for energy efficiency and whatnot.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, there is no specific program that we have in place in terms of replacement. The province, I believe, paid the entire capital costs of those buildings initially. That's one of the major reasons why we emphasize maintenance as heavily as we do that they be maintained and they should last, I would say in the main for many years yet, but there may be some older ones. I'm not sure. I think they're all pretty well the same age. We may have to look at our maintenance program a bit better and maybe make sure that maintenance is, in fact, very much up to date because if it isn't very much up to date, the deterioration that the honourable member speaks of and because the buildings are, I would say of what 1940, 1945 vintage — somewhere in that range — there has to be good maintenance on them for them to continue for another say 10 to 15 years.

MR. G. FINDLAY: We're talking and I'm thinking primarily of clinics out in the country serving rural needs or agricultural needs. There are the clinics in the cities. Do they get the same degree of support or are we looking at strictly the rural clinics and naturally there's a non-agricultural trade that's in them? In some it's more than others. Is the program subsidizing non-agricultural trade in the country but not in the city? How has that worked out?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, in fact, it's the reverse. The private clinics, of course, are totally on their own. There's no public subsidy to them at all. There are some of those in rural areas I think I gave in my remarks. There are some notes on where the private clinics are today. So, some of those private clinics would also be operating in rural Manitoba.

There is, of course, a fee differential that in terms of the pet traffic, we call it to the public clinics, the charges would be very similar to the commercial charges that are made at private clinics, so that those revenues would help to support the other activities of the clinic. Basically, other than food producing animals, the rates are basically the commercial rates in the city. The rates for food producing animals are negotiated, and the fees are negotiated annually. Of course, that is an ongoing process in terms of negotiations. The fees have, in fact, not only by negotiations, but also by the recognition by many veterinarians that they can't charge whatever the traffic will bear because the business will go down and they're going to be out of business as well. There is, I think, a recognition on both parts that you just can't knock the heck out of agriculture when, in fact, times are difficult.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Is there any difficulty in obtaining vets to serve all clinics across the province on a year-round basis and is the decision to hire a vet totally in the hands of the local board or there is any involvement of the central commission or the Provincial Government?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, all the clinics have practicing veterinarians at the present time, but I have to say that's not always the case. We have our difficulties from time to time because we feel some responsibility for those clinics and for the service to rural Manitoba and our staff do attempt to assist in seeking out and recruiting veterinarians to assist the boards. We kind of work as close as we can with the district board through the Veterinary Services Commission staff and the district boards.

Of course, we have the scholarship program. We are allowed to provide 12 students to the Veterinary College in Saskatoon each year and we do provide scholarships to those students in exchange for future services in rural Manitoba. The condition is that the scholarships would be written off with I think service in rural Manitoba over a five year period, that's the stipulation.

MR. G. FINDLAY: I notice that there are summer student vets. Are those the scholarship students, they're required to come back every summer and serve in our provincial clinics?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, most of them would be. We offer that opportunity. They may not all be students from scholarships but there would be an opportunity for those to have summer employment if they so desire. They may, in fact, choose to work in other clinics but that's really an individual choice as students, but that offer is there. In the main, I would think that the majority would be, but I don't want to say that they all are there when, in fact, I may not be right.

MR. G. FINDLAY: What is the value of those scholarships and are they set up for the entire period that they're in Saskatoon or is it based on their marks on an annual basis? Further to that do these summer students receive government support for being in these clinics over the summer?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that the cash support would be in the range of \$750 per year towards tuition and the department would, in fact, in the first year, a first year student would essentially pick up the entire summer wages of that student at a clinic. It would be reduced as the student gains experience; in the second year, it may be half; in the third year, it may be then a third, and virtually once they graduate they're totally on their own; but we would assist in the Summer Wage Program, basically a wage subsidy program during the summer months.

MR. E. CONNERY: Yes, Mr. Minister, is it only veterinarians who are allowed to do PMU mare pregnancy testing?

HON. B. URUSKI: I'm not sure that there is any legal impediment that would prevent someone with practical knowledge from doing that. I'm not a lawyer but I know of no such impediment. If the member has some information that he'd like us to check out, I'm not 100 percent sure. I'm just advised that if in fact someone employed would pose as a professional veterinarian and was not in fact a professional veterinarian, he or

she then could run afoul of The Veterinary Medical Professional Act and they could go after the individual. But I'm not sure that there is a requirement anywhere for the specific service, that one has to be a licensed, practising veterinarian. I don't believe so because you have many instances where farmers, as a result of practical experience, do what one would say, good veterinary work. They do it on their own animals and they're happy to serve their neighbours, those kinds of things occur and I don't know whether it would be any different in this case.

