

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 17, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Pembina Crest School, twenty-seven Grade 9 students under the direction of Leslie Mesman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans).

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

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Manitoba Child Care Association Meeting Request

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, 145 child care centres closed in the Province of Manitoba, not just in the City of Winnipeg but in communities like Portage la Prairie, Teulon and Brandon. These child care centres were supported by the parents of the children who attend those centres and indeed on the steps of the Legislature by many of the children themselves. They know and appreciate the work that is done by those employees of the child care centre.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can no longer hide behind refusing to act because he feels under duress. Will he now agree to meet with the Manitoba Child Care Association and begin the negotiation process for better pay for child care workers?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** I am not hiding behind any reasons or any desire not to solve problems with the day care community. I believe there ought to be a commitment to resolve the issues that are outstanding for the day care community, but this is not an issue that is going to be solved by a band-aid solution or a quick fix, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is wont to suggest all the time.

This is a long-term funding issue that has not occurred overnight, that has not occurred as a result of the past 17 months of this administration. We have indicated our commitment over the past 17 months.

In two budgets we have increased funding by 45 percent to day care. We have increased it by 13 million additional dollars, and we continue to be committed to resolve the outstanding issues, including the issue of more pay for day care workers.

\* (1335)

We have set up an advisory committee along with a Cabinet committee to sit down in a working group

and come up with a plan to resolve, not only the long-term issues of ensuring that we have adequate funding for the day care system, but to ensure as well that we address on a more immediate basis, for the next budget and beyond, the issues of funding for the workers in day care to ensure that they get better pay as they deserve.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Band-aid solutions will not solve anything, but discussions just might discover the answer and the solution. Why does this Premier (Mr. Filmon) consistently refuse to meet with the Manitoba association that works and represents the child care workers of this province?

**Mr. Filmon:** Precisely as the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has indicated in her preamble, discussions must take place. Discussions began a week ago. We had the advisory committee that includes membership from MCCA. More than half of the members on that child care advisory committee are from the MCCA, including their president, Carol Draper.

During that discussion the people, all of them there, were happy with the direction that was taken, were given a sense that we were on track to not only look at the short-term issues but also to come up with a better funding mechanism for the long term. They agreed that that kind of discussion and negotiation was the way to go, Mr. Speaker. As a consequence, we are going to carry on with that because we are committed with a working group to make progress, to set targets, and to ensure that people know that we are committed to resolving the outstanding issues.

#### Day Care Workers Salary Negotiations

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Obviously when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) went out onto the steps of the Legislature this morning, he had blinders on. He did not see the hundreds and hundreds of child care workers and children and parents who were gathered there who were absolutely dissatisfied with his lack of action in negotiating with the very people who represent those child care workers.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has been a leader in the day care field. Why is this Government not willing to take us once again to the leading edge, to the negotiations of salaries which are appropriate to the work done by child care workers?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** I did not have the blinders on that did not allow me to see or hear what the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) said when she appeared before that group. What she said was entirely different to what she said when she spoke in this House on Wednesday, May 20, 1987. This is exactly what the Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote, first of all—

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

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

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**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, if the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is going to quote from Hansard, will he in fact quote the whole two pages of Hansard which makes reference specifically to private profit day care?

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

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order.

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**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I know that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is afraid to hear her words of two years ago, because she changes her position every time she speaks to any group in this province. This is what she said on the 20th of May, 1987.- (interjection)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Filmon:** I will read the entire paragraph in totality. First of all, this is her words, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry that her Party is so embarrassed by them, but I ask for the opportunity to read her words then: "First of all, let me make it perfectly clear that the federal Liberal Party is in favour of universally accessible day care and my position has always been that it is the child I would like to see the subsidy go to, not the day care centre. I am not concerned about the centre per se, nor would I provide them with maintenance grants, nor would I provide them with salary enhancement grants, but I would provide subsidies for children because that is after all who is in care."

Now, Mr. Speaker, today she is saying that she wants to give more in salary enhancement grants. Today she is saying she wants to give more in maintenance grants, but when she had the opportunity -(interjection)- to—

**Mrs. Carstairs:** You know, it is not difficult to teach people how to read. What it is difficult to teach them how to do is to read in its context, and the context of the discussion was private day care and profit day care.

\* (1340)

### Day Care Task Force Recommendations

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). This Government spent \$400,000 on a task force report, monies which could well have been spent on salary enhancement, but the Government chose not to do it. Why is this Government,

through their Minister, rejecting the recommendations made by that \$400,000 task force report?

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, I have not rejected the recommendations of the task force. Many of them have been carried out; others take longer to implement and will be implemented. The task force members themselves said there was no intention that this should be interpreted that it should happen instantly, that it takes time to work these things through and get the funding in place.

### Day Care Long Range Planning

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, but that is exactly what we want the Minister to do, which is to lay out a plan, a plan based on the task force recommendation. Will she lay that plan out today to show that there is a plan in this Government to bring about appropriate salary enhancement and appropriate salary levels for day care workers?

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):** I do not know how many times, Mr. Speaker, we have to tell the Leader of the Opposition that these things are being worked through. Time and time again the day care community has told me, told the Premier, told others, that the funding mechanism which we have is very awkward and difficult. In order to change that it takes time and it takes planning, and that is what is taking place.

### Day Care Long Range Planning

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, but this Government has been in power for some 17 months. Where is their inability (sic) to plan and provide the kind of management that they promised in the 1988 election campaign? Did they have no idea of how they were going to better manage the day care centres of this province than the previous administration?

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

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** That is exactly whom she asked. She did not say anything about the Minister. She said "this Government." I speak for the Government.

Mr. Speaker, when we took office -(interjection)- I know the Liberal Party does not want to hear any answers, Mr. Speaker, but I will try and give them some very direct answers.

Firstly, we made a commitment to day care. We said that it was a high priority and we have extended funding well beyond the levels of increase that have been given to any other area of Government, 45 percent increase over two budgets in less than 17 months, 13 million additional dollars because we are committed to quality, flexible, accessible day care because we know that

Manitoba's day care system must be maintained, enhanced and improved, Mr. Speaker.

We were left with many, many problems by the former administration but one of the things we did was make a commitment to additional funding, and then the second one was that we were going to ensure that we worked with the day care community to develop a funding model over the longer term to solve the issues that remain outstanding, including the issue of salaries for day care workers.

That is our commitment and we will carry through that commitment with or without the help of the Liberal Party of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

### Manitoba Child Care Association Meeting Request

**Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier of this province stood up in this House on a number of occasions in the last couple of weeks and also said the same thing publicly to the Manitoba Child Care Association that, but for the fact that the demonstration was hanging over his head, he would meet with the Manitoba Child Care Association and sit down and discuss plans for the funding crisis in day care in this province.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is: now that day is over that over 2,000 Manitobans, parents, children and day care professionals have demonstrated that their concerns are widespread and real and genuine, will the Premier pick up the phone today, set up a meeting with the Manitoba Child Care Association, open up his budget, negotiate a fair increase, negotiate a plan for the funding crisis in day care?

\* (1345)

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know where the Member for St. Johns was when she was in Government, because all of these issues occurred as a result of the actions of her New Democratic administration. When she was a special assistant in the Office of the Premier, and then for two years while she was in Cabinet, all of these issues were brewing. The underfunding of day care, the low wages and salaries of workers in day care did not occur in the last 17 months. They occurred because of 16 and a half months of the conscious policy decisions of the New Democratic Government.

Now in a hypocritical fashion, Mr. Speaker, that Member for St. Johns says that everything should be the responsibility of this administration. We take our responsibilities seriously and we are going to ensure that we work on a long-term basis to ensure adequate funding for the day care community of this province.

**Ms. Wasylcia-Leis:** Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to know if the Premier (Mr. Filmon) will live up to his promise to meet with the Manitoba Child Care Association. Thousands who appeared today at the Legislature do not believe what the Premier is saying. Thousands of

shivering faces today in front of the building saw red. The Premier thinks he is Ronald Reagan and that Manitoba child care workers are the traffic air controllers.

My question to the Premier is: will the Premier stop his bullying tactics, give those tactics a rest and negotiate in good faith with the parents and child-care providers in Manitoba?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, that is precisely what we are doing. We set up the Child Care Advisory Committee that includes representation—more than half are members of the MCCA—and we are meeting with them. We are committed to meet regularly until we set up a plan and targets to meet all of the outstanding problems that face the day care community in Manitoba.

### Day Care Fee Schedule

**Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns):** It is clear that the Premier, this Government, will not meet with the child care association despite its promises. Now its strategy appears to be one of dividing and conquering, trying to divide parents and child care professionals by saying the only thing child care professionals will get more is if the parents pay more.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. And the question is?

**Ms. Wasylcia-Leis:** My question to the Premier is: given that the average family in Manitoba that makes \$40,000 a year and has one preschooler in day care and one infant in day care pays a quarter of their gross income on day care already, how much more does this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this Government think the average family in Manitoba should pay for child care services?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** We have indicated that we are prepared to put substantial increased funding into day care, a 45 percent increase in two budgets over a space of 17 months, 13 million additional dollars. All we are talking about now is the fact that when that money goes in at the top it does not come out at the bottom in a way that benefits the day care professionals.

We need to have an entirely different approach, a revised approach to a funding system and mechanism. What was put in place by the New Democratic administration was not working, and I might say that this Member (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis) continues to berate this issue despite the fact that their Minister, the New Democratic Minister, Muriel Smith, said time and time again that they needed time to address the issue of salaries, that day care workers should be patient.

During that period of time there was no withdrawal of services, there was no strike, there was no outcry, because she believed that was the way to go. Today she has changed her approach. She is exhorting the members of the child care community to strike, to withdraw their services, and she is not doing them a service. We will work with them conscientiously to solve the problems in day care.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** This week the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care wrote this letter to the Premier which I am willing to table, Mr. Speaker, to express their grave concerns about the child care crisis in Manitoba. I will be happy to table this letter.

\* (1350)

Considering that this group is well aware of the child care situation, Ontario states that Manitoba until now has offered a model of quality child care—

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

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

**Ms. Wasylycia-Leis:** Did the Premier's Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) state yesterday that she wants to go back on years of progress and try and introduce an Ontario funding model for child care in Manitoba, which will double the fees now paid—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Filmon:** We have not proposed anything that suggests what fees ought to be. That is the role of the discussion that we will have with members of the child care community, through the advisory committee, through the Cabinet committee that will sit down with them and look at the funding models and mechanism. The fact of the matter is that there are some people who have their children in child care who cannot afford to pay more for it. The current funding mechanism does not allow for that to happen. The current legislation does not allow for that to happen. The fact of the matter is that we have to work this out in a way that is consultative, that addresses the views, the needs and the concerns of those people who deliver child care in this province. That is what we are attempting to do.

### Centre For Disease Control Site Selection

**Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The issue of site selection for the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control is still very much on the minds of many Winnipeggers. Just last week a group of residents and business people approached the executive policy committee of Winnipeg City Council to have the whole issue revisited so that they could remove the Central Works Yards. There is a growing awareness that City Council's decision not to allow the lab to be placed downtown is an historic mistake, and some councillors who voted against the downtown site now say that they would change their mind if the province helped finance the movement of the works yards.

Is the Premier prepared to initiate a meeting with the mayor and the federal Minister of Health, after next week's elections, to revisit this embarrassing and short-sighted decision?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question of the Member for Fort Rouge, but he

made one very important reference there, and that is if the province will pay, or help pay for the removal of the works yard.

Mr. Speaker, as somebody who worked in those work yards 30 years ago, 30 years ago I worked in those work yards on an asphalt patching crew, I was chairman of Works and Operations during the '70s. I know those work yards and it is acknowledged by people who know anything about municipal planning that is an inappropriate location for that kind of yard to be with an asphalt plant, with emissions, with dust and odour problems and all of those things. That is a problem of the City of Winnipeg to move those yards. That is not a problem that was set up by any provincial Government, formerly or now.

So if we are talking about that I think we have to acknowledge, as people who care about the environment, that the city is going to be obliged to move those yards at some point in the not too distant future in any case, at their expense. Why not do it today when they have an appropriate use for those yards that fits in with the medical centres, with the infrastructure of the hospitals and everything else? You cannot have a works yard in the middle of a residential area and a health care area—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

**Mr. Carr:** Mr. Speaker, I think we are making progress. We now have the Premier on the record saying that the works yards are not properly located. We also have the Premier on the record supporting that site for the lab. Will he put the two together and use the resources of his Government so that we have an historic opportunity to take advantage of the comparative advantages of our health care system, and put that lab where it belongs and where the blue ribbon panel said it should go?

**Mr. Filmon:** Number one, this Government in writing from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) have indicated in the past, for many, many months, probably close to a year, that was the site that we preferred, Mr. Speaker. There was no question about that. Secondly, anybody who has any background in environmental matters knows that is an inappropriate location for the site. None of this is news, Mr. Speaker, unless it is news to the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr). He puts in the unfortunate words that must require the application of provincial resources in order for the city to make the right decision. They do not need to be bribed to make the right decision. They need to make the right decision for the right reasons, because the works yard is an inappropriate location and because they have an opportunity to properly locate a health lab of \$96 million investments from the Federal Government with the infrastructure right there—

**Mr. Carr:** We now have a price tag on this Government's commitment to the downtown lab. It is zero, Mr. Speaker, because the Premier knows full well that he can have that decision reversed if he is prepared to use the influence of his office and the resources of his Government.

Are there any circumstances under which the Government of Manitoba will help move those yards to facilitate the placement of that lab so important for our city and the health care system of this country where it belongs, downtown, next to the Health Sciences Centre, next to the University of Manitoba Medical School?

\* (1355)

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, now we have the policy of the Liberal Opposition in Manitoba, and that is that decisions do not have to be made for all the right reasons, but that people have to be bribed to do the right things, that all you have to do in Government—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order. The Honourable First Minister.

**Mr. Filmon:** The Liberal Party of Manitoba believes that all you have to do in Government is spend money, tens and hundreds of millions of dollars, regardless of the reason, regardless of the rationale, regardless of the logic behind the decision. What it takes is to pour out millions and millions of dollars to convince people to do what is inherently right to be done. I would hope that the new City Council that is elected at the latter part of this month will have a lot more sense than the Member for Fort Rouge and will know that they have to do the right thing on this issue.

**Mr. Carr:** Mr. Speaker, I hope that the new City Council has more vision for the City of Winnipeg than the Premier of Manitoba has.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is not a time for debate.

### City of Winnipeg Capital Grants

**Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge):** This is a new question, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Carr:** A new question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier knows better than most, because he has served on City Council, that the Government of Manitoba provides millions of dollars a year in capital grants to the City of Winnipeg, and the City of Winnipeg decides how those capital grants could be used.

There is a wonderful opportunity here for the Premier of this province to show some leadership. He is on the record supporting the placement of that lab in the downtown site. Is he prepared to talk to the mayor after the election on October 25 to find a way of correcting mistakes which have been made, not only by City Council but by this Government, by remaining so quiet on the issue so an historic mistake can be

avoided, or is he just going to sit there and accuse other people of the mistakes that he is making?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** The Member for Fort Rouge is getting sillier and sillier. The mayor is not the problem. The mayor is the one who consistently has lead the charge to have the lab at that downtown site. He is the one who has said over and over again—he is not the problem. I met with him and had breakfast with him and talked about this particular issue a year ago and indicated our support for that location. He was in full agreement and he lead the charge on council, and it is not there.

So the fact of the matter is that we have an election coming up at which we will have new members of council who I believe will have perhaps a desire to have another look at it. They are not going to be encouraged by the kind of silly suggestions of the Member for Fort Rouge that says all you have to do is hold out for money, money, money. That is the answer to every problem. When do people make the right decision for the right reasons?

### Centre for Disease Control Site Selection Agreement

**Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, encouragement from the Premier of this province is much more important than encouragement from me, and that is what these people are looking for. Is the Premier -(interjection)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

**Mr. Carr:** Mr. Speaker, is the Premier prepared to have a conversation with Perrin Beatty, the federal Minister of Health, to see if he can bring the federal Minister of Health onside with him and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) whom we know believes that the site ought to be downtown, in order to come up with a three-level agreement from the municipality, from the province and from the federal Government to make a deal so that the site goes where it belongs?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that Mr. Beatty, like his predecessor, Mr. Epp, supported the downtown site as being the preferred location. They had a study group come together to look at all the alternatives and chose that as the No. 1 site. We have said so, the Minister of Health—I have indicated that is our preferred site and the mayor has had the same indications. This is not Monty Hall's Let's Make a Deal. The fact of the matter is that the City Council has to be convinced and he can help by talking to some of his friends at City Hall to tell them that it is the right site for all the right reasons, and it is time that they made the right decision.

\* (1400)

**Mr. Carr:** I will make a deal with the Premier, I will talk to my friends on council if he will talk to his.

### Site Selection Reversal

**Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge):** Is the Premier prepared to make any steps whatsoever to help reverse the decision for which Winnipeggers and Manitobans will be paying, not for a year or not for two years, but for generations to come?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, first and foremost, I believe we now have to wait for the election of a new City Council because we have to have a fresh approach to the problem, which is not going to be there if we do not get fresh faces on City Council who are prepared to take a new look at it. Subject to that, I am certainly prepared to indicate publicly again and again and again that we believe that is the best site and the new City Council should take a new look at it.

### Port of Churchill Shipping Season Extension

**Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger). On several different occasions this year the Minister has indicated that there is a possibility of more grain being shipped through the Port of Churchill this year than the 300,000 tonnes that was originally committed to. Can the Minister now indicate the status of any possible extension of the Churchill shipping season to accommodate for an expanded number of shipments through the port this year?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that I am pleased we have had a more successful year this year with shipping through the Port of Churchill than we did last year. I cannot confirm that there is an expanded program at this time. We are still hopeful that there will be a further announcement on it but we do not have anything that we can confirm.