MR. E. CONNERY: Maybe the Minister would find out for me. There was a complaint to me in Portage of one of the PMU operators. There's this one fellow that apparently is excellent, and there's a reason to have pretty accurate pregnancy testing because they've got to go on line at a given time and if the assessment is wrong, then the quality of the product isn't there and they get downgraded, so it costs them money.

This one fellow that does it but isn't a vet, apparently the police came out and were harassing him and stopping him from doing it — now this was a year ago, I believe — and he said that they were told that only a licensed vet could do the pregnancy testing. Some vets are not very good at it; and there's no surgery or anything involved as far as the application of the procedure.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, if the member knows the details, if he'd like, maybe a memo to myself and we'll have someone look at it directly. But it just appears that he may have run afoul of the Veterinary Medical Association and their professional ethics in terms of their legislation, I'm not sure.

I think maybe just a short memo outlining names and the like, in memo form, we'll be pleased to investigate it, and at least we can share the information and advise the honourable member of what actually did happen. We can have somebody look into that. Just give me a note on that and we'll look into it.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Every once in awhile, especially in the wintertime, we run into examples of cruelty to animals, not being fed, and so on. What's the mechanism of reporting? Are the veterinarians really the responsible people to identify such cases or can the average citizen do it? What's the mechanism that prevents that from carrying on?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, in terms of my notes — I'll read them to the honourable member — dealing with humane inspections. "To ensure adequate correction of humane treatment of animals, private veterinarians throughout the province are appointed, and paid for humane inspection duties under The Animal Diseases Act. Most frequently such complaints are made to the local police detachment and they in turn may request a veterinarian's assistance." So any individual, generally, could make that complaint.

"It is the veterinary inspector's responsibility to immediately implement proper care and treatment of the animals and the police officer's responsibility to institute court proceedings, or the police officer's responsibility to institute court proceedings, where warranted.

"Seventy-three humane inspections were carried out in 1985. About 20 of these proved to be unfounded; 50-odd owners responded willingly to veterinary direction in correcting their situation; and three warranted prosecution under The Criminal Code."

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)(1)—the Member for Virden.

MR. G. FINDLAY: When you go to the clinic to get drugs, it would appear to me that somewhere recently within the last year or two there's been a requirement that certain drugs fall under a prescription fee. What I see happening is farmers are pretty knowledgeable about what they're handling and this piece of paper is put on the counter, it's already signed, the technician is there, fills in the additional details, the farmer takes it across the counter and drops it in the wastebasket, and is charged \$2.50. Is this serving any useful need? What was the intent and is it working?

HON. B. URUSKI: I recall the situation. I don't recall the specific drug. I was just trying to mull through my mind as to try and determine which drug it was. But apparently what had happened — and we were just conversing about it — was that the drug was seen and alleged to have been a possible health hazard to humans.

This was checked out by the Pharmaceutical Association and, in fact, was determined by them as a potential hazard to humans; and as a result we had to maintain it under prescription. That was the reason that action was taken. It was on the authority, I guess, of the Pharmaceutical Association in terms of how drugs are dispensed.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Has that changed or is it still in place? Is it only one drug?

HON. B. URUSKI: There are a number of drugs that are under prescription but in the last year or so, I recall it was only one specific drug at that time, added to the list, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)(1)—the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. G. CUMMINGS: The veterinary clinics working in adjacent communities, there seems to be quite often a wide variation of the fees charged for similar services. Are there any regulations that apply in that area or is it entirely at the discretion of the veterinarians in charge of the clinic?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I can speak with some authority in terms of the fees charged by a clinic, by a public veterinary clinic. Those fees are negotiated between our Veterinary Services Commission and all the veterinarians operating the public clinics. There is a maximum fee agreed to. That of course does not prevent the veterinarian from charging less than the maximum in terms of those fees, but no more than the maximum.

However, in the cases of private clinics, there is no negotiated agreement or set fee. It's basically, I would think, in most of the food-producing animals, the fees charged may be at or near the maximum that is agreed

to, or slightly above in terms of the private clinics, but that would be for the veterinarian himself to determine since the clinic is his own.