### Polish Aid Program

**Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill):** The last scheduled ship has now left Churchill. They have now started shutting down the port facility for the year, closing it for the year. They will be sending the workers home over the next couple of days. Every day that passes it becomes increasingly difficult to reactivate the port this year. Can I ask the Minister to indicate if his Government has had any contact with the federal Government to promote the Port of Churchill as a priority shipping port for any goods, especially grain or food, for any of those goods that are going to be shipped to Poland under the recently announced aid program?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that my staff are constantly in touch with their federal counterparts. We are always looking forward to any enhancement of shipping through the Port of Churchill and will certainly be looking at this as well.

**Mr. Cowan:** Given that the Department of External Affairs has already begun discussions with the Polish

Government to determine exactly what type of aid program will flow under this announcement, can the Minister now commit to having his staff, on a priority basis, contact the federal Government, contact the Department of External Affairs to urge them to use the Port of Churchill immediately before it is too late this year as a priority shipping port for any goods that flow under that program?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I will.

### Goods and Services Tax Free Trade Agreement Violation

**Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona):** The federal goods and services tax may well violate the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Eliminating all federal taxes on exports and shifting the entire burden to the same goods consumed in Canada is the classic example of an unfair trade subsidy.

Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) warn the Prime Minister that he is inviting the Americans to punish Canadian exporters with countervailing duties?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Surely the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) would not want to initiate a major confrontation between ourselves and Ottawa over a highly speculative question such as "the GST may well violate."

That is the whole premise, an entirely speculative question. He does not have the grounds to make that accusation. Let us have the facts and the figures on the issue. Let us have legal opinion and indeed confirmed allegations rather than this kind of speculative question as the basis upon which we should contact Ottawa on an issue of such importance.

**Mr. Kozak:** Mr. Speaker, we all in this House know that it is highly speculative to expect this Premier to take any action. Given the demands of the Free Trade Agreement, will the Premier ask if the Prime Minister has gone to Washington, cap in hand, to ask American permission to introduce a goods and services tax?

**Mr. Filmon:** One has to wonder who writes the material for this Member. I certainly hope it is not those people who say they are grossly underpaid working for the Liberal Party Caucus in this Legislature, that director of research who was quoted as saying that she needed another \$10,000 because she is grossly underpaid.

The fact of the matter is that this is an issue to do with the federal administration. It is an issue that, if he believes it is a good question, should be written out and sent to Lloyd Axworthy to ask in the federal Parliament. This is not an issue. This is not an important issue that should be dealt with here in the Manitoba Legislature.

### Economic Theory

**Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona):** Our Premier (Mr. Filmon) is the only Manitoban who can make light of serious questions on the goods and services tax.

Will the Premier demand that the Prime Minister stop playing with conflicting economic theories from the 17th and 19th Centuries before he does serious harm to our economy and our sovereignty?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I will take that advice under advisement.

### **Hazardous Goods Transportation Regulations**

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** I have a question for the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger). Recent changes to Transportation of Dangerous Goods and Weights and Dimensions Regulations for semitrailer trucks have made it possible for certain kinds of trucks to tow pup trailers behind them and to be used on Manitoba highways.

Yesterday, a potentially disastrous major accident occurred on the Perimeter Highway involving such a configuration of a pup trailer behind a semi. Has the Minister determined whether the truck in question met the requirements of the Canadian Safety Code that has been approved for commercial trucks and the configuration under the weights and dimensions legislation for Canada?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, that was one of my first concerns when I was informed of the accident. A report is being done and I am awaiting that report. As soon as that comes forward, I will be able to answer that question.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Speaker, has the Minister asked specifically whether the configuration and proper equipment was being used in this particular case on this truck? Also has he determined, and is he conducting inspections to determine whether all trucks in Manitoba are abiding by the safety code and the configuration, the conventions that have been adopted? Are many trucks using below standard equipment at the present time?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether this truck was within the legal requirements under the National Safety Code that we have. I would just like to indicate that we have inspectors who are doing spot checks with various units across the province on an ongoing basis to see that people comply with the regulations and the safety code that is required.

\* (1410)

### **Designated Routes**

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we have a report as to the degree of compliance from this Minister. It is also important, because of the potentially disastrous situation that could have happened, if this had happened on another area of the designated routes, for the Minister to review with the City of Winnipeg the designated routes for dangerous goods in this province. I ask the Minister

whether he has determined whether the designated route that this truck was using was in fact such a designated route and was meeting the requirements for these routes in this province?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, this accident happened on the Perimeter Highway. That is one of the designated routes. However, once the total report comes forward, I am prepared to review that because the safety aspect of hauling the kind of weights and dimensions that we have, the kind of hookups that we have, is an ongoing concern within my department. We are looking at it on a continual basis and will continue, in view of the accident that happened, to review the situation with the City of Winnipeg as well.

### **Goods and Services Tax Impact on Manitoba**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** Last month in this House, in response to a question, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) estimated the impact on Manitoba under the GST at some \$200 million to \$250 million. A week before last, in a private meeting with the House of Commons Finance Committee, he estimated it to be around \$105 million.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we hear news from his meeting down east that the impact will be largest on small provinces and much greater than his original estimate. Can the Premier tell us today what the number is they are working with now?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Yes, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

### **House of Commons Finance Committee Submission Tabling Request**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** I am surprised the Premier does not know that, but perhaps he would agree today to table that report. Will the Premier commit to tabling that report once the Finance Minister returns?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** I will have to obviously consult with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), so I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Finance.

### **Goods and Services Tax Consumption Tax**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** That is interesting, Mr. Speaker. He answers for everybody else, but he will not answer for the Finance Minister. Perhaps we will try this one.

The Finance Minister indicated in his submission that he supports a broadly-based consumption tax. His concern about the current proposal is that it is not broadly based enough. How broadly based does the Premier want it?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the Member for Osborne liberally quotes the Minister of Finance

(Mr. Manness), because he has been very inaccurate in the past in quoting the Finance Minister for New Brunswick, and because he has had difficulty in knowing about tax changes in Newfoundland from the Premier of Newfoundland. I will look into that matter and make sure that the information he has put on the table is accurate and ensure that question is responded to in future.

### Northern Development Agreement Negotiations

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Rupertsland has time for one very short question.

**Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). The Northerners are concerned about the future of the Northern Development Agreement. The NDA funds many needed programs in terms of human and economic development. The NDA was extended by the previous Government but has since expired.

Will the Minister advise the Legislature of the status of the negotiations, and will the Government assure the Northerners that if any replacement of the NDA is negotiated, there would be no loss of any programs?

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs, and Native Affairs):** Let me say how pleased I am to see the Member back in the Legislature following the break that we all had.- (interjection)- I do not know, Mr. Speaker, why they are so excited. Is it not appropriate to welcome a Member back to the Legislature after we have had a whole summer's break? With an attitude like that, is it any wonder that they have trouble with their daily activities.

Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that it is a concern as to the status of the Northern Development Agreement, probably the biggest concern, that the new negotiations and the new agreement is far more successful than the one of which he and his colleagues were a Member of, where we spent some \$300 million to \$400 million and still have an 80 percent to 90 percent unemployment rate in the communities that he represents and his colleagues represent.

We are working aggressively with the federal Government on a Memorandum of Understanding which will lead to a meaningful long-term agreement to support the people of northern Manitoba in training and creation of employment and a meaningful lifestyle.

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

### SPEAKER'S RULING

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

On October 2, I took under advisement a point of order raised by both the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) and the Honourable Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock), respecting words spoken in the House.

On examination I found that there were two separate and distinct points of order. I will therefore deal with them in the order in which they were raised.

The Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) requested that the words of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), in a question addressed to the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), be reviewed to determine whether she was imputing motives. The Honourable Government House Leader did not raise his point of order until after the Honourable First Minister had replied to the question containing the alleged unparliamentary language.

Beauchesne's Citation 319 states in part that "The Speaker's attention must be directed to a breach of order at the proper moment, namely the moment it occurred." Similarly, Beauchesne's 485(2) states in part, "... the proper time to raise such a point of order," respecting alleged unparliamentary language, "is when the words are used and not afterwards."

Speaker Phillips quoted these Citations on June 25, 1987, when ruling against a point of order which had been raised after the appropriate time had passed. Based on the authorities quoted, I must rule against the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader.

Turning now to the second point of order, the Honourable Opposition House Leader asked that Hansard be reviewed with particular attention being paid to the words spoken by the Honourable the First Minister.

The Honourable Member was recognized to speak to the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) and on rising indicated that he would be doing so. In fact he addressed a different point of order respecting words spoken by a different Member. The House was already dealing with a point of order which had not been disposed of.

\* (1420)

As I believe the Honourable Member knows, points of order in this House are dealt with one at a time, and a second point of order is not entertained by the Chair until the first one has been disposed of. Beauchesne's Citation 318(1) states in part: "A point of order cannot be raised on a point of order."

For the reasons indicated, I must rule against the Honourable Opposition House Leader's point of order.

### NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation):** Would I have leave to make a non-political statement?

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Minister have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, I was honoured today to be part of a sod-turning ceremony on the site of the new Actors' Showcase School at Market and Main.

The school will be linked with Pantages Playhouse Theatre, which has been a Winnipeg landmark for 75 years.



The new home for Actors' Showcase, Manitoba's premiere theatre group for young people, is part of an elegant and functional addition to Pantages Theatre.

Today the federal, provincial and city Governments also ensured that this reminder of our theatrical heritage continues to play a major role in our community with the unveiling of a plaque designating Pantages as a building of national historic significance.

This theatre is one of the last vestiges of a great era in early North American theatre. It is one of a very few remaining from that golden age of vaudeville and the only one left in Canada.

In the heyday of vaudeville, Mr. Speaker, the greatest of the great performed on Winnipeg's stages. Today the Pantages vaudeville circuit, like its contemporaries, has receded into the folds of history and memory. What is left with us today is its magnificent architectural legacy that has survived the fate of vaudeville performers.

The new addition with Actors' Showcase will ensure Pantages remains our link to the past and becomes our bridge to the future. It will live on with our future actors—the children of today—and remain a vital part of Manitoba's and Winnipeg's theatre scene.

As Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, I extend my best wishes to Actors' Showcase and Pantages Playhouse Theatre as they look to the future together. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Member for Selkirk have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister for Selkirk.

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** I wish to join with the Minister in congratulating all levels in Government. It is always nice to see three levels of Government agree upon a decision to build a facility in the proper place, such as Actors' Showcase is locating next to Pantages, and we hope that type of agreement can be taken over into other areas.

Actors' Showcase indeed is going to house the youth and the future of our province. Pantages represents the past, what a wonderful blend for the present.

I congratulate each and every one who will be members of the association, the volunteers, the workers, the performers and all the audiences who will enjoy what has come to be this day. Congratulations and best wishes to all.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Member for Logan have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Logan.

**Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan):** Mr. Speaker, we would also like to join and add our congratulations to all of the people involved in yet another very important building block in making Manitoba one of the leaders in the country, if not in North America, in terms of our cultural activities, particularly in the area of theatre and production.

It is great to see things continued on from the past but also moving forward to the future so our young

people are given opportunities to develop their skills and their abilities and to do it in such a wonderful setting.

How many times have we looked past and wished we had not destroyed one of our beautiful old historic buildings in Winnipeg? Many of them are gone. It is wonderful to see we have recognized soon enough that we have to protect those that are left. It is going to add to the image and visual delights of our city and also add to the building of our cultural and arts community.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Minister of Education have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister of Education.

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring to the attention of the Members of the House today that today marks the beginning of People Transportation Safety Week in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note that during 1988 there were no fatalities or serious injuries reported involving school buses in Manitoba. This is commendable considering that close to 1,850 school buses carried an average of 68,000 students over nearly 35 million kilometres last year.

The theme of People Transportation Week is "Protect our children, partners in school bus safety." Activities this week will focus on a co-operative approach to school bus safety, which includes parents, school bus drivers, mechanics, teachers, administrators, motorists and students themselves. My department will be providing assistance through professional development programs and educational materials to schools throughout the province to promote a partnership approach.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the fine work of Manitoba's school bus drivers. I would especially commend the 1,700 or 91 percent of school bus drivers who were accident free in 1988.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Member for Dauphin have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in supporting the words of the Minister. However, I would like to point out that he is talking about programs and education which normally would come under ministerial statements. As the Minister of Education, I think he is somewhat abusing the rules in asking for a non-political statement. Having made that statement, and I think it is worth noting, I do feel that it is a very important issue, obviously promoting safety of children in the school bus system in this province is very important.

We have worked to encourage school bus safety over the years with additional signage and so on. I make that comment realizing that perhaps that is somewhat

political, but that is the nature of this particular announcement. We will continue to work with the Government in enhancing school bus safety over the next number of months to ensure that this record is continued and improved upon over the years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister.

**Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to inform all Honourable Members that this is Consumer Week in Manitoba.

Being a consumer is a year-round role in which all Manitobans participate, a role that often requires us to continually update our purchasing skills and seek new or better information about the goods and services we buy.

In Manitoba, Consumer Week is proclaimed by the Premier as a provincial observance of the role consumers play in the vitality of the Manitoba economy and our system of commerce. Although the observance is held once a year, this by no means should limit the teaching and learning of consumer skills to just one week. Being an educated consumer is important enough that it should be addressed on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite all Honourable Members to join with me in recognizing Consumer Week.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform all Honourable Members that this week is National Co-operative Week, and that Thursday, October 19, is International Credit Union Day.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the Honourable Member for Thompson have leave to make a non-political statement? On a point of order, the Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, I really do not want to see us get into the situation where we have to end up having people denied leave to give a non-political statement, but I would say it has been the past practice in this House to have non-political statements on areas outside of ministerial responsibility, in particular, programs. I do believe the last two statements, while they were probably well-intentioned, were more suited for ministerial statements.

The problem we run into is that then the other critics wish to speak and address the programs and then that becomes political. I would, as a point of order, ask whether we perhaps should not consider what the real purpose of non-political statements is.

I really believe that the last two statements would have been better presented to the House as ministerial statements.

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

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** I would join with the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in expressing the hope that we would not have to deny Honourable Members, such as the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) as a result of his comments today.

\* (1430)

I would hate to have to join in the expression that we would have to deny Members the opportunity to raise non-political statements.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Churchill, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I object to the somewhat threatening, although mildly stated, threatening tone of the Government House Leader with respect to his last comments. He is somewhat cutely trying to suggest that he is just agreeing with our Opposition House Leader. I do not want there to be any doubt in anyone's mind as to what the situation is at present.

If Ministers stand and give ministerial statements under the time provided for Non-Political Statements, what has always been and should always continue to be Ministerial Statements in this House, under that different activity in the House, then it will be necessary for Members of the Opposition critics, who have always reserved the right to criticize the actions of the Government, to stand and do so in response to a non-political statement by way of a non-political statement of their own.

For example, it would have been very easy for any opposition Member to stand and criticize the lack of activity on the part of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) in protecting consumers in this province.- (interjection)-

On the point of order, I am somewhat distracted. It would be very easy and tempting for someone to do that, because in fact it is criticism that is justified and criticism that has been deserved by the Minister and his lack of activity in that area. So for him to try to escape the legitimate exercise, the constructive criticism by the Opposition, by taking what should be a Ministerial Statement and turning it into a Non-Political Statement is going to in fact lead us to the type of situation that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) referenced.

I would like you to, if possible, take under advisement the actions which have been taken today by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) and the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) to determine if that in fact has not been a violation of a long standing practice and a Rule of this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let me thank all Honourable Members. Order, please, I would like to thank all Honourable

Members for their comments. We will take this matter under advisement and report back to the House.

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**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I ask permission to revert back to non-political statements.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. There is no leave required. Does the Honourable Member for Elmwood have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Speaker, I just assumed that I would have an opportunity to respond to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery).

I am pleased to say a few words at this time concerning the Consumers Week. Last year, when the Conservatives downgraded the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to be part of the Attorney General's office, some people—

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

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

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Speaker, without reservation, we on this side of the House routinely grant leave to Honourable Members who ask for leave to make non-political statements.

The Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) displays the wrong spirit I suggest with the comments that he just made. I suggest he think about his comments. Perhaps ask for leave tomorrow to make a non-political statement and we could consider the matter further, but in view of his comments, any leave that he would ask for today would not be granted by Members on this side.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader. I would like to remind—there is no point of order. The Honourable Member for Elmwood, I would like to remind the Honourable Member he has been granted leave to make a non-political statement. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

**Mr. Ashton:** A new point of order.

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

**Mr. Ashton:** I earlier raised concern about the difficulties we run into when Ministers make statements under the title of a Non-Political Statement. I think the statements by the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and talk of the new point of order reflect the difficulty that opposition Members are placed in when Ministers raise matters under Non-Political Statements, therefore putting us in a position of not being able to respond

because of the categories. I would raise that as a point of order as well. I think it is legitimate for the Members to ask questions about the Member for Elmwood's statements but he should—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. I have already advised the House that I will take that matter under advisement. The Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), you are up on a what? There is no point of order. Order. On a new point of order? The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a new point of order.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I understand that you have agreed to take it under advisement. Leave has been given for the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). I would assume that we can continue on with the non-political statement as it is set out in our Rules and that we will expect some type of a ruling from Mr. Speaker on it.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order. I have already recognized the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

**Mr. Maloway:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly clear, to me anyway, that the opposition of the Attorney General to strengthen the consumer protection indicated a basic hostility -(interjection)- on him and his Government.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order. The Honourable Government House Leader.

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) be called to order by the Chair for disregarding the Rules of this House regarding non-political statements.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member has been—Order. Order. I have warned the Honourable Member for Elmwood I have taken this matter under advisement. Order. Order. I have recognized the Honourable Member for Elmwood.- (interjection)- On a new point of order?

**Mr. Ashton:** On a new point of order, Mr. Speaker. I must say I am finding it increasingly difficult as a Member of this House when I am recognized to be heard above the row from certain Members of the Conservative bench. I think they should show a little bit of decorum, allow me to continue—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order. I am having great difficulty in hearing the remarks of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). The Honourable Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Ashton:** We are running into a great deal of difficulty now because the Member was granted leave to speak. Now the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) seems to feel that he can rise during the middle of the statement and withdraw the leave. I believe that when leave has been granted, that Member is allowed to speak. It is not up to the Government House Leader as to whether that is withdrawn. I would suggest that

we take this matter under advisement but in the interim  
-(interjection)- recognize—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), I have already warned the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) I have taken the matter under advisement. The Honourable Member for Elmwood, on his non-political statement.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that we are very pleased that the previous Minister was dumped and that we now have a current Minister. We are hoping -(interjection)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please; order, please. May I remind the Honourable Member—the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), on a point of order.

**Mr. McCrae:** In my short time here, Mr. Speaker, it has been rare that I have seen such blatant abuses of the privileges and Rules of this House as that displayed this afternoon by the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to recognize someone else now.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have reminded the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) on three separate occasions.

The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), on a non-political statement? Does the Honourable Member have leave? Does the Honourable Member for Thompson have leave to make a non-political statement? Order. Does he have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I thank those Members who did give me leave. I would like to just say that even though I cannot say anything political in regard to the co-ops until we hear your ruling, I will abide by your having taken it under advisement that we in our caucus are very pleased to see co-op development week.

We will raise our political concerns about co-ops at the appropriate time and we would like to indicate our strong support for the co-operative movement and for the credit union movement in Manitoba. I hope to be able at another opportunity be able to address some of the things we would like to see done in those particular areas to further enhance co-ops in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Ashton:** I do not think it is appropriate for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) to refer to any Member as he just did, as "this jerk," and I really find that the level of decorum is disintegrating very rapidly. I would ask you to ask the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs not only to withdraw that comment, to apologize to the House for that ridiculous statement that he just made.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Government House Leader on the same point of order.

**Mr. McCrae:** My only comment as part of this point of order is that I recall sitting over there where the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) now sits and being called that by the former Minister of Finance, by the name of Kostyra, so you might want to think about whether that kind of language is correct or not correct, but in any event we will abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order, but I would like to remind Honourable Members that in order to preserve decorum, I would ask all Honourable Members to pick and choose your words very carefully.

\* (1440)

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member for Radisson have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

**Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, in view of what has been going on for the past 20 minutes of productive time, I think I shall make my comments very brief. I even wonder if I should say anything. Just let me say on behalf of the Opposition then, the Liberal Party, that we certainly commend the concept of Consumer Week, and we also commend the very hard work that is put in all year and over a period of years by organizations such as the Consumers Association of Canada and its Manitoba branch and so on. We wish them well, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair, which he might really feel like doing at this point, and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply being granted to Her Majesty, in the Chamber, Rural Development, in the Committee Room, Health.

**MOTION presented.**

## MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

**Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of grievance.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Radisson, on a grievance.

**Mr. Patterson:** We have a great deal of concern and much of it has been expressed over the past many months on the situation of the Workers Compensation Board, the current state that it is in. Two key things, Mr. Speaker, there was a long delay in bringing in new legislation. It is coming now, we must admit, but we are wondering why it is coming in at this particular late

date, and the lack of leadership by the current administration, by the Government in cleaning up the mess.

Now the Workers Compensation Board, Mr. Speaker, has many deep-rooted problems that must be addressed in order to solve short-term complications such as delays in adjudication, undue delay in the length of appeals, escalating costs, and poor public relations. I fully recognize that these problems should have been addressed years ago. We have in the past, admittedly in the early part of this Session, it was quite evident that the present Government had inherited a mess from the previous NDP administration and it was only right and just that they be given some time to look into the problems and address them. However, that time has long passed. This government has been in power now for some one and a half years and they have had plenty of time to grasp the problems and to address them, so legislation such as what is being brought forth now should have been introduced months ago.

For example, in Bill No. 46, why did the present government have to bring in a separate Bill to index pensions? Why could not this more comprehensive Bill No. 56 have been brought in several months ago?

Delays in bringing in legislation and in dealing with administrative problems have caused considerable difficulty for both injured workers and employers in the Province of Manitoba.

Look at some of systemic problems, first the matter of adjudication. There have been several delays, ongoing delays in the initial adjudication. The vast majority of claims, of course, are adjudicated within three weeks of the accident being reported, but nevertheless some claims do take much longer.

For example, you might just say, Mr. Speaker, that any examples I am setting forth right now are just combed from many, many, many complaints that our Members on this side of the House—and I would suggest also that many Government MLAs are getting similar calls from dissatisfied claimants about their treatment at the Workers Compensation Board.

Now this one particular case involved a sign language interpreter, and this adjudication took well over a year. The interpreter was a young woman who developed tendonitis in her hands as a result of the constant repetitive motion of interpreting the sign language. This problem inevitably is not uncommon with sign language interpreters. However, this sign language interpreter was affected to a far greater extent than usual and she was told by her physicians that she is unable to ever return to her career as a sign language interpreter.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

This obviously presented a problem for the Workers Compensation Board because the case was unusual and unprecedented and therefore it caused them quite a dilemma. Extensive investigations were carried out and adjudication was delayed and delayed again. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a precedent in Alberta where another interpreter had had a similar problem and was compensated. However, the

adjudication here still took over a year. The claimant was eventually compensated but, while waiting, went through some tremendous emotional anguish and also some financial difficulty.

It seems evident that complex claims can take extreme long periods of time to adjudicate. Unprecedented claims do take long periods of time to adjudicate. Lengthy adjudication is not common, but it is nevertheless unacceptable. It is understandable that certain claims might take a few weeks longer than usual, but not months and certainly not over a year.

Another reason for lengthy adjudication is that claims often are passed from one adjudicator to another. Claims are now assigned to adjudicators based on the geographic location of the injured worker. Complex cases are passed, for example, from adjudicator (1) to adjudicator (2) if the latter, the adjudicator (2), is more experienced. Complex claims are sometimes passed to three or four adjudicators before they are finally decided, and each transfer simply delays the adjudication.

In the matter of appeals, this is one that has been the particular thorn in the side of, I would say, all 57 Members here, but more particularly those of us on this side of the House. There are delays in the appeal process at all levels although there is evidence recently that this is improving. However, extremely lengthy delays are unacceptable.

When a claimant disagrees with a decision and wants to appeal it, the claimant writes to the supervisor of adjudication and instructs the initial adjudicator to review his or her decision. If there is no change the appeal is forwarded to the review committee.

The first level of appeal, the review by the adjudicator, takes far too long and very rarely results in a change unless further evidence is presented. Very often adjudicators will wait for further medical evidence or further investigation and this causes prolonged delays.

Incidentally, the Workers Compensation Board seems to have difficulty receiving medical information at all levels of application. If a report is not forthcoming, then the adjudicator simply waits instead of following up to find the reason for delay. In cases like this, of course, the claimant obviously suffers.

In any event, this first level of appeal does not seem to be effective from the claimant's perspective. Appeals to the review committee often take eight to ten weeks. This is an improvement from earlier this year, but it is still unacceptably long.—(interjection)—You tell me. Well, zero defects. As well there sometimes appears to be a delay by the board in putting claimants on the review committee waiting list in the first place.

There seems to have been considerable improvement in the waiting period for appeals to the board. It seems that now when a claimant requests an appeal, then an appointment for a hearing is set up, often within a month's time. However, these decisions can take a long period of time to come down, that is, from the time of the hearing to the time of the decision.

It is not very difficult for an appeal board to hear numerous cases in a week, but the problem is not

being solved and it takes several months to reach a decision.

There are also problems with the medical review panels which can take months to review cases. So overall there is still considerable room for improvement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the whole appeal process.

We look at personnel. There seems to be some difficulty with personnel at the board. For instance there have been problems with morale. Now the job of adjudication in particular is a strenuous one. Adjudicators have to make difficult decisions and there are constant time pressures on them. The adjudicators often make decisions with which claimants disagree. Consequently they face abuse from alienated claimants. This is understandable.

So two problems seem to result. That is high staff turnover, and frequently staff is abrupt with claimants. Now the high staff turnover at the adjudicator level is a difficult one because it is hard to train new adjudicators. One cannot pick them off the street and put them into that type of a job. So this causes delays in adjudication because new adjudicators cannot deal with particularly complex cases. Because of this, cases are transferred more frequently, and in general there are more demands on the senior adjudicators, but not only the adjudicators, often the switchboard is abrupt with claimants. This of course is not acceptable regardless of the pressure and regardless of the abuse from the odd claimant. The abruptness creates further problems in the long run.

The claimants start to believe that the board is more or less "out to get them," and then the claimants can become unreasonable. So there appears to be no question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Workers Compensation Board has a public relations problem.

Additionally, adjudicators and other compensation board staff make commitments to get back to claimants either by telephone or in writing, and they do not. This creates further aggravation. So there is a need for better training at the board. Adjudicators in particular should learn to deal with the public in a more professional manner.

\* (1450)

It is also important that adjudicators are made aware of various board policies and procedures and that they are familiar with these policies and procedures.

Just two more examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to illustrate some of the problems with adjudication. We had a call recently from a claimant complaining about the delay in the initial adjudication of his particular claim. This person had developed an allergic reaction to isocyanides and was unable to return to work in that particular environment. It was not possible for him to be moved elsewhere at his place of employment. He applied for compensation. Eventually, after missing several months of work, he was compensated for seven days.

Now even though he could not return to his employment, he was not injured. He could have worked elsewhere because he more or less quickly recovered

from the initial reaction to the isocyanides. He assumed, however, that he would be compensated for an indefinite period of time, and in fact he received advice from his union that he should be compensated for the period he missed. Now he appears to have received poor advice from his union, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There is no doubt about that, but the thing is that he did not receive any advice from the Workers Compensation Board. The policy was to give him a maximum of seven days coverage, and this should have been communicated to him at the outset. The adjudication should have been straightforward, and the adjudicator should immediately inform the claimant of his particular situation. It was just a matter of poor communication in that particular instance.

Another example illustrating some of the need for training of personnel involves a CNR employee or worker. Now this worker injured his hand. He was off work and received compensation for several months. The adjudicator received a medical report that the injured worker could probably return to work with light duties and was told by the CNR that light duties were not available. The adjudicator called the injured worker to discuss a return to work, and the injured worker was strongly of the opinion that he could not return, even in a light duties' capacity. I should make a correction there. I think I said he was told by the CNR that light duties were not available, light duties were available.

In any event, the injured worker was cut off benefits. He then attempted to return to work, but before doing so was required by the CNR to take a medical exam from their own physician. This examining physician recommended that he be put back on benefits. So the injured worker was reinstated because of this but not retroactively to the day he was initially terminated. The reason given by the adjudicator was that the injured worker was not co-operative in trying to get back to work, yet it is obvious he was injured for the entire period.

This particular worker was told that he would have to appeal to the review committee, and that is where the claim is currently. This is fine, that is part of the process. However, it seems clear here that the injured worker should have automatically been retroactively reinstated. The facts are clear, and there should not be any need for this particular worker to have to wait for whatever the time period is to go through the appeal process, waiting on the part of the claimant and also taking up time and effort on the part of the board. This case has contributed greatly to the poor public image of the board, and unfortunately workers at the CNR particularly have a very negative perception. So it is clear that with better staff training and more consistency the Workers Compensation Board would be better off.

With the matter of reorganization, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reorganization is underway, considerable progress has been made, but really it is not acceptable. We recognize the difficulties involved with computerization, but now it would be nice to see some tangible evidence of improvements and service. Electronic tracking of files does not appear to be in place. They can still take days to find a file. The inquiry

unit is helpful, but it sometimes takes as long as three days for them to respond. The idea of combining service departments, as recommended by the King Commission, is a very positive one, yet there still does not seem to be adequate co-ordination, and there does not seem to be the emphasis there should be on rehabilitation. Many injured workers want very much to be retrained, and they are eligible for retraining, but they simply wait and in many cases worry about being terminated.

There have been positive steps such as the creation of the Policy and Research Department, the issuing of the comprehensive plan in August and the creation of the Internal Ombudsman—all very positive moves, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We do recognize many of the positive things that have been done and are also in process. So we do hope that Bill 56, which we will have before too long, we hope, will include the legislative changes needed to really overhaul and improve the system.

Now we just might mention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the King Commission Report. Now this summary of all the recommendations that were in the whole report—and remember this was a tripartite commission with a representative from workers, a representative from employers and a neutral chairperson—contained finally 178 recommendations and of these 178 recommendations, 165 of them were unanimous on the part of this tripartite board.

As I have said a few times before, one would be very hard put to find any just cause as to why all of these at least unanimous recommendations should not be implemented.- (interjection)-

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

**Mr. Patterson:** Bill 56 is long overdue. This present Government should have brought in at least these key recommendations much earlier. Early legislation would greatly have assisted in the reorganization and the improvement of service. So if we just look at several of these recommendations, some of which you might call key ones, recommendation No. 5 recommends continued training in the area of human relations. We just finished discussing this at great length when I talked about the problems with personnel and training.

Recommendation No. 9, this recommends that the board allow workers to receive their permanent impairment pensions by way of a lump sum if they so wish, rather than a monthly payment. This seems to be a perfectly straightforward recommendation, as oftentimes injured workers who are younger could use a lump sum payment to re-establish themselves in another career, perhaps to start a business or whatever, but why should workers not have the choice?

Recommendation No. 12, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this recommends that the section of the Act requiring employers to report to the board within three days be enforced. Currently many employers do not comply with this particular section of the Act, and needless to say this results in further delays. Amongst the worst violators in this particular case is the CNR. There have been numerous injured CN workers who have

complained about slow adjudication only to find out that Form 2, the employer's report, has not been forwarded. So this particular section of the Act—this is in the current Act—must be enforced. The board has the authority and the teeth to do it.

Recommendation No. 13, this recommendation outlines time limits for adjudication and appeal. With limits put in legislation, the importance of dealing speedily with cases would be fundamental.

Recommendation No. 21, this states that the average weekly earnings should be the greater of (1) 1/52 of the actual earnings of the injured worker for the 12 months immediately preceding the start of the loss of earnings as a result of the injury, or (2) the rate of daily, weekly, monthly or other regular earnings that the injured worker was receiving at the start of loss of earnings as a result of the injury and then this amount converted to a weekly amount.

Now in many industries, for example the construction industry, workers make their money during a very short period of time and if earnings are calculated over one year and they miss some number of weeks during their peak season, they will not receive fair compensation. However, there must be a counterbalance so the workers cannot collect a seasonally high amount for the entire year.

\* (1500)

Look at recommendations 40 and 41. Recommendation 40 states that adjudicator guidelines be published by the Workers Compensation Board outlining the meaning of the role of presumption. Indeed the board should publish adjudicator guidelines to ensure consistency in adjudication and to improve communications.

Recommendation 41 states that the guidelines include one, that the onus is on the board to disprove a claim and not on the claimant to prove the claim, and second, that no incident is required for a claimant to be compensatable.

Now injured workers who suffer from back problems, most particularly muscular industries, have considerable problems with the board. It is difficult to measure pain of course. Many injured workers suffer an obvious back injury and receive compensation, and then they are terminated even though they claim they have not recovered. Often these workers have specialists who agree with them that they still suffer pain and have not recovered. There is not clear evidence however that they are still injured, simply the injured worker's word and the medical opinions.

The Workers Compensation Board can approve the injured worker who is not still injured, but feels that he or she should have recovered from the compensatable injury.

Another example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an injured worker that we have been dealing with. This particular worker injured his back. He had no prior history of back trouble and after several months he was terminated.

Now the majority of medical evidence indicates that he still suffers back problems. Yet the board indicated

that he should have recovered and he lost all of his appeals. At the board hearing he was asked, how long do you think it will be before you will be able to get back into the work force? This is a question he should not have been expected to answer, and incidentally he is eligible for a disability tax credit from the federal Government. So it appears obvious that the board terminated this particular worker and refused to reinstate him because he was unable to prove that he had been unable to recover.

Workers who are injured as a result of long-term problems rather than a single incident have unnecessary difficulties. Often workers who are exposed to toxic chemicals and who suffer from occupational diseases have difficulties, for instance the case involving the sign language interpreter that I referred to earlier. These types of injuries result in lengthy adjudications and sometimes it appears to be unfair denial.

Recommendation 105, Mr. Deputy Speaker, states that the method for compensating workers based on 75 percent of gross income should be replaced by a net income formula, and that about 90 percent of net income would be best.

Now at present injured workers with huge tax deductions are better off on compensation, based on the gross income formula, but the net income formula is better for workers who have families.

Recommendation 135 states that The Employment Standards Act should be amended to guarantee that employers should not fire an injured worker simply because they have an injury.

There have unfortunately been numerous examples where it appears that workers have been let go after years of loyal employment simply because they have been injured.

Recommendation 140 states that the Act should be amended to allow claimants to both claim compensation and initiate lawsuits against third parties.

Another example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a case involving a worker who was injured in a motor vehicle accident. This individual is employed as a wholesale distributor, and he was actually on his way to lunch in a vehicle owned by his company and driven by a fellow employee. While stopped at a light, this vehicle was hit by another vehicle and this particular worker was seriously injured. Now the fault was entirely with the other driver and the worker wanted to pursue the matter civilly and he was allowed to by the Workers Compensation Board at first.

Four years later, after this worker had spent about \$8,000 in legal fees, the Workers Compensation Board was convinced by the third party, which is also an employer covered by the board, that the case should be covered by the Workers Compensation Board and the board did accept responsibility. However, to date this worker's claim for his out-of-pocket expenses in legal fees, drugs, and so on, have not been fully paid by the board.

Now it appears that the intent of the original Act has been violated. The Act was never intended to protect third parties.

Recommendation 154 states that the Workers Compensation Board should have no role in determining whether or not a medical review panel should be convened.

Now it would seem only fair that an injured worker should be entitled to such a panel if it is recommended by his physician.

So overall, most of the recommendations of the King Commission, or the King Review Committee, should have been implemented months ago and service would be improved today if the necessary structural framework was in place.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it appears obvious that this Government has not seriously addressed the problems at the Workers Compensation for us. The Government has not put in place a framework to deal with the structural problems. Structural problems have clearly been at the root of delays and initial adjudication. Although most cases are dealt with efficiently, it is unacceptable that a few claims take long periods of time. The appeal process has improved but the length of time is still unacceptable. There are continuing problems in the area of personnel, problems which really complicate adjudication.

A more serious effort must be made in the area of human relations. More training is needed, because training is critical if reorganization is going to result in more efficiency. Training should be in place to ensure that the staff can operate in the new system. We need training in computers, for example.

So overall the reorganization is dependent on legislative changes being implemented. Bill No. 46, which did increase the pensions for the cost of living increases, should not have been necessary. Bill No. 56 should have been introduced several months ago.

This Government's lack of action has caused problems for the system and thus for both the injured workers and the employees. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**QUESTION put, MOTION carried** and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Department of Health; and the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair for the Department of Rural Development.

\* (1510)

## **CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HEALTH**

**Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer):** When we last met on Thursday the committee had been considering item 1.(b) Executive Support, 1.(b)(1) Salaries, \$394,300—the Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan):** Mr. Chairperson, last Thursday when we were ending the part of the debate in the opening statements, a number of allegations were



made by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). They were very inappropriate because I think we are here to discuss not personal professional allegations, but a Health Estimate which we relate to the public and not to any particular person at all. I think if we keep that in mind we will not waste taxpayers' dollars.

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** After the last hour in the House, you are going to make that comment, about wasting taxpayers' dollars with my staff sitting here waiting for Estimates to commence.

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**Mr. Chairman:** The Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), on a point of order.

**Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona):** Mr. Chairman, the Liberal official Opposition is extremely concerned to give the full exhaustive consideration to these Estimates, that the Minister of Health himself has urged us repeatedly to make in the past. We can assure him that we will not disappoint him with the exhaustive treatment of these Estimates.

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**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Honourable Member. He does not have a point of order. I recognize the Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I think the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) had his time, half an hour, and I think it would be very kind if he would let other people speak. When his turn comes, probably then he should talk.

Mr. Chairperson, about his first personal allegation about my personal professional abilities, I will not tolerate any kind of harassment or allegation from him in the future. I am making it very clear.

Mr. Chairperson, let us talk about his mismanagement. He has become very known as a crisis manager. Let me go back to his decision last year about Selkirk Hospital. That has become sort of a cornerstone for everyone to discuss how he deals with the Department of Health, and how he makes decisions on circumstantial evidence and on a hasty situation without thinking what is going to be the outcome.

\* (1520)

His theory was to second two psychiatrists from Selkirk to Brandon in a desperate situation. By ordering that, Mr. Chairperson, he not only did a disservice to Selkirk, but he did a disservice to Brandon as well as the whole of Manitoba. Two people resigned and that was the outcome of his actions and that is even being felt now.

Because of his actions there is one full time and one executive director who is providing services to a large number of patients. If he calls this good management, I think everyone would disagree with him.

Mr. Chairperson, let us go back to his remarks in regard to Pine Falls Hospital. He said that the Pine

Falls people were very happy. They were very disappointed with us. I think he is just reading the one side of the story and he should not mislead the public. Just by taking one side politically which favours their own riding, they are not doing a service because they are ignoring a large section of the community.

Around Pine Falls there is Fort Alexander and a number of other reserves. A number of other reserves have been denied adequate care in the past, and they are still being denied. Fort Alexander is an excellent community of about 4,000 people. They are ready for someone to come and practise medicine in their own community but the number of areas have been put for one reason or another. The basic point is, how can you say that the Pine Falls Hospital and the area is getting good service when a large section of the community is not satisfied. I think that is probably more a political statement coming from one editorial rather than looking at the whole aspect of the health care system in that region. That is misleading.

A number of times, I said the other day that in the health care system, after spending 1.5 billion it is not universal and it is not accessible. I repeat that for almost every surgical procedure people have to wait. I think he is misguiding the public by saying that we are going to have instant surgery. He should work and look like a Minister of Health, not as a political opportunist just for a few minutes of glory and then he is going to repent. He is going to be sorry for what he did to Selkirk, the same way he is going to be sorry for other services in Manitoba.

He repeated allegations that we have not come up with any solid proposals for any of the problems in the health care system, Mr. Chairman. If he reads the Hansard of last year—and I agree with him that I may have some language barrier—but the meaning he should read and most people understand is that we have proposed a number of good ideas. I do not think he or any other Minister has to hide behind any personal language barrier. That is the reality of Manitoba and he has to face it, the sooner the better.

We have proposed to solve a number of issues and I would repeat that one of them has been very well accepted, not only in Manitoba but in the rest of the country. He knows full well that some of his plans are possibly against the Charter of Rights even. His proposal of giving funds to one section of the community and not giving to another is not right. It has been challenged in other places and recently even the Alberta College of Physicians was challenged on that. We do not want to see that kind of message going out in Manitoba. I think that is unfair and he should correct his mistake and come to his senses, politically, and make sure that people who are ready to practise medicine should be given an equal chance. If they fulfill all the right requirements, if they are clinically knowledgeable, if they have all the requirements, why do we have to run away from Manitoba and do the opposite and waste taxpayers' dollars.

I do not think we will stand for that. I want to let the Health Critic for the New Democratic Party know because his Leader has stated publicly that he also opposes that action. We will see when we go to that item that has to be sorted out.

For any effective health care system the planning has to be for today and tomorrow and for the future. After hearing the other day a half-hour initial statement I did not get any conclusive evidence that this ministry is moving in the right direction. They are fixing a few things here and there but they do not have the long-term planning. That will become more and more clear when we go line-by-line in the Estimates.

His idea of co-operation with the professional groups as I indicated in the past is just to go behind their backs or ignore a certain section of health care professionals. It is not a partnership in the health care system. Representation on the health advisory network is a clear example. Manitoba deserves better than the present Health Minister (Mr. Orchard) they have.

When he has the chance in a minority Government to work and produce all the good things, I do not think anybody in his right mind will refuse any conclusive plans coming from this Minister, but we have not seen anything coming, other than having personal allegations. I think there is nothing he is good at doing, other than having personal allegations, and that has to stop because I do not think from now on I am going to even waste my time to reply to his personal allegations. Let the public be the judge.

The other day, Mr. Chairperson, he stood up in the House and said that on the AIDS campaign their record is the best. I think he is misleading in a way. It took him nine months to make a brochure, just to simply change the colour of the brochure, simply to change the colour of the brochure from orange to blue. That does not mean that they are doing better than the previous administration.

I do agree with him on one thing, that their campaign, right now, as far as the TV ads and the other things, that excellent one, very progressive one—and we said that we support that—but the process took them one year. It took them one year and now the other day he stood up in the House and he said that he does not favour the needle exchange program, he is sending a message that he does not have the insight of how to deal with the AIDS issue right now and for the future. He looks at the small numbers, but that number is significantly important. Even though the IV drug users are only 2 percent to 3 percent contributing to the spread of disease, it is going to get worse if nothing is being done.

Why there has to be personal belief attached to any programs, it should not be the case, but when you have \$50,000 and more money available to use in a program, such as is very widely accepted scientifically, I think it is the wise way of spending taxpayers' money and I disagree with him when he said in the news media that is not the right way of wasting taxpayers' dollars. That is absolutely wrong, and all the professional groups will disagree with him.

Mr. Chairperson, over the summer there is one very significant problem that resulted because of this Minister, in that his misinformation or not knowing what he was doing in terms of The Mental Health Act, he almost violated The Mental Health Act. He changed the Mental Health Review Board, and when we asked

him the question in the House, in his political way of answering questions, he is very good. Even the message even did not go across where he was, you know, something was done. He changed the whole board. It took six weeks to put the new boards in, new board members in and to retrain them, and that is not acceptable. Patients were kept against their will in some of the institutions. The exact number is not known and we may never know the exact numbers, but that is wrong. He accepted that, it was the front-page story, he should read it. He is reading other people's editorials, he should read his own, as one of the stories he should read. He should read the editorial saying: Orchard blundering on Selkirk psychiatry situation. He should read that too; he should read that. That was last year.

Mr. Chairperson, lest I deviate from the constructive criticism here, I will leave his personal things for people to judge, and I will end by saying let us just go line by line and work on the questions, rather than going on the personal problems. Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall the item pass? The Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Chairperson, I must say it was an interesting experience last time we discussed the Department of Health in Estimates when we introduced the debate. It was interesting because the Minister of Health reverted back to the type of approach that I came to know as being his style, came to know pretty well my first years in the Legislature. He has been in the Legislature longer than I have. He is one of the veterans of this House, was elected in the Sterling Lyon era, and I think in 1981 undertook to carry the torch to continue the style and approach of Sterling Lyon in the Legislature.

\* (1530)

That was the Minister of Health who I came to know when I was first elected as a Member of the Legislature, having been elected by constituents who suffered under the Sterling Lyon Government, and who sent me here to make sure that never happened again. I remember being engaged in some pretty tough debates with the Minister at the time, as were many others of my Party who were elected in 1981.

Then something happened to the Minister. I think it probably had something to do with his interest in the Conservative Leadership, but the style changed. All of a sudden the Minister of Health was trying to convince people, this is when he was in Opposition, that he was not a rural right winger, that he was not a Sterling Lyon reincarnate, that he was somehow mainstream Manitoba. That lasted for a period of time. When he became Health Minister the attempt to be moderate continued, but I think we saw, as we introduced the Estimates earlier, that the facade has been torn down by the Minister and he is right back to where he was in 1981, Sterling Lyon reincarnate.

I even heard the Minister talking about shibboleths the other day in the Health Department Estimates. I have not heard that expression since Sterling Lyon. So I think we are seeing a reversion back to that style. I

just hope that we do not also see a reversion back to the substance of that period.

It was interesting in looking back to 1981, I remember when the New Democratic Party was elected and looked at the situation in health care at the time, I remember my own constituency comparing the hospital budgets prior to the election of the Sterling Lyon Government and the actual drop. I am not talking about lower increase in inflation, but the actual drop that took place in the funding for that hospital, and how that was built up over the years. I remember that being the case across this province. It was interesting.

Even the Minister himself last year, on October 25, 1988, his first statement as Minister of Health at Estimates, stated that the system he inherited from the previous Government and it was, and I quote, our health system is among the best in the nation or any other. That was the legacy of this Minister.

It is not what you would have understood from his comments the other day. He went to great rhetorical splendour in terms of trying to establish the case. That was not the case, but that is the Minister's own words that we have when he came into office, one of the best systems in the nation.

I want to say to the Minister that as an opposition Critic what I want to make sure is he keeps it the best, if anything can improve upon it. I want to make it clear to the Minister that when action is taken that is positive, I will be the first one to lend my support to it as critic for the New Democratic Party, as will our caucus.

I even stated in my opening comments, there have been some initiatives which have been taken, which I think we can all support, just as the Member I am sure would acknowledge there are many initiatives taken by the previous Government, by the NDP, that he would have supported, in fact did support at the time, a number of initiatives.

I indicated when there is inaction, we will criticize the Government for it. I mentioned last time I spoke about the health promotion trust fund and the inaction that has taken place. The Minister has recycled that announcement ad nauseam.

Here nearly a year and a half later he is still announcing. I think the last announcement we had from the Minister was that he was establishing criteria for this fund. This, by the way, is virtually a carbon copy of a fund introduced by the NDP, which he criticized when he was the Minister. Now we will forgive him for perhaps being misguided at the time, but as opposition Critics I think we will not forgive him for refusing to act in this regard.

We will also be critical in other areas. In terms of spending, for example, I would note once again in the Minister's introductory comments last year, and he would set out the Minister's agenda, and I think it was a legitimate agenda on his part, and I give him credit for referring to it up front. I do not think he was quite as up front in this particular opening statement that he gave just a few short days ago, but he talked basically at length about his main goal as Health Minister was, "to maximize efficiencies in the delivery of health services."

I want to say that this may be the type of issue which we have to agree to disagree upon in terms of the type of emphasis, the type of bias, and it is not that people do not want an efficient health care system, Mr. Chairperson, but people remember how many of these same phrases were used as a pretext by the Sterling Lyon Government of which the Minister was a Member and a vocal supporter, provoco proponent, of those policies. When the words were taken maximizing efficiency and the delivery of health care services were taken for an excuse to cut back in terms of resources and services that were being offered in this province. We will raise our concern about that.

As I said the Minister is very up front in his agenda. He spent considerable part of his first statement in this committee giving a clear indication that that was his basic goal as a Minister. In fact, he highlighted two general areas. He said first the fiscal and economic situation in health services. That was his first concern, his first priority. Now, some of us may say perhaps the Minister was misguided in his No. 1 concern. Some would have asked whether he should have been more concerned about improving the health care system and maintaining it at a very difficult time in terms of development, whether the Minister should have been talking about the need for more health care promotion or should have been talking about the challenges of demography. You know we have an aging population. What is this Government's policy in regard to that?

I think those are the type of questions that maybe some would have expected the Minister to raise last year, but he did not, and he did not in this time. I find it rather ironic, Mr. Chairperson, that when he opened the Health Estimates and replied to the comments made by the Opposition critics by myself and the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), but the Minister talked about lack of vision. Well, I do not know what the vision of this Minister is in terms of the health care system other than, as I said, to quote, "maximize efficiencies." I am not really sure if this Minister has a long-term vision. I am not sure if this Government has a long-term vision.

I think the bottom line is they are in a minority situation. They may slip back into the phrases of Sterling Lyon, but they know as long as they are in a minority position they cannot slip back into the policies. The Minister for Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) probably may find it strange at times talking like a red Tory because of the minority situation. I am sure his constituents must wonder sometimes with some of the statements he has made in the House.

The same for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), talking like a red Tory, as if they had a long-term commitment to social programs and health programs in this province, and compassion. Mr. Chairperson, for those of us who remember the Sterling Lyon period, and those like myself who came in 1981, we would almost laugh at it. It is was not such a serious matter, but that is really the situation we are in.

We have a short-term situation where we have a Government that is essentially committed as the No. 1 priority, "maximizing efficiency in the delivery of health care services." That is the bottom line with this Government. What I believe has happened is that, yes,

there have been some initiatives that were taken that were positive, but in many other areas we are seeing either inaction, or else, as I said, in terms of some areas, some people have actually had their service cut. I think that is the bottom line with this Government, and it comes from the fact that we are in a period where they do not have a long-term strategy other than surviving until the next election. Quite frankly, I hope the Minister will take the time to outline what his vision is for the health care system throughout these Estimates.

I am not sure if the people of Manitoba will like that vision. I am sure that if the people of Manitoba were watching the debate last time we were sitting, they would have been amazed at this Minister. I was amazed quite frankly. I have not seen this the Minister like this for a number of years. He used to be like that on a regular basis when he was in Opposition, but I would say first of all, for example, that his attacks on the professional credibility of the Member for Kildonan were totally out of line. I do not know who the Minister of Health thinks he is, but because he is the Minister of Health, I do not think it is appropriate for him to be lecturing a practising physician on the practice of health care. I do not think that is appropriate. It is fine for the—well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) does, too. He is not a doctor either, and I am not a doctor either, and I am not a doctor either and I would say—

**An Honourable Member:** What are you?

\* (1540)

**Mr. Ashton:** I am an economist by background, and I would say that it is absolutely uncalled for, for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to get into those. The Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) I think acknowledged it and I give him credit for not responding in kind, but those types of personal attacks. I believe the Member for Kildonan—and we may have our differences at times—is a capable individual, he is a capable physician, and he certainly does not need any lectures from the Minister of Health on the practice of medicine in this province. I think that is the first thing that should be said. But the other thing that I think was most noteworthy about last time was that when the Minister was prodded by the opening comments of the Opposition Members his basic arguments were once again all on the deficit side. He went on for about 10 or 15 minutes in rhetorical splendor about the deficit that was left to him by the previous Government. He did not talk, as I said, about the best health care system in the country which he acknowledged last year as being the case. He talked about the deficit. It makes me wonder if really we are not reverting back to what I said before, the real agenda being a cost-cutting, cost-control mechanism and that because we are in a minority situation we do not see the full amount of it. We just see the tip of the iceberg.

I would say if the average person in Manitoba, the average hospital worker, for example, last time was to be watching this, the average patient, anybody who has had any connection in the medical system, I would

say they would be very concerned that the direction of policy for this Government is being set by the current Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) because the talk was once again of that right-wing, Sterling Lyon nature, something that I think we should have learned our lesson from between 1977 and 1981. I would have thought the Minister of Health would have learned his lesson. For awhile it appeared he did, but I think that is the true agenda of this Government.

What they should be doing instead of emphasizing this right-wing fixation of theirs is working to maintain the health care system and working to improve it. I want to deal with maintaining it initially because that is important. We are faced with a major decline in support for the health care system from the federal Government. Over the next several years we are looking at losing a total of about \$141 million in transfer payments, \$101 million out of that will come from the health care system.

So what we are faced with is a decline in federal support for Medicare, and let us not forget the background of Medicare as it was set up in the 1960s, it was cost shared between the federal and provincial Governments. We raised this a number of years ago and it is interesting because I remember the NDP raised it in Government, and the action on behalf of the Conservative Members who were then in Opposition was one of saying, no, there have not been cutbacks. What they failed to realize at the time was the percentage share from the federal Government has declined substantially. Despite the commitment of the Conservative Prime Minister to maintain that share, it has declined. So what we are faced with is the need to be looking at more and more absorption of the burden for health care costs by the provincial Government and that is something we have to be dealing with.

I mentioned some of the other challenges in the health care system and this is looking ahead again too, at something I think the Minister should be addressing, and I think it is important for all Members to be addressing. I mentioned about the demographic situation. We have an aging population in this province, it is a national trend. Yet what we are seeing on the part of the Government is the confusion in the area of seniors policy. It is certainly evident in the Department of Health, the section that is responsible for policy in regard to seniors. I remember well—and it was not a question asked I know by our caucus but it was asked by the other opposition Party in the Legislature—when the Minister responsible for Seniors was asked what initiatives he had taken in the area of seniors policy, and the answer was—well, actually there was no answer. There was no answer to what direction the Government has taken.

Really we have to recognize that is a growing situation and it is going to impact most directly on the health care system, because whether it be in regard to the hospital system where seniors use the hospital system far more than the average Manitoba, whether it be in regard to Pharmacare where seniors, I believe, use the Pharmacare system on average double the level of other Manitobans, whether it be in the area of home care

where we once again indicate our own concern about the Government's priorities in that area, whether it be in the area of personal care homes, or in the whole spectrum of seniors' policy I think has to be raised at this point in time. In these Estimates we will be asking the Minister some very direct questions about the direction he will take in terms of seniors' policy.

Let us look ahead to the future, once again, in terms of health promotion. We took the initiative to bring in the Health Promotion Trust Fund and if there was one criticism I think that could be made of the previous Government, legitimate criticism, is that perhaps that Health Promotion Trust Fund should have been brought in earlier. I think that is something that I think could be a legitimate criticism. I would say the real question though to be asked now is why this Government, when it criticized that fund when it was introduced by the previous Government, has now taken close to 18 months to do absolutely nothing in this vital area. It set up a fund, it does not even have criteria for the fund yet. I think we are going to have to ask some very serious questions about why this Government refuses to move in this key area.

Also, in terms of specific program areas, I agree with the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) in terms of some of the key areas, in terms of AIDS, for example, which is a growing problem. The clear message from people is that the Government has not been responding to the needs, it is only just getting around to looking at the needs, for example, to get right out where the problem is and that is on the streets. The Government is dragging its heels on something that is an emerging issue. I do not think anybody, even a year ago, realized how important a problem it was.

Let us look at drug and alcohol abuse. Look ahead, once again, to the future. The level of consumption of illegal drugs has dropped, the average number of people using them has dropped. But what has happened is a higher percentage of people each year are using what could best be described as hard-core drugs, facing the very severe physical, mental and emotional risks that go with drug abuse. I think some very serious questions have to be asked about the Government's approach in that area. It has brought in a program of sorts, it has some activities out there in terms of education and I would be the first to support it, but we are going to have to be faced with the fact there are going to be people coming into the system who require not only education, but also treatment. I think that is a very serious question that this Government has to ask itself, what it is going to do in that area.

I look also at the situation, once again the promotional health area, in northern Manitoba where we have a much higher degree of medical problems because of socioeconomic conditions. - (interjection)- I am glad the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talks about the dialysis machine. I, along with the people in Thompson, the Kidney Foundation, wrote the Minister on that, he referred it to the committee and announced it back in August. I would be the first to commend the Minister on that. As I said, I will commend the Minister where he does listen and I will criticize where he does not. I can list 10 other items in northern Manitoba where

the Minister has not responded and each time the Minister finally does listen, I think we in the North will congratulate the Minister. It may be to our amazement at times, because the Minister is probably better known for his speaking abilities rather than his listening abilities. That is something I think anybody who has sat in the Legislature with the Minister, as I have for eight years and I know some of the other Members just for the two years, would be the first to agree to.

Let us talk about the situation in northern Manitoba. We have a problem that is worsening because of the fact that the shortages, in terms of physicians, both specialists and general practitioners, is becoming increasingly worse. In my own constituency we went from having approximately 12 general practitioners, just a couple of years ago, to the point where earlier this year we had a level of between five and six. Currently, after lobbying by the hospital board, there has been the approval for emergency medical officers, two in the Thompson area. But the question is whether those positions can be filled.

I know in the process of having those funds approved, there was at least one doctor who was interested in moving to the community who moved elsewhere so we lost the opportunity to fill that position. That is in my own constituency. It is a similar problem throughout the North, and in fact we were becoming reliant more and more on doctors who have less and less of a stake in the North, doctors who are coming to northern communities and rural communities only to establish for immigration purposes and then are leaving very shortly thereafter.

We are in a very fortunate situation. If it was not for the crisis in South Africa, we would not have doctors in a lot of northern communities right now because that has been the biggest source of doctors, is from South Africa. It is ironic that because of the growing crisis in that country that we are able to have even the barest minimum of medical care in northern Manitoba. It is getting to the point where people are going to have to be shipped out of northern communities to visit general practitioners. It is happening already with specialists, but it is happening also at that level. I think those are the kind of things that we need clear direction from, and I know the Minister has made some announcements in this regard. I am not sure if he has really analyzed that structural problems exist, why we have this continuing problem, but that is something we need to know in terms of the future vision of this Minister.

\* (1550)

We also need to know what direction this Minister is going to take over the next number of years in terms of innovative health care measures, not just at the promotional level but also at the treatment level. I would like to hear a clear statement from this Minister about the role of community clinics, a clear statement. I would say the clear impression of the community clinics in this province is that this Government does not give them the kind of priority that they have had in the past in terms of either operational funding or capital funding. I think that is the clear impression. There is a very great

concern that the Minister may be moving in that direction.

As I pointed out in the House just the other day, there is a study in Saskatchewan, which the Saskatchewan Government sat on from 1983 until just recently, that showed that the community health clinics in those provinces are not only providing good medical care but are also efficient. I would have thought that the Minister who talks about this efficiency would have been the first one to say, yes, that has to be a priority, but instead of saying that we have heard no commitments. The Minister gave no commitment in the House. I think when I asked the question, he did not even remember what question I had asked. I am repeating it now so that we might give him a second opportunity to listen and respond in that area.

I would say that we expect, in the Opposition, to see some of the immediate needs of the community clinics met, particularly in the area of capital funding. Clinic is in desperate need of a new facility, the Minister knows that. We have been waiting month after month after month for the capital budget. I hope that it is in the budget. I know that the people at Clinic have increasing concerns about the uncertainty. They would like to know from this Minister and this Government whether it is in there. I do not see any reason why it should not be in there as are a number of other very important capital needs in this province, but I think the Minister should clarify exactly what the position of this Government is in that very important area.

So to respond to the Minister when he says about the opposition Parties in terms of their vision, I am quite happy to lay out the vision of my Party in terms of health care in the future. I think the one advantage of having been in Government is that there was some clear evidence in terms of the importance in that area. We believed in the increasing need for health care promotion. That is why we brought in the trust fund, unlike the Minister who sat on it now for well over 18 months with his recycled version, we brought in that. That was recognized as a key problem.

We recognize generally across the board the need for innovative programs and the Minister talked about my own constituency. I can run through the record in terms of what was brought in. The adolescent health centre, for example, which pioneered in the area of promotional health care in terms of adolescents, and adolescents are a highly susceptible group to many preventable medical problems and it is having a tremendous effect. I know in the North, too, there are many additional facilities that were brought in previously.

I know also that there was recognition of the demographics, the changing situation, the aging population. There was clear evidence in that particular area. There was clear evidence of the need for balance between traditional institutional care, between the traditional institutions and the community health clinics. We have pioneered in that area a number of important initiatives. So I think you can look at it and say that we did have a vision of the future. We, for example, were raising the concern. I think we were the first in the country really to be raising the concern about the level of federal funding to the degree that we did, we

raised it at that time. I would like to the Minister's idea where things are going to happen.

We pioneered in the area of health care, for example, and it was because we did have a vision. I think it should come as no surprise to anybody's historical observer because the New Democratic Party has always been committed to Medicare. We pioneered it in Saskatchewan. I realize the Conservatives only reluctantly brought it in at the provincial level under pressure, federally because of the growing support for it. I realize at times they have difficulty understanding the whole basis of Medicare as a universal health care system, but that is our vision. We are not going to allow this Government to destroy the vision that we had put in place in this country and in this province that gave us, as the Minister, himself, said, one of the best health care systems in this country. That is why throughout these Estimates, regardless of the rhetorical attacks of the Minister, we will be asking some tough questions. We will be giving the Minister credit where he does listen to the Opposition, does move in needed areas, but we will be asking some tough questions because I really believe it is this Government that does not have a clear vision of where it is going in terms of the health care system. I think its vision begins at the last election and ends at the next election, because they are in a minority Government situation. I do not really know what their vision is beyond that.

I suspect that it is a vision that most Manitobans would not even want to hear at this current time, because I think it would be a vision, the Sterling Lyon vision of a health care system, to use the terms of the Minister himself, that would be more efficient through the use of cutbacks not just in funding terms but in terms of services.

Let the Minister put forth his real vision in terms of where he wants to see us go in five and 10 years. Does he still stand by some of his statements in Estimates a few years ago when he talked at great length about what he saw, the abuse in that area? Is that part of the basis of Government policy, either in the short or the long run? Does he stand by his statements, for example, in the area of home care? He is really defensive in the home care area. He says there have been no cutbacks. He himself, as an opposition Critic, was a vociferous critic of the program. He criticized it for overspending and poor management.

The recent report that was brought in, the Price Waterhouse Report—does the Minister support its recommendations? Does the Minister support the recommendations of that report that would clearly lead to user fees and cutbacks in this very important area?

I know we are going to be looking for the direction of the Minister in this area. I would like to see the Minister explain for example how he ended up with a situation where there are clearly unmet needs, and we will document them as we go through the Estimates in the health care area, when the health care funding was underspent last year by more than \$20 million—something the Minister denied in the House initially, but was proven wrong on, more than \$20 million. I would like to see the Minister explain why it was underspent by \$20 million, but the unmet needs are

still there. I would like to see him explain why he has delayed putting the health care promotion fund in place. I would like to see him explain what he has been doing in terms of contacting the Minister of Health in regard to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, another potential source of funding for the health care Estimates.

It is fine for the Minister to come in here and talk as he does about being more efficient and limited resources. That is what he said in his opening comments last year. I think he has to also answer the question about what the real priorities, and the real future vision of this Government are. As I said at the beginning of my comments, I believe that it is a vision that has seen some initiatives in some areas, has seen inaction in a lot more areas and has even some selective cuts in other areas. I believe it is a vision that is a temporary one that is tempered by being a minority Government.

I do not believe there is a real commitment to a long-term vision for our Medicare system and I look forward to debating the Minister throughout the Estimates on these very vital points.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, again I have listened with a great deal of patience to both of my opposition Critics. Both of them whine from time to time about personal attacks, particularly the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). I did not personally attack the Member for Kildonan. I quoted from editorial comment which brought him up short on where he was not accurate in some of his criticisms of this Government's action. Those were not my words, those were editorial comment from Pine Falls.

I brought the Member up short because when he came to the House with information regarding Dr. Ramsay, he was wrong. He did not bring factual information to the House. A letter to the editor went from Dr. Ramsay to the Free Press correcting my honourable friend from Kildonan. That is not a personal attack on the man. That is simply pointing out that he has to be accurate when he opens issues for discussion and debate.

It is incumbent upon each Honourable Member of this Legislature to speak honestly and truthfully and to not bring misleading facts and statements to the House. That is not a personal attack. That is attempting to make my honourable friend more responsible in his job. Quoting individuals who have said he has not been responsible in the job, that is not a personal attack, not at all.

My honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan, says we are wasting time. I agree. I have not heard anything of value from either of my opposition Critics in two days now, and furthermore I have not heard anything of value immediately after Question Period today. I did not hear anything of value from either opposition Party all day yesterday when we could have been debating the vital issue of health care in Manitoba.

\* (1600)

All we have heard is my honourable friend from Thompson, the New Democratic Critic, saying there have been selective cuts without one single example,

because none exists. That is the game the New Democratic Party plays. It is a game that my honourable friends in the Liberal Party get absolutely boonswaggled (sic) by the NDP into going down the same garden path, without establishing their own agenda; this Government-in-waiting attitude that was promised by the Liberal Leader of the Opposition prior to the commencement of the Session.

Again I listen patiently for an hour to both of my honourable friends, the opposition Critics, speaking for the two opposition Parties that wish to be Government some day, and I never heard a single new idea. We heard lots of discussion. Well, we want to hear about the Minister's vision on health care.

The vision of this Minister and this Government on health care is one of reform, renewal and achievement for the betterment of Manitoba. It is there in every single thing that we have done to date, and will continue to be there; vision in the reform of the mental health system; vision in the planning process of health care delivery; vision in service delivery; vision in co-operation with professional organizations who are once again around the planning table and assisting Government in making proper decisions for the future of health care in Manitoba, a circumstance that did not exist 18 months ago when Government under the previous administration tried to operate in isolation of reality and of sound advice from those professional care provider groups in the Manitoba health care system. That is no longer the case.

The only vision I heard articulated today by both opposition Health Critics was the kind of vision you get by looking in a rearview mirror and watching the country that you have just been past. Nothing in the future, just rearview vision from both of my opposition Health Critics, and I suggest we get on with line-by-line consideration and maybe my honourable friends might have some points they would like to make.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Chairman would recognize that we have had opening statements and I do believe it is time we get on to discussing item (b) 1.(b)(1), and I would cite Rule 64.(2): "Speeches in a Committee of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion."

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairman, can the Minister of Health tell us how many positions are vacant in the Executive Support staff—just line-by-line?

**Mr. Orchard:** What would you like to know again?

**Mr. Cheema:** The total staff he has under the professional and technical line administration support staff, and rather than going from—can he just go through them one-by-one, what they are, and what they do, and also each one's specific salary?

**Mr. Orchard:** Their specific salary?

**Mr. Cheema:** Yes, especially the Deputy Minister of Health.

**Mr. Orchard:** Especially the Deputy Minister of Health? Mr. Chairman, there is a secretary to the Minister. There

is a special assistant to the Minister. There is a special adviser to the Minister. There is an executive assistant to the Minister. There is an administrative secretary, one clerical support staff, a Deputy Minister, a secretary to the Deputy Minister, a clerical support position, and a French language service co-ordinator for a total of 10.

**Mr. Cheema:** Are there any positions vacant at present?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Cheema:** Can the Minister of Health tell us what is the salary for the Deputy Minister of Health?

**Mr. Orchard:** I am informed that it is \$85,000.00.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us the exact amount of money paid to Mr. Kaufman as a part of his going package?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, I cannot.

**Mr. Cheema:** Why not?

**Mr. Orchard:** Because I do not believe those negotiations have been finalized.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, this is a Minister saying, you know, he has a grip on his administration. It is more than one and a half years. Even during last year's Estimates he said he was negotiating. Is he still continuing to negotiate with Mr. Kaufman?

**Mr. Orchard:** That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can he tell us how much more time does he need to negotiate with one person?

**Mr. Orchard:** The amount of time it takes for two lawyers to settle their differences on behalf of Government and their respective client.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can he tell us how much money they have spent to negotiate to date? If he cannot give me the exact number today, can he provide it to us on Thursday, the exact amount?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, why not?

**Mr. Orchard:** Because, Mr. Chairman, I do not have the exact amount. The matter is not concluded. Until the matter is concluded, I can hardly provide my honourable friend with the exact amount. I have absolutely no objection, when we conclude this negotiation with the contract that we inherited with Mr. Kaufman, that I will share every single financial detail with my honourable friend and the New Democratic Party. I would be pleased to.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, it is amazing that we spent last year at least 20 minutes discussing the same

thing. He said that he is going to bring forward whatever is going on in the negotiation and what is the end result. Why did it take him so long? Why have they still not concluded the negotiations? What is the reason? What is the major hitch?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, possibly because we have not backed the Brink's truck up to Mr. Kaufman's offer. If we used the Liberal Party's solution and backed up the Brink's truck, we would have settled within a couple of days. We are trying to settle a reasonable settlement on behalf of the taxpayers of Manitoba. That is not yet concluded.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, that is exactly what it is. We are asking for a simple management decision. This Minister is saying that we are asking for the Government to have a Brink's truck. This is nonsense. I think he should answer a simple question—to negotiate with one person is going to take 18 months and two lawyers and more time? How much more time does he need?

**Mr. Orchard:** As long as it takes to settle the matter on behalf of the taxpayers of Manitoba.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, this is very strange that the Minister of Health keeps on repeating the same answer and I am going to keep on repeating the same question. Taxpayers' money is being wasted. That is why we want an answer about how much money so far has been spent just to find a solution and how much more time is it going to take. We are asking so that we would know and the taxpayers of Manitoba would know how they are spending taxpayers' dollars.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, as I have indicated to my honourable friend, when we conclude the negotiations and the settlement with Mr. Kaufman, we will be pleased to share with my honourable friend (a) the value of the settlement with Mr. Kaufman, and (b) the costs of legal counsel utilized to achieve that settlement. We will be pleased to share them with my honourable friend. Until I have them, I cannot share something I do not have.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can he please tell us how much, if not the exact number, how much money in approximate amounts has been spent so far to negotiate with Mr. Kaufman?

**Mr. Orchard:** I do not have the exact amount in approximate numbers of how much we have spent to date in negotiating with Mr. Kaufman. I do not have that at my disposal, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Cheema:** When can he provide us that kind of information?

**Mr. Orchard:** We will attempt to give my honourable friend an exact approximation of the approximate amount that we have spent to date.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I am asking him a simple question. When can we expect it—in a day, two days, three days? We need an exact amount.



This is his department and he has the information. He is negotiating with Mr. Kaufman, and he is not telling the public of Manitoba how he is spending their tax dollars when we are having a problem with each and every area of the health care system.

\* (1610)

Simply, if he cannot even negotiate in the right way, or he cannot spend taxpayers' dollars wisely, how can we expect this Minister to perform in any other area? Can he tell us in simple terms, one day, two days, three days, one week—he should give us at least an approximate time. When can we expect to hear from this Minister what Mr. Kaufman's salary is, or whatever package he is going to be negotiating, and how much money he has spent so far?

**Mr. Orchard:** Oh I think that is a reasonable target my honourable friend has given me.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, it is not a Question Period that he has to evade here. We do not have a TV camera. The simple question we are asking him is: one day, two days, three days, one week? He should give us at least one week. Is that a fair request?

**Mr. Orchard:** That is a fair request.

**Mr. Cheema:** Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us now is he working on any special program? What are the specific areas that the Minister of Health is working on?

**Mr. Orchard:** There are all areas of responsibility that my deputy is working on, inclusive of continuing the reform of the mental health system, of attempting to resolve some inherited issues in Winnipeg regions, of attempting to put on track a pro-active health promotion program in terms of continuing with the pro-active planning in the Manitoba Health Services Commission as a member of the revamped, reconstituted board of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and in bringing the Manitoba Health Services Commission into the future, if you will, and in terms of work with the Health Advisory Network as the only Government representative on the Health Advisory Network Steering Committee, and bringing, helping, and assisting in the deliberations there. The Deputy Minister is involved in all aspects of the department, including the development of new program initiatives.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, the Minister of Health has indicated that the Deputy Minister is actively involved in the mental health reforms.

Can he tell us who made that decision for the change of the Manitoba Health Review Board this summer?

**Mr. Orchard:** The Minister of Health.

**Mr. Cheema:** Can the Minister of Health tell us why he made that decision, knowing these board members were doing a wonderful job and he put the patients at risk for six to eight weeks? Why did he make that simple decision?

**Mr. Orchard:** First of all, my honourable friend's preamble to the question is incorrect. Second, I made the decision to change membership on the board, because that is, if one reads the Act, the exact responsibility of the Minister of Health in administration of The Mental Health Act, as amended and passed, about two years ago. It is entirely the Minister of Health's responsibility to choose the membership on those mental health review boards. That I did in exercising my responsibility. My honourable friend's preamble about endangering patient health, et cetera, is wrong, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, is the Minister of Health saying that he made the right decision or the wrong decision?

**Mr. Orchard:** I am very satisfied with the decision that I made. The boards are working very, very well. There are very effective people working on those boards. Some of them have been there on the previous boards, the psychiatrists and some of the members at large, and I am satisfied that the boards are working very well.

**Mr. Cheema:** Is the Minister saying that he is satisfied that the patient had to wait for six weeks for the review for their mental condition? Is he satisfied with that statement?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, the question my honourable friend asked me was: was I satisfied with the changed membership of the board? I indicated to him, yes, I was. I would not have put those individuals on the board if I did not think they were competent people capable of making informed decisions in accordance with the Act in the role and responsibility of membership on those review boards. I would not have put those people on if I would not be satisfied with their undertaking of their duties.

**Mr. Cheema:** I am saying to the Minister of Health, is he satisfied that he put the mental health patient in a risk situation for a minimum period of six weeks? Is he now even satisfied with the decision? Can he say that he made the right decision at that time? It was a possible violation of The Manitoba Health Act. Does he agree with that statement or not?

**Mr. Orchard:** Oh, I do not agree with that statement of my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Cheema:** That is fair enough.

**Mr. Ashton:** I just want to clarify because I too was surprised at the Minister, and this, getting back to Mr. Kaufman's settlement, after Tuesday, October 25, 1988, asking fairly detailed questions, still is not in a position to conclude the negotiations. What money has been forwarded to Mr. Kaufman, if any?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, we have paid Mr. Kaufman his salary and everything that was due to him as of the term of employment, including the holiday pay. Those outstanding issues, where we have not

concluded, is a settlement on the contract which was in place with Mr. Kaufman at the time of the change of Government.

**Mr. Ashton:** The amount that was forwarded, is that the \$85,000 figure that the Minister is referring to, or is that a separate amount? What is the amount that has been forwarded to Mr. Kaufman? What is the amount that has been agreed to thus far? What is that amount in settlement for? I am just trying to get some idea of what has been paid, what is going to be paid, and what has not been concluded yet.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, what has been paid is what, if you wanted to work it out on a daily basis or whatever, his salary on the contract would have been until the time of his departure from Government. What is at issue is the value of the contract which was terminated by this Government. That is what is before the lawyer. Mr. Kaufman has been paid what is due him for his job responsibilities that he carried out until the time of leaving Government. What is at issue is the value, or what the value is of the contract for which Mr. Kaufman was employed.

I might indicate to my honourable friend that I do not know of too many other jurisdictions that had a contract for the Deputy Minister position. Deputy Ministers are normally, as the current Deputy Minister is, appointed at the will and pleasure of the Lieutenant-Governor so that when Governments change, Deputy Ministers are viewed to change with the Government, as happens from time to time.

\* (1620)

My honourable friend ought to recall 1981 where a number of Deputy Ministers were terminated at the change of Government, as happened in 1977 and as happens when Governments change. Settlements are made in accordance with the salary that is paid. This was a unique circumstance where the previous administration had seen fit to write a long-term contract. That is almost unprecedented in the parliamentary system, that a contract would be in place for a Deputy Minister which traditionally is appointed at the pleasure of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, namely the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and Executive Council.

What is at issue is what is the value of a contract written by the previous administration guaranteeing that an individual would be the Deputy Minister presumably, and that is the question I suppose that is being negotiated. When Government changes, that contract has unusual implications. It is unprecedented in certainly the history of this province. No other administration faced the inherited contract of a Deputy Minister appointed by the previous Government. Always they had been at the pleasure of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council and when changes are made very readily, ready settlements are made. In this case we are disputing over contract with Mr. Kaufman, and that is what is taking the time to settle.

**Mr. Ashton:** It is a bit frustrating trying to get an indication of the money. I think also the Minister should

be careful in criticizing the opposition Members and suggesting that they are backing up the Brinks' truck.

I think the Minister made a very clear decision to release Mr. Kaufman and the consequences, the year-long negotiations and the dispute over the amount of the settlement are really the direct consequence of the Minister's decision.

Quite frankly, after seeing what has happened in terms of senior staff with the current Minister, I would not be surprised if a lot of people are going to ask for a similar contract in the future because this Minister has a great deal of difficulty in recruiting senior staff. It is not just in terms of this one position, but there has been a major problem across the board. I would suggest perhaps the Minister be a little bit careful in terms of the way he deals with this and in terms of the future, because we have a serious problem in terms of this Minister and senior staff.

I do have a question on a different matter though, and it is an urgent matter. It is related to the current situation at Victoria General Hospital with the pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants. I understand that they have withdrawn their services, or at least had indicated yesterday they were going to withdraw their services at twelve o'clock noon today. I would like to ask the Minister, since he was copied on the letter from the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals, what the current situation is at Victoria General Hospital.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I just do not want my honourable friend's comments to be left on the record about senior staff. Senior staff in the department are working very, very diligently and working very effectively on behalf of the ministry of Health in the Province of Manitoba.

I want to ask my honourable friend, who emulates the epitome of parliamentary democracy, if he believes that any Government, this one included as a minority Government, ought to sign five-year contracts with Deputy Ministers knowing that their term of office may be up tomorrow, the next month, the next year. Ought we to sign long-term contracts with Deputy Ministers, not simply tying the hands of future Governments to accept those individuals whether they wish to work with them or not, but more importantly forcing the Government into protracted negotiations over a contract for a position, namely Deputy Minister, that never in the history of this province has ever been written into contract.

Is that the kind of new Government style that the New Democratic Party would urge upon political Parties in Manitoba, that we sign contracts. Then when Government changes if you do not like X, Y, Z, Deputy Minister, you have to purchase your way out of an expensive contract?

We did that with the chairman of the Manitoba Energy Authority because of a long-term contract. We did that I believe in another couple of areas unprecedented, but definitely unprecedented in the Deputy Minister level.

Now if my honourable friend thinks that is the way the parliamentary system ought to work then maybe

he ought to talk to his visionary leader in Ottawa, Stanley Knowles, who would tell him that is not the way Governments in a democracy work.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend can make his innuendos and his side comments about senior staff et cetera, et cetera, but he has no definitive points that he can make, only the innuendo against senior staff who cannot voice their opinions at this committee. If he has criticisms he can criticize the Minister, but leave the senior staff out—

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, please. On a point of order, the Member for Thompson.

**Mr. Ashton:** The Minister should be aware, and the rules are quite clear in terms of making statements about people outside of here who cannot defend themselves, that I made no reference to senior staff having been difficult. I said that the Minister has difficulty attracting new senior staff, recruiting new senior staff, because of the Minister. I was critical of the Minister and not the staff or certainly potential recruits, because I do not blame them for not working with this Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Member does not have a point of order. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order. The Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, Mr. Chairman, to answer my honourable friend's question on Victoria Hospital, the Manitoba health care professionals, in attempting to, I believe certify or gain first contract for pharmacists at the Victoria Hospital, were threatening or were negotiating on the basis of withdrawing services as of noon today.

Apparently a conciliator has been put in place and those negotiations are currently ongoing, hopefully with a settlement that can be achieved, as has been the case on a couple of other occasions with that particular certifying body over the past several months.

**Mr. Ashton:** The reason I am asking the question as well under this particular item is because one of the policies of the Minister has been to improve wages and working conditions for non-union employees, presumably because they have not been represented by a union, they have not been able to obtain the contractual benefits that unionized employees clearly have been able to over a period of time.

The letter for the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals expressed concern that, "the membership is not prepared to accept less than they were entitled to under the hospital's policy for non-union employees."

I guess the real question is: what is the intent of the Minister's policy, and what is its interpretation at the hospital level? Is the intent to improve the situation for non-unionized employees, which certainly would be a supportable proposition, anything that can be done to improve their working conditions, or is it to have only one level of benefits for both unionized and non-unionized employees, in which case you end up in the very difficult situation that is happening in this case, in this dispute.

One of the concerns is that the hospital is refusing to give more than that given to non-union employees. Is that because of the Minister's policy or perhaps an incorrect interpretation of it?

I do not want to get involved in the collective bargaining situation here at all. All I want to do is make sure that the Minister's announced policy is not in any way, shape, or form contributing to any confusion that may be leading to the current situation.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend ought to take his advice and not get involved in negotiating on behalf of anybody at the committee stage or in the Legislature. I certainly do not intend to negotiate on behalf of either the pharmacists, the hospital, or the union.

\* (1630)

Mr. Chairman, the policy of union/non-union wages is a policy that for approximately six years the Manitoba health organizations, who represent union and non-union facilities throughout the province, said clearly to Government this is an issue of blatant discrimination wherein you will not fund non-unionized facilities at the same level that you fund the unionized facilities. This at the same time that we were bringing in pay equity, not to pay an LPN the same salary for working in a unionized versus a non-unionized facility, but to rate the value of the LPN service versus the RNs versus some of the support service. It was clearly the most blatant inherited discrimination in funding that faced the ministry when I took over office 16 months ago.

We instituted a two-and-a-half-year policy wherein the wages for non-union facilities, the salaried components for non-union facilities in their global budgeting, will equate that of unionized facilities less, with one figure deducted, that being the average monthly union dues. It was clearly an issue of equity and fairness, and we believe that no Government ought to discriminate against non-unionized staff, as was the case 17 months ago. So from now on facilities will be able to treat their employees equitably for doing exactly the same job as an LPN in a union versus a non-union facility.

I do not think that anyone with a reasonable approach to fairness and equity would disagree with that policy, and I do not think anybody has. It was a policy requested over a six-year period prior to my being in Government that was ignored by the previous Government. We chose not to ignore that discrimination against workers and have introduced funding levels which allow equitable treatment of individuals doing the identically classified work, union facilities versus non-union facilities, less the monthly union dues.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall the item pass—the Member for Ellice.

**Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice):** I listened with interest to the Minister's opening comments the other day and today as well. He speaks frequently about vision of his department and the partnership when he refers to that partnership and that vision and talks about the health

care community and others. I find it quite interesting to note that he always seems to perhaps forget to mention the one important partnership, and people that he should also be working with very closely in terms of that partnership, and that is his own department, i.e., the civil servants.

Be that as it may, I will save some of those issues to later on. I also was listening to the Minister's comments about the Women's Health Directorate, and perhaps the Minister could clarify for me—certainly he refers to the Women's Health Directorate as a new initiative, one which I would assume that the Deputy Minister has certainly had some input in as well. I am wondering if the Minister could indicate for us, this Women's Health Directorate, who is the Minister responsible for this and under what division is this Women's Health Directorate found?

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, I will be the Minister responsible for it, as Minister of Health. It will be within the Community Health Services portion of the Estimates.

**Ms. Gray:** Can the Minister indicate: is that a separate directorate with a separate group of SYs and individuals who have been hired into these positions in a directorate?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, as my honourable friend might appreciate, we announced the Women's Health Directorate initiative in the throne speech some four and a half months ago. We are in the latter stages, I guess it is fair to say, of the evolution of that policy commitment, that direction in program.

**Ms. Gray:** Would the Minister care to elaborate on what he means by the latter evolutionary stages of this? Would he be more specific, i.e., are you planning to have a director of the Women's Health Directorate? Are you planning to have staff? What exactly is the situation with this elusive Women's Health Directorate?

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, Mr. Chairman, that is exactly what will be announced when the discussions, the organizational structure is finalized and put in place. That is exactly why Government indicate directions they are going to take to signal to the public, to the opposition Members, that here is an initiative we wish to undertake. Then we commence the finalization of those plans and they are announced when finalized. That is why I say we are in the final stages of that implementation of a throne speech initiative from four months ago.

**Ms. Gray:** Could the Minister indicate with this new initiative that he refers to being in the planning stages, have there been specific resources that have been allocated in this year's Supplementary Estimates which refer specifically to that Women's Directorate?

**Mr. Orchard:** As much as I would like to pursue this topic with my honourable friend, those details are exactly the details that will be part of the announcement when the plan is finalized, and when all of the discussions are completed, and when all the "t's" are crossed, and the "i's" are dotted.

**Ms. Gray:** It was the Minister, himself, who spoke again of the Women's Health Directorate in his opening remarks for the Supplementary Estimates. I think it is quite an appropriate simple question that I am asking the Minister, i.e., are there specific resources that have been allocated for the Women's Health Directorate anywhere in these Supplementary Estimates?

**Mr. Orchard:** That is all part of the announcement that will be made when those details are put in place. I am not going to—my honourable friend, can ask the question all this afternoon, all tomorrow afternoon, all Thursday afternoon, I will not deliver any other answer other than when the initiative is finalized it will be announced. Those details will be made available to my honourable friend, and it is at that time that I will make those details available. I am unable and am not going to release part announcements at this stage of the game. That is not what I prefer to do.

**Ms. Gray:** Could the Minister indicate to us when we can expect this announcement?

**Mr. Orchard:** Having consulted with my Deputy Minister, we think probably in about a six-week window we will have the reorganization finalized.

**Ms. Gray:** Is the Minister then indicating, given that the announcement may not be for six weeks, that he is unprepared to discuss the Women's Health Directorate which is his responsibility as a Minister in these Supplementary Estimates?

**Mr. Orchard:** We can discuss the Women's Health Directorate in terms of the general direction the Government envisions for the Women's Health Directorate, the overview of what its intention is, what the direction is to be, what it is designed to provide a focus to in terms of women's health issues. We can talk of the broad, general approach to it. The specific details of staffing, of resourcing, et cetera, are to be completed as of yet. If my honourable friend has questions about what is included in a general policy way, I will attempt to answer her questions.

\* (1640)

**Ms. Gray:** Perhaps, could the Minister then indicate to us how he can plan overall direction and strategy in a given area and not have the faintest idea about how or where he is going to find the resources in order to carry out that given direction or those goals?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I realize that my honourable friend is part of a Liberal Caucus that has every solution solved by money, except for the Member for Selkirk who said that we continually try to solve problems by throwing money at it. I do not know whether she is in the mainstream of the Liberal Party or in the minority, but you ought to read the Member for Selkirk's comments because before she accused us of solving all the problems by throwing money at it, she laid out all the problems that were yet unresolved because we did not spend money. It was a confusing statement, and I did not know where it was coming from.

Now let me deal with the specifics of my honourable friend for Ellice. The Women's Health Directorate is a direction of this Government focusing on women's health issues to be staffed and resourced in a start-off mode in the near future, hopefully within that six-week time frame that I have given to my honourable friend, at which time the details, the specifics of staffing and resourcing, will be abundantly made available to my honourable friend and to the general public. In the meantime, to leave the impression that how can we plan without knowing what resources are available is simply belying a lack of understanding of Government planning.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot do anything more than attempt to provide the best information I can for my honourable friend for Ellice, information that is available and that I can share with her today.

**Ms. Gray:** Could the Minister clarify? Is he suggesting that I am wrong when I indicate that a Government should, when they have a direction in mind and a vision of where they want to go, have some idea of where the resources are going to come from? I get the impression that the Minister is saying I am way off base when I suggest that.

**Mr. Orchard:** Oh, I would not want to say that you were way off base when you suggest that.

**Ms. Gray:** Perhaps the Minister could then clarify what exactly he was saying in relation to a Government planning for a new direction as they refer to the Women's Health Directorate and yet not being able to indicate how they are going to achieve those goals in regard to resources? Also, let the records show that I have not sat here and said what new resources are available, I have simply said to the Minister what resources will be available.

I would assume that the Minister would know that resources can be found in a variety of means, and part of my question is: is the Minister doing a reorganization, so that in fact SYs and positions will be moved from one area to another? Is there going to be an amalgamation of a couple of the directorates to form a larger directorate, which would encompass the Women's Health Directorate? What specifically does the Minister mean when he says, "start-up mode" and "in the future"? Those two phrases are very vague indeed, and we are no further ahead in regard to what this Government sees as the vision for the Women's Health Directorate. If it is a new initiative, then put on the record exactly what you plan to do in this area, or is it another idea, but you have no thoughts, no goals, no objectives and no idea of what the resources are going to be?

**Mr. Orchard:** I want to thank my honourable friend for her incisive advice. Those questions will be answered when we have the program, in an announceable form. Some six weeks out is the hopeful agenda. I know my honourable friend in the Liberal Party can accomplish instant wonders overnight. I appreciate that ability in the Liberal Party. We simply have not got that Liberal magic wand that we can wave and make things happen

instantly. We are moving very deliberately on the women's health initiative and we will make the announcement, as I have indicated for the last 20 minutes or so, when the plan and when the resourcing and when the staffing plans are finalized.

**Ms. Gray:** Could the Minister indicate for us what the relationship will be of the Women's Health Directorate to the Health Promotion Directorate which also deals with some women's health issues and to the Maternal and Child Health Directorate?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, that relationship will become abundantly clear to my honourable friend when we make the announcement.

**Ms. Gray:** The Minister has indicated today that he is prepared to talk about general direction and the vision of this Women's Health Directorate. Yet in every question that I have asked, he has totally avoided or appears to be unwilling to answer the question. Perhaps the Minister could then indicate to us just exactly what he is prepared to say in regard to the Women's Health Directorate.

**Mr. Orchard:** There are a number of issues that are specific to women in terms of accessing and needing the health care system. I think my honourable friend might know that in certain age brackets women consume substantially greater percentages of the funded services in health care. That is for a variety of reasons, a lot of them to deal with child rearing and the function of child rearing.

Those issues are focused in a number of areas, as my honourable friend has indicated, within the department. Part of the direction of the women's health initiative is to bring a co-ordinated focus to those—bring together divergent program areas to make a focused, balanced and comprehensive approach to women's health issues. My honourable friend is going to say, well, what does that mean and what are you going to do, and who is going to go where, and what is going to happen here? I simply point out to my honourable friend that is part of the discussions that are currently ongoing and will be part of the announcement.

It is not dissimilar, this initiative, to what we undertook approximately a year ago in terms of the whole mental health issue in the ministry of Health. Mental health, as I explained last year when I assumed responsibility for the office, was in reality in four different streams of funding, with four different roles of accountability.

You had the major mental health institutions reporting to an Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health—that is Brandon and Selkirk. You had Eden Mental Health Centre reporting to the executive director of the Manitoba Health Services Commission and rural division. You had the acute psychiatric wings in the hospitals of Seven Oaks, Victoria, Grace, St. Boniface, Health Sciences Centre, as part of the reporting system of the Manitoba Health Services Commission urban facility section. Then you had our regional services where our mental health community mental health

workers and regional staff reported to the Community Health Services Program under an Assistant Deputy Minister of the department.

So you had four separate streams of funding. As I indicated to my honourable friend, I think it bears repeating because this is the agenda that we are on in terms of reforming the health care system from within, when I became the Minister of Health, approximately the 1st of June I believe was the operative day or maybe it was the 30th of June, the McEwen Building at the St. Boniface General Hospital was going to close. That was going to remove from service some 50 beds, as I recall, from acute psychiatric care in the urban hospital facility. It was in June I indicated to the then Deputy Minister I would like to meet and discuss this issue, because I believe that we are going to have some substantial difficulties over summer with this.

\* (1650)

A meeting was called—we were meeting on Wednesday morning I believe it was or Thursday morning—but late afternoon, Wednesday, I phoned my Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health on a different matter and in closing the conversation I said, I will see you at the meeting tomorrow. My Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health, bearing in mind we were discussing the issue of mental health service delivery in Winnipeg and the acute care closure of McEwen Building, he asked me, what meeting, because he had not been invited to that meeting.

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health had not been invited to that meeting because that was not the way we did things in the department at that stage of the game. Everybody went separate flows. The commission was the commission, the department was the Department in Mental Health, the department was the Department in Regional Services. That was totally unacceptable, Mr. Chairman, and that stimulated the immediate addressing of reform in Mental Health to bring the policy and planning and program delivery under an Assistant Deputy Minister. One responsible point for delivery and that has already yielded significant benefits, and it is not a completed reorganization.

Now, we have the same circumstance facing us in women's health issues, where we have them under a number of different directorates, a number of different responsibilities. We think it is prudent and important and effective to bring them under one reorganized reporting line to better address not only the existing issues in women's health but new issues. Now my honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), says this is technospeak, or something like that. This is a realistic outline of what this Government is attempting to do to bring focus, direction, planning and effective service delivery to the ministry of Health. I realize my honourable friend with the New Democratic Party does not understand that because certainly we inherited a disjointed ministry.

Now that is, in general terms, where we want to be with the Women's Health Directorate. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the outcome of this initiative will be several beneficial measurable policy directions. First

of all, a more effective and co-ordinated service delivery mode, a more effective policy development mode, and certainly sort of a one directorship or one area of responsibility to which the ministry and Government can refer issues specific to and pertinent to women in the health care field. That is the objective in broader terms, and I think it is a laudable one. I think it is one that my honourable friend will support.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Chairperson, the Minister has talked about past history, and I think that is about six times we have all heard that particular story. The Minister did indicate that in the mental health reorganization they felt that one line of co-ordination or one stream was important.

Is the Minister then indicating that as an example with the Mental Health Directorate, who obviously now would look at women's mental health issues, should move out from mental health and be under one line of authority under a women's health initiative?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Gray:** I certainly have more questions in this particular area, but I believe the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) has a question.

**Mr. Kozak:** Cognizant of the fact that we are approaching five o'clock, I will limit my remarks this afternoon to three brief points. The Minister of Health of course need not respond to the first point. It is simply a comment for his edification.

The Minister, a short while ago, referred to certain comments of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles). I would suggest to the Minister, who certainly is amply experienced in this House, that it is not unusual and in fact it is a public service for each opposition Party to assemble and put on the record what might reasonably be considered a wish list that indicates in full the philosophy of the Party in question.

It is the responsibility of course of that Party, as we approach a provincial election, to prioritize that wish list in a manner coherent for the electorate. I assure the Minister of Health that my Party is looking forward to that opportunity and will do so in a way that will satisfy him.

However, regarding two points that I would hope to have a brief answer from the Minister of Health on, I do not expect to be a regular and extensive intervener in this committee. The confidence I have in the superior professional expertise of my Party's Health Critic, the Honourable Member for Kildonan, Dr. Cheema, is virtually unbounded.

I will probably, however, like to make certain comments with regard to items under the Health Services Commission, and secondarily, with regard to employment equity programs instituted within the Department of Health relative to persons with disabilities in particular.

I wonder if the Minister, as a matter of courtesy, could extend to me some idea of when I might converse with him in a constructive manner regarding the Health

Services Commission and employment equity for persons with disabilities.

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, I will take the last first. That would be appropriation I.(g) Human Resource Management for the employment of Manitobans with disabilities in the Manitoba Health Services Commission is the last item that we deal with in Estimates, and those questions regarding facilities, ambulance, and medical services can be posed there.

**Mr. Kozak:** Mr. Chairman, simply my thanks to the Minister for his guidance.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us, under Other Expenditures, total, there is \$65,000 more spent this year—

**Mr. Chairman:** Excuse me, have we passed line (1)? Are we going to line (2)?

**Mr. Cheema:** No, we are still on line (1).

**Mr. Chairman:** Line (1)? Okay, sorry.

Shall we pass line (1)? The Member for Ellice.

**Ms. Gray:** I have a question in relation to line (1). The Minister again had made reference to the fact that one of the overall broad responsibilities of the Deputy Minister was in regard to some reorganization or changes in Winnipeg region.

I am wondering if the Minister can update us as to what has transpired over the past year and a half in regard to potential changes in the Winnipeg regions.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my honourable friend wants to deal with regional services under executive office. That is where that issue can be discussed if my honourable friend would have the patience until we get there.

**Ms. Gray:** Would the Minister be prepared then to indicate to us, given that there is overall strategic direction done out of this Executive Support, if Mr. Reg Toews has been hired, either on a contract basis or through some other means, to work with the Deputy Minister in looking at some of these reorganizational issues?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Reg Toews is under contract to try and resolve some long-standing issues from approximately three and a half years back in Winnipeg region.

**Ms. Gray:** Could the Minister indicate to us what the length of time is of this particular contract and what the dollar amount is?

**Mr. Orchard:** Yes.

**Ms. Gray:** Will the Minister then, if he is able to—which he indicated he was.

**Mr. Orchard:** That is approximately \$45,000 for a six-month contract.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall the item pass—the Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Cheema:** Can the Minister of Health tell us now under the Executive Support staff, and he is the one who made identification, the policy direction in key areas of the health care system, what are the major policies they are looking at for this year other than the Manitoba health care reforms?

\* (1700)

**Mr. Orchard:** Under Executive Support—

**Mr. Cheema:** If you go to page 24 under I.(b)—

**Mr. Chairman:** Can we leave that until the next day?

**Mr. Cheema:** We can start it tomorrow, that is fine.

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

Committee rise.

\* (1510)

## SUPPLY—RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski):** Municipal Board, item 2.(a) and 2.(b): Reviews and renders decisions on municipal borrowing, assessment, planning and other matters as required by statute. The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

**Mr. Helmut Pankratz (La Verendrye):** Mr. Chairman, I just would also like to put a few comments on the record in respect to this rural development, which was being questioned, and it is in Hansard of Thursday, October 12. First of all, when the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was indicating which communities had some problems, and he was mentioning, for instance, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Morden, Winkler, Selkirk, Dauphin, and then he says he does not know of any more. When the Minister responded to that, he mentioned Altona. I would like, at this point in time, to also include Steinbach in that, because I believe Steinbach is one that has been working on infrastructure with the province and with the Water Resources Branch for quite a number of years.

I found it quite interesting when the Member for Dauphin was questioning the Rural Development Minister about initiative and so forth. I would like to, at this point in time, congratulate the Minister that he has now allowed it possible for municipalities to be able to have a fund for basically a rainy day. I think that is a good name for that fund even, which the Member for Dauphin was referring to as a slush fund and so forth, at one point in time.

What I would like to point out is, Mr. Chairman, that in 1984, I believe it is, the Town of Steinbach applied to the Water Resources Board. At that time it was the NDP Government in power, and the Member for Dauphin puts on the record that the Water Services

Board used the Jobs Fund to help along different communities when they required infrastructure. It just caught my eye when I was reading Hansard that this was something that we were trying to get at that point in time and they would show no consideration whatsoever for the community of Steinbach.

I am very pleased at the present time that we are seeing, under this hopefully, what the Premier is referring to, a one-third and one-third and one-third. I think that is a very good formula. I would think that each community should have to contribute something of that nature and actually, in respect to the Town of Steinbach, we would even have been looking at a plan very favourably if it would have been 50-50, and the Member for Dauphin says something like 10 percent. Yes, that is true enough, the Member for Dauphin I think would just like to spend, spend, spend, which he did when he was in Government before. That is basically why at the present time the Government of the Day has problems with funding some of these projects because there is the high interest and so forth which they have to contend with today. That is because the previous administration was doing exactly what he would like to see happen—spend, spend, spend.

Once again, I just wanted to put that on the record that the Town of Steinbach is looking very favourable if a plan of this nature could come through, which would be one-third, one-third, one-third, and as a Member of this Legislature, I also think that the Minister, if he can get that through, which he has indicated that the municipalities can save for rainy days, I think that is another step forward in that direction, whereby communities can plan for the future, for the long-range future, and not always have to appear before possibly the Municipal Board in order to get some funding available. Thank you.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Chairman, I cannot help but respond to some of the things that the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) has stated here. Clearly as I said the last time, perhaps off the record to the Member -(interjection)- I said, off the record, that he is now, of course, not able to hear what I am saying, but he is from a community which is quite wealthy comparative to other communities in this province, there are many communities, many municipalities, that do not have the kind of tax base and the wealth that Steinbach has. That is well-known in this province.

So I do not think that his comments should be taken as typical comments for communities in this province. Clearly they are not. Steinbach is not. The Member for La Verendrye has very narrow vision of this issue. He does not seem to have explored the issues as they apply to other communities which are relatively much poorer and do not have the financial base to draw from what he has in his community. I think he should broaden his vision a bit, look wider, look beyond the one major community, or one of the major communities in his constituency, and understand the rest of the problem.

It is precisely because of that narrow vision that a person like him would be very dangerous in Government, because he is not taking a broad perspective and understanding those less fortunate

areas of our province, and not only looking from the perspective of a rather wealthy area of the province.

The other thing I believe is misstatement is I have not referred to a reserve as a slush fund. I have talked about the \$200 million fund that the Government is setting up as a slush fund in the past, and perhaps could be used as that if it is misused, but certainly I do not view the establishment of a reserve by communities as being a slush fund. I do not know where he got those references.

Another point I would like to say just in response to what he said is that I believe that 25 percent is a fair proportion to be contributed by the community. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) has said that if he does not have a third, 33 1/3 percent, of a major project that he will not have the commitment from the community. I said in that context I did not think 33 percent of the project was necessary to demonstrate commitment, particularly when it is going to be a rather onerous burden upon the local taxpayers. So I said 10 percent would show a commitment, 20 percent would show a commitment, but clearly my position is 25 percent is a reasonable amount for these communities to pay.

I think that the Government should look towards pushing the federal Government to a formula where the two senior levels of Government would supply perhaps 37 1/2 percent each which would be 75 percent and the remainder would come from the province. That would make a significant difference on a \$9 million project. We are talking \$500,000 to a million dollars difference in terms of what has to fall on the backs of the local taxpayers, and yet it would not be a tremendous amount of increase from the two senior levels of Government.

We will wait for what the Minister is able to table. The information we asked for last time which was the assessment base for those communities that are candidates for these major improvements in the infrastructure and what their borrowing is at the present time, to determine whether in fact there is a high level of debt which will make it almost prohibitive for those communities to enter into this agreement and actually successfully have the infrastructure constructed that they would like to have.

I would leave the Minister at this particular time if he has the information to provide it to the Member so that we can perhaps pursue that discussion a little further.

**Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development):** Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be able to respond at this time to some of the comments that were made by the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) in commenting on some of the things that were being said by the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz).

It is interesting to note that the discussions when we ended the Estimates debate here last week were on this very topic. I had indicated at that time that I would be willing to table the information that the Honourable Member for Dauphin had requested in regard to the affordability of communities to in fact put in place the



infrastructure that would be required such as sewage treatment facilities, water services, water treatment plants and the like.

There are some interesting numbers I suppose when you compare notes and when you look at the capital debt as a percentage of the equalized assessment of the various communities across the province. There is a wide range, and remember that communities are limited to borrowing to a limit of 30 percent of the equalized assessment.

\* (1520)

Some of the communities in the province approach very close to that number now, that amount, and therefore the Honourable Member is correct in saying that he questions whether some of the communities can in fact, or would in fact, be able to support large infrastructure expansion initiatives. It is, however, interesting to note that the very community that the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) lives in, and that he was referencing the other day, indicates clearly that it is that community, the community of Dauphin which has been very responsible, has managed their financial affairs very responsibly over the past number of years and therefore is one of the communities with one of the lower debt-to-assessment ratio. I think therefore there are some communities that would be able to afford if they had to, projects, fairly large projects in some instances such as a water treatment plant in Dauphin.

I would, for your information and for the information of the committee members present, table the information that we have. We have done a number of towns here and the numbers of some of the towns, the percentages of borrowing on some of these towns that you can make those comparisons.

The one town that we were discussing here a little while ago that is not on this list is the Town of Steinbach, but I am given to believe that the assessment vehicle as assessment there would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$22 million to \$23 million and that the debt load there would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20 percent to 25 percent, although I reserve that figure to be exact, and if you want that information we can provide that exact information if it is your wish.

The other item, Mr. Chairman, that is outstanding from when we adjourned last is the questions that the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) had left with us in regard—and he indicated I never answered them.

I want to say for the record that the first time the Members, the critics and myself met to discuss the 2.2 (b) of the assessment legislation was around the 13th of June. Both Members were present at that meeting. That is the only meeting that had been formally called to discuss at which all Parties could agree to attend to discuss Section 2.2 (b) and the Keewatin-Thompson case. I find it interesting that on June 19, the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) wrote a letter to myself indicating that consultations must be held with representatives of both municipal officials, Indian bands and umbrella organizations. In that same letter he said

that the federal Government must not be allowed to absolve itself of the responsibilities in this matter. He goes on to say, given the fact that the federal Government is Conservative and that you are part of a provincial Conservative Government, this should not be a problem, indicating in my view that there should be some discussions with the federal Government. Municipal bodies must not lose any revenues whatsoever. They have, do, and should receive.

Number four, Treaty rights must not be violated.

Number five, given the fact that you are in Government and the Minister responsible it is incumbent upon you to present us with your proposals, whether that might be in the form of amendments to the Act or agreements or a combination of both, or any other way you may wish to do it so that we may be in a position to advise you whether or not your proposals rectify this situation in a mutually accepted fashion. He says, I look forward to you following through on the above.

Let me say that I wrote a letter to the Honourable Member and he indicated that I had not responded personally to him. I wrote a letter on June 20 to him, and it says, further to our discussions, and I can for the record if you want me to, read this whole page into or this whole three page letter into the record. However, if it would satisfy the Members I would table all the documents and all the correspondence that has taken place between himself, the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), his Leader and my department and myself and also the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and his Leader, on this matter to clarify, once and for all, that communications in fact did take place, but I want to read to you the last line because he wanted to know how we would resolve this issue. The last paragraph in the letter that I wrote to him, and I suggested, accordingly it is my view that an amendment to the legislation is necessary to confer on all the municipalities outside of Winnipeg the same privileges that the Legislature conferred on Winnipeg relative to this issue in 1972.