MR. G. FINDLAY: When a clinic is set up and public money is put into operating the clinic and municipal money is put into operating the clinic and the building is put there and serviced and the veterinarian is there doing business, and the veterinarian moves on or decides to go somewhere else and somebody else comes in, does that veterinarian have the right to sell the practice? I'm thinking here of the similarity with maybe marketing a controlled commodity. There's a business there. Does the veterinarian have the right to sell his business? Does he have a right to sell good will in a situation where all the services are supplied by the public and the building's supplied by the public?

HON. B. URUSKI: Only with the approval of the district board. I know that there have been disputes within districts on the use of names and those kinds of things, of using a particular name or the former name or a particular name of a clinic. There have been disputes arise between veterinarians or former veterinarians of a district and the district boards and those kinds of things. I'm not aware, but that doesn't mean that it hasn't happened that any district board has granted the actual allowance of good will being charged by a veterinarian who's leaving a district and selling it all.

Oh yes, there is one. There is a discussion, I should tell my honourable friend. There are negotiations and discussions going on in one clinic over that very matter. I'm advised that this matter likely will go to appeal to the Veterinary Services Commission for adjudication in this disagreement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)(1)—pass; 4.(c)(2)—pass.
4.(d)(1) Soils and Crop Grants, 4.(d)(2) Other Expenditures — the Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, in this section, Soils and Crops, there's a staff complement of 54.47 staff years. I'll give the honourable members the total breakdown: Branch Administration of 6; Horticulture Management, 1; Horticulture Investigations, 5.2; Plant Pathology, 4; Northern Horticulture, 1.26; Cereal Crops, 2; Cereal Crops, 3.19; Forage Production and Investigation, 2.19; Soil and Water Management, 1; Soil Fertility, 1; Soil Management and Conservation, 4; Soil Testing Lab Administration, 1; Irrigation, 1; Weed Control Investigations, 3.39; Land Utilization, 1; Soil Surveys, 15.28; Land Planning and Development Studies, 1; for a total of 54.47 staff years.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Would The Noxious Weed Act be under this division?

HON. B. URUSKI: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. G. FINDLAY: Would you explain how it acts, how it operates? If there's a problem, what's the mechanism to get some action?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the noxious weeds, of course, would be outlined in the legislation and

identified within the legislation. Where a weed district is in place, the responsibility for administering the act would fall on the district supervisor in consultation with our staff centrally, with our chief of the weed section, yes. Barry Todd would be the contact person.

There would be occasions when, as outlined in the act, there is a prescribed amount or dollar amount that the district can impose in terms of cleaning up those weeds. However, in some instances, that expenditure has to be exceeded and authority has to be requested from the chief of the weed section, in fact I believe of the Minister, and the chief does grant that authority to go above the specified dollar amount per acre for the cleaning up of those weeds. That's generally how the act works.

In municipalities where there is no district supervisor, the municipal council really would be the responsible authority for administering The Noxious Weed Act. There is, quite frankly, a fair number of municipalities in the Province of Manitoba who have not joined. In fact, it kind of follows a pattern. In fact, I was meeting with representatives of the district boards just earlier this week, discussing matters of funding and relationships with municipalities who don't participate.

One of the greatest concerns — and I will share it with my honourable friend — is the area where primarily hay, machinery and equipment is being brought in from across the border from the United States. The one port, the area in the Boissevain area is not within a weed district. The rest of the municipalities are generally — there may be one other one — all within the districts. The gentleman from municipal council said, everyone who wants to by-pass the system in terms of the regulatory system that they've set up through their districts, they seem to beeline for the Boissevain port because, if they come into the district, automatically the ports people call the district supervisor. The machines are either steam-cleaned, aired out and made sure that the weeds are cleaned out of the equipment so that there isn't a transportation problem with weeds.

They highlighted the case of leafy spurge. In the State of North Dakota, it is so bad in that area that they are spending about as much money on just trying to get under control the infestation of leafy spurge as we spent on all our entire district because we have maintained our weed district concept over the last decade and it has helped.

We haven't been perfect, and we probably should be attempting to do more in that area, but it's being recognized that the district concept in our province has worked because we're basically doing what I would call preventative maintenance rather than crisis management in terms of the weed. That's not to say we don't have our share of our own problems and outbreaks of weeds, but we have them much better under control. Our difficulty is especially in those border points — and the one I make specific — that concern was raised with me by members — is the bypassing of the regulated system through a municipality which is not in a weed district.

MR. G. FINDLAY: I'm glad you mentioned leafy spurge because that's the weed I wanted to get to. A resident in a municipality that I represent came to me the other day and said there's a significant problem with leafy

spurge in a particular portion of that municipality, and the land that the leafy spurge is the worst on is MACC-owned land. They're not a weed district, and the person was wondering who is responsible for the clean-up and what course of action should he pursue to alert the proper people that this is there and something must be done.