The proposed amendment would read—and remember that the Honourable Member tabled a resolution in this House and I want those of you who know what that piece of legislation reads, I want you to listen to what I recommended—that lands held in trust, and we added three words to the current legislation “by the Crown” for any tribe or body of Indians would resolve this issue. I suggest to you that is the similar wording that he used in a proposal that he put forward. Let the record show that he or his Party have yet to agree to me drafting legislation that would resolve this issue, therefore, I take exception and offence to the procedure that the Honourable Member opposite has taken in this regard.

I want to read a few other items into the record. On July 3, I wrote another letter to the Honourable Member which simply says that on July 19, I received a letter from him which I believe does not warrant response at this time, as it appears as though my correspondence of June 20 and his correspondence of June 19 passed in the mail.

Now, I want to indicate to the House that there are two pieces of correspondence that are of interest to me. One is in a letter that Mr. Roch wrote to me on July 19 and he says here, on July 19, the Liberal Party and the Opposition say I await your introducing legislation to rectify this matter as soon as the Legislature convenes, this September, he says. In the meantime, I would strongly suggest that the Government of Manitoba intervene and assist with the City of Thompson's appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada so that their appeal may be fast tracked.

Two days later—and I think there was some passing of letters in the mail here too—I received a letter from his Leader, Mrs. Sharon Carstairs, which says, the Liberal Caucus believes it is essential that we have a legal opinion from the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa before you proceed. Two days later. Now, I ask the Members of this Assembly, what should I read into those letters? Should I believe the Leader of the Opposition and ask for that opinion from Ottawa and wait for that opinion? Well, I did exactly that.

We have the legal opinion, and we have the opinion from the Honourable Pierre Cadieux and it very clearly gives us his opinion of where the responsibilities lie. Instead of taking up a tremendous amount of time to read all this into the record, I would table, Mr. Chairman, for the Members here, that information for you, that it can be distributed and put into the record.

\* (1530)

I want to say before I sit down that the co-operation that we have received from Mr. Plohman and the New Democratic Party has been well received and has been very responsibly done.

**Mr. Plohman:** Well, Mr. Chairman, reverse psychology sometimes works and killing you with kindness sometimes works. I do want to thank the Minister for his statements about co-operation because that is not uncharacteristic of the New Democratic Party in Opposition, I have to say. As a matter of fact, if the Ministers consult their consciences and their souls they will know that is a fact because we are making minority Government work. If it was not for the way we are operating there would have been an election irresponsibly so some time ago. I think the Member should reflect on that before they laugh and guffaw about the statement that was made by the Minister as if it was uncharacteristic of us to be co-operative.

Let me just say, Mr. Chairman, on this issue, on a couple of issues, first of all, just to conclude the previous issue which was the one dealing with the municipal assessment and the borrowing levels. In getting this information from the Minister it does demonstrate that there are a couple of communities, namely Portage la Prairie and Winkler, which would find it very difficult to undertake any major improvements, and Brandon perhaps as well. In addition to that the formula that the Government is currently negotiating, namely one-third, one-third, one-third, would in fact result, if the project was to go ahead in Dauphin, in doubling of the debt. So it is a significant decision for them. We can understand, even though they have responsibly kept

their debt very low, obviously something has to suffer when you do that. That is, that there has been a deterioration in their water and sewer system over the years. It is getting old. In the Town of Dauphin there is a need to replace the water mains and the sewage system in the town. Of course it has deteriorated over those years, probably as a consequence of the low debt in this particular case.

So as a result of that they are going to have to undertake major improvements in the next while, but I believe we have to make that as possible for them to do so as can be developed by the senior levels of Government. Certainly they have not just the water treatment plant that they are going to incur. They have a number of other major expenditures that they will incur in the next number of years. That is why I do not want to see them burdened with a huge debt. It is not just Dauphin, and I say this particularly for the Member for La Verendrye's edification, that I am speaking about when I raised these questions.

As the Rural Development Critic, I am concerned about all of the communities that would be impacted by that agreement, not just by Dauphin. So therefore I speak from a broader base than the Member for La Verendrye who is talking about Steinbach. I am talking about all of the communities affected and I see here some serious problems for some of those communities with the formula that this Minister has negotiated.

I believe he should go back to his Cabinet colleagues as a result of this and say there are a number of communities that just will not be able to make this happen. We can negotiate all we want with the federal Government for a major water and sewer agreement under the southern development initiative, or whatever it may be called, but it is not going to wash with them because they are not going to be able to afford their one-third. We are not even going to allow them under the current formula that is there to undertake those projects. So it is rather ironic for us to say, here is two-thirds of the money, but that third that is necessary from the municipalities will not even be forthcoming because we will not allow it under the formula which says that 30 percent is the maximum debt that they can have of equalized assessment.

So what I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that the Government should take a very close look at this and of course treat all of those communities the same under an agreement, which means raising the formula of the provincial and federal Governments to, say, 37.5 percent each, which would result in 75 percent coming from the two senior levels of Government, and 25 percent being left for the municipal Government, and 35.5 percent is not that out of line considering the federal Government was willing to put up 50 percent previously in some agreements that we were negotiating. If they are willing to go 50 percent on an agreement, why would they not go 37.5 percent matched by the province on these particular projects, and therefore cut down the impact on these communities.

So I raise that as an issue that I seriously ask the Government to review and have the Premier review because he is going around the province saying that this 33-1/3 percent is absolutely necessary to show

commitment from these local communities. He is also saying that is the formula and I think before he does that he should realize that he is going to arbitrarily, through that formula, eliminate some communities from proceeding.

Now insofar as this other issue dealing with the Native taxation question and so far as it concerns lands that are off reserve, taxation by municipalities, I have seen this flip-flop in the Liberal position as well as the Minister and I, frankly, was quite surprised to see the Rural Development Critic coming forward with this amendment when all of the criteria that he listed in his June letter had not been met.

First of all, and the most important one for the New Democratic Party in this whole issue, is the one of consultation. I have not heard any evidence, although it is possible that the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) has consulted with the Native community about this issue and he has now received their okay to go forward with his amendment, I doubt it quite frankly. So I do not believe that he was consulted and I know that the Minister had not, at least he had not advised us and I thought he would have done the courtesy since he was already consulting with the opposition Parties that he would have advised the opposition Parties if he in fact had undertaken any consultation on this issue over the summer months with the Native groups.

So I would assume then that neither the Government nor the Liberal Party have undertaken any consultation with the Native groups as to the impact that this kind of an amendment would have on their position vis-a-vis Treaty and aboriginal rights and their position on this whole issue. I have a belief, and my colleagues have a belief that if there can be some mutual solution found to this issue, it is to everyone's benefit, including the municipalities, including the Government of Manitoba, including the Native groups. The reason I say that is because I believe that if they are not consulted this is going to be tied up in the courts for many, many years to come.

Perhaps that is the only way it will be resolved, but I think it is important for the Minister, it is incumbent upon the Minister to at least be able to say when he goes into the committee meetings on this issue that I talked to your leaders when representation comes forward and I advised them what we were planning to do. They told me what they thought about it and we had the discussion on it because if he does not have that to fall back on what of course they are going to be able to say is that you did not even talk to us. If there was someone taking away the Minister's rights at this particular time, if someone was going to push forward some legislation that would take away the Minister's rights here in this Chamber, just to take his rights away, and they would do it without talking to him at all. They would talk to everyone else in this House, but they would not talk to the Minister at all, but it was going to affect his rights. They talked to everyone else but they are not going to talk to him. I am sure he would be hopping mad that someone would have the nerve to take away or alter his rights, what they construe as his rights, or what he construes as his rights, without consulting with him.

\* (1540)

I think that is basic and that is why I say the Minister has a responsibility to do that, but what really surprised the New Democratic Party, of course, is that this Liberal Critic and the Liberal Caucus obviously have jumped ahead on this in an effort I guess to win support from municipalities, not realizing that they had not even had their own criteria dealt with that they had set out as minimum requirements before this issue should be pursued.- (interjection)-

Well, I do not have any problem with my nose growing here, the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) is saying. Clearly that is what the Member for Springfield said and maybe he does not want that pointed out. I am not trying to ridicule him personally, I am just saying the Member has not thought this through before he brought that amendment in, in that rush to do so.

So when we met with the municipalities, with representatives of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, we said to them, no, we are not going to agree at this point in the backrooms here to the precise wording that the Member for Springfield has brought in or the wording that the Government said they were going to bring in—because they said they were going to bring in that precise wording—we are not going to do that until we have had time to hear from all of the presenters. Then we will decide whether we are going to approve that wording as it is or whether we want to in fact move an additional amendment, for example, an amendment that might protect the rights of the Native people insofar as the Constitution Act of 1867 or any other negotiations they might undertake for the federal Government at constitutional conferences in the future.

It should not hurt anyone in this House if we were to put such an amendment forward, because in fact what it would do is it would show the Native people that we respect that they have some territory, some rights, that are not completely fleshed out and defined yet and there will be more discussions at various conferences in the future. There is The Constitution Act. It maybe has not been challenged insofar as off-reserve lands, insofar as whether they are deemed to be Indian lands under The Constitution Act of 1867. Since that is unclear, there are some questions there, we do not want to jeopardize their position with the federal Government as to that. Maybe we should be looking at some type of amendment that would ensure that there is no erosion of their position insofar as that is concerned.

At the same time we could move forward with an amendment that would ensure that municipalities were not out financially as a result of this ambiguity and this contention and this current situation that exists with the Act. That is something that we will be considering as we move forward into committee on this issue. Those things have not been dealt with yet. That is why I am surprised that the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) brought forward his amendment at this time.

I do think the Minister should be giving us, and I ask the Minister now if he can give us, a timetable. I understood from the article on the weekend in the press

and from statements that he has made in the House that he is planning on bringing in amendments to The Municipal Assessment Act, all-encompassing amendments that would deal with the assessment question. I say that with quotation marks, the huge assessment question that has been hanging over the heads of the property owners of this province now for some years as the department and the Government have readied themselves to deal with this issue through automation of their systems and so on, whether he is now going to be in a position to bring that or when he intends to bring it forward.

Does he intend to have the Legislature consider it in its entirety at this Session, say before Christmas, or does he intend to just bring it and table it and then take it out and have consultations perhaps in the form of a White Paper, or whatever? If that was the case then this issue would not be dealt with and perhaps then the Member for Springfield's Bill would be in order. If he is going to cover that same subject area in his Bill, as he has indicated, then clearly the amendments that the Liberal Party has brought in are out of order and cannot be considered by this Legislature. I think that has to be clarified and I have not heard that issue addressed by the Minister yet.

**Mr. Penner:** It is my pleasure to respond to the Honourable Member. First of all, the first issue that he raises is suggesting that we should have met with all groups, all interested concerns. I have continually said throughout this process that I am quite willing to sit down with any organization or individuals that would like to discuss this matter with me. I have indicated to your Leader, the Honourable Gary Doer, that if he wanted to take it upon himself to arrange for a meeting between the Keewatin Tribal Council and myself, I would be quite receptive to that meeting. I have yet to hear whether your Leader has been able to arrange for a meeting between the Keewatin Tribal Council or not. I am looking forward to that meeting if in fact it can be arranged.

I want to say to you, that the Dakota-Ojibway Organization is coming in this Thursday and I will discuss this very matter with them specifically on this. It was at their request that we meet on this matter. It is the first Native organization that has requested a meeting on this matter directly to our office.

As far as introducing the legislation, I am on record publicly, on a number of occasions during the course of meetings that were held by the UMM, that indicated as soon as the legislation was ready that I would be willing and prepared to introduce it. That still stands. The legislation is not quite ready. When it is ready and we are able to, we will introduce that legislation. What that time period will be exactly is still in question.

**Mr. Plohman:** I just want to make a couple of more points with the Minister on this, and this is that I believe what he is undertaking, the initiative to make changes to legislation that affects certain people, that it is incumbent upon him to initiate the discussions. If people refuse to talk with him, naturally he cannot do much more about it but this is what we believe has been missing, the initiative on the part of the Minister.

The second thing just briefly is that the Minister has again said he will be coming forward with the legislation and it is just a matter of when it is ready. Am I to assume, without him breaching any of his responsibilities as Minister, that he is going to deal in that large Bill with all of the assessment questions that he wants to have addressed by this House? Is he saying to us specifically that he is going to deal with this particular issue in that Bill, or is he going to now leave it out because there is another Bill dealing with it? Does he intend to deal with it as he has outlined in his letters he has brought forward, that he sent to us, on this issue?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I have again said on a number of occasions that there are a number of ways that you could deal with Section 2(2)(b) of the assessment Act. I would also indicate that the reference I made to how to deal with it specifically in one small Bill amendment was something similar to what the Liberals have now introduced.

I still say that we are contemplating, at some point in time, introducing assessment reform legislation; 2(2)(b) being part of the assessment reform or part of assessment legislation could very well be dealt with at that same time. Again I say that if and when the assessment reform legislation will be finalized then we will introduce that legislation.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Plohman:** A clarification to follow through here—the Minister is being somewhat circuitous in his answers. It seems now he is revealing that the assessment reform package he will bring in will not include this issue because it has already been included in a Bill that the Liberals have brought forward here. I would like the Minister to indicate specifically whether that is his intention at this present time.

Secondly, does he see this reform legislation coming forward this Session, to be passed this Session, or does he see another type of approach or strategy developing on that legislation? If the answer to the first question is no, that he will be bringing in something in this overall package to remedy this question of the Native rights insofar as taxation of land is concerned off reserve, if he is going to deal with that then obviously that package would have to be passed this Session, unless he is intending to delay that for further years. Of course the municipalities would be very upset with that side of it.

So I would like to know from the Minister specifically if he is going to deal with this issue now through the Liberal Bill, or whether in fact he intends to bring in another one. Does he intend to have that passed this legislation? Is he going to ask us to pass it this sitting?

**Mr. Penner:** First of all, it is my understanding, and I say to the Honourable Member from Dauphin that he has been here longer than I have, so being a relative newcomer there are some things that I do not know and I guess we will learn as we go along. However, it would be my view that when you introduce a reform

legislation that it would be a new piece of legislation. Therefore, all the old legislation and the assessment Act would be repealed. So for that matter it would be dealt with in one fell swoop.

I would also say to you that it is my understanding, again as a new Member, that if and when a Bill comes before this Assembly that there is another process. It has to go to committee and anybody in this province can appear before that committee and make their views known.

I would think that there might be organizations that would welcome the opportunity to appear before the committee and voice their opinions on the legislation. Of course, as I said before, when that will happen will be largely determined in our ability to be able to get the Bill written as we would like to see it written and presented to this legislation. It will also depend in large part on the co-operation from the opposition Parties, Mr. Chairman, as to how willing they are to proceed with that legislation when we introduce it.

**Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield):** Mr. Chairman, it is interesting that when we left this item on October 12 the Minister, when I asked him and I will quote specifically from Hansard—it says, I asked whether “the Minister will tell us whether or not he will be prepared to support Bill No. 37, whether the Government is prepared to let Bill No. 37 go through as soon as possible,” but the Minister did not respond. He said—I am quoting from Hansard: “Mr. Penner: Mr. Acting Chairman, I would first of all like to ask whether we are dealing with 141 as the Acting Chairman had indicated, and had asked whether we in fact were in favour of passing page 141 of the Estimates? So I am wondering whether we are dealing with that.” The following day, during Question Period, again when the Minister was asked whether he would support Bill 37, he evaded the question, he would not respond, and all of a sudden today he decides to bring it up again. He tables documents and I have to say that this is the first time that I have seen a copy of this letter. I have an identical one, a copy of I assume that was sent to his colleague, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), dated June 20. Upon reviewing the letter, of course I noted there is a stamp on this one addressed to myself which says, “Received, Minister of Municipal Affairs.” So I guess he sent it to himself and he stamped it “Received” and he kept it. I do not know, because all I have is a copy of a letter sent to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and it reads, word for word, similar to the letter which he just tabled which apparently was meant for me but which he sent to himself.

In any case, the fact still remains that the Minister—and I have to correct some erroneous information. Part of that was the fact that he claims he sent me a letter, which he never did, and I am sure he did intend to not say anything untrue. What I have tabled is not a resolution but a Bill, a Bill which will rectify the situation if the two other Parties are willing to support it. I find it interesting that the Member for Dauphin says he was surprised by what happened.

Mr. Chairman, let me just state that, as the Minister has indicated, several letters were exchanged. There

was a lot of, to and from, from his office to the Leader of the Opposition’s (Mrs. Carstairs) office, the Leader of the third Party’s (Mr. Doer) office, but still it appeared that the Minister was unwilling to take any action by himself. He was just totally—I do not know if he was scared or what, but he kept throwing it back into the Opposition’s lap. So he wanted something in writing from us but was unwilling to propose a Bill himself. Therefore, we took it upon ourselves to introduce such a Bill, and the Minister has still not stated whether he will support that Bill, has not stated, has refused, has evaded the question. When I asked him last October 12 and October 13, he just completely evaded it and now he brings it up again.

The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the Member for Rhineland (Mr. Penner) both say, well, the criteria that was set out. Our Native Affairs critic has consulted with the Native groups, but that was not the issue in point. The issue was, would the Government do so and get legal opinions? He mentions he has received opinions, various legal opinions, including the federal Government. Well, all he received from the federal Government, Mr. Chairman, was a letter from the Honourable Pierre Cadieux, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It may or may not be in the package which he tabled, I did not notice it, but I will read it into the record.

It says: “Dear Mr. Penner: I am replying to your letter of July 24, 1989, on the subject of a proposed amendment to The Manitoba Municipal Assessment Act. Simply stated, the interest of an Indian or a Band of Indians in reserve, or surrendered lands, is not taxable anywhere in Canada because of Section 87 of the Indian Act. Similarly, off reserve in Manitoba “land held in trust for any tribe or body of Indians” is not taxable because of Section