HON. B. URUSKI: Regardless of who owns the land, the act is very clear in terms of the responsibility. If the land is rented, the renter would be responsible, and the act clearly specifies how it can be enforced, the terms and conditions under which the weed can be put under control.

If, in fact, the land is actually not rented and it's under the control of MACC and they haven't done it, the act is very clear in terms of the municipality's authority in which to put that noxious weed under control. It doesn't matter whether it's a Crown agency or a private individual, the law is the same and should be applied to both.

I believe there has to be written notice provided to the parties, but I am sure that the municipality has their own solicitor, and if they would want legal advice or if they want some advice, pick up the telephone and phone our Chief of the Weed Sections, Mr. Todd, and I'm sure he'd be more than pleased to set out the process in which they can follow to provide some action in this regard.

MR. G. FINDLAY: He indicated that he talked to the councillor and he wasn't all that fired up about it, but it is a noxious weed, and I guess that's the obvious process, to talk to Mr. Todd and see if he will move on it.

The other thing he raised was that as far as he was aware, Tordon 22-K was the only chemical that would really work on it. Is it true that there's only two licensed people in the Province of Manitoba that can apply that chemical and therefore cost will be a major factor?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I will have to check that out. I'm sorry, I don't have that information. I know Tordon is one of the chemicals that may be used, but I believe that in terms of leafy spurge, I'm not sure if it wasn't Gleen that is the chemical that a number of municipalities wanted to use. I know there were some difficulties with one of the chemicals that certain municipalities wanted to use and there was I guess what I would call a professional difference of opinion based on test results that the department had had in terms of the allowance or non-allowance of that chemical.

But we'll get that information for the honourable member, Mr. Chairman, and provide it for him because I remember being in the Emerson area, in the Vita area, where this matter arose a year or so ago, where that there in fact was quite a heated debate between our professional staff and the councillors in the weed district as to why not I couldn't use that chemical, they were using it south of the border and it was doing a good job, and you guys down here are not allowing us to use this particular control mechanism.

A MEMBER: That was bladder campion.

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HON. B. URUSKI: Oh, that was on bladder campion, that's the one; it wasn't on leafy spurge. But we will get it on leafy spurge and give him as much technical information as we can on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. L. DERKACH: Still on the topic of leafy spurge, to the Minister, Mr. Chairman. With the province there's a considerable amount of hay moving back and forth north and south within the province and also out of the province.

I couldn't help but notice along the Souris River, I guess it is, that flows through Wawanesa, the amount of leafy spurge along the banks of that river. That leafy spurge has been there for a number of years now and it's also now crept up into some of the pasture areas in that area and nothing has been done with respect to the leafy spurge there. Some hay has moved into our area from the south part of the province and, as a matter of fact, some of the leafy spurge has shown up in some of the farms that have purchased hay over the last few years. Now is there any way that that leafy spurge along the river can be controlled?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, there may in fact be ways of controlling that along the river or any area near a river, but I believe that our staff would be prepared to provide technical assistance to the municipality or to the weed district in order to assist them in getting a control program going. But the responsibility for the control program would be that of the district or municipality involved. Our staff would have no difficulty — I shouldn't say no difficulty — would be prepared to provide technical help and

assistance in trying to get a control program or an eradication program in those areas. I'm sure there would probably be some concern about the water supply and that, so there would have to be some work done in preparation for such a program, but we'd be prepared to assist any municipal district and/or a weed district board in setting up such a control program, but they'd have to initiate it and we'd help them out.

MR. L. DERKACH: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister again on the same topic. Is every municipality in the province covered by a weed district?

HON. B. URUSKI: Pardon me?

MR. L. DERKACH: Is every municipality in the province covered by a weed district, or is it a case of where municipalities can belong to a weed district on a volunteer basis?

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, I believe I've answered that question in my notes that there are 33 weed districts in the Province of Manitoba. There was one weed district disbanded in 1986 and that is Birtle, Shoal Lake and Strathclair. That weed district was disbanded in 1986.

Mr. Chairman, there is a map that I've had in my office. If the honourable member would like, I'll try and get the copy of that map which shows which municipalities are in and which municipalities are not in weed districts, but not all of them are.

Mr. Chairman, I believe it's that time of the day and I move that committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Agreed? (Agreed)
Committee rise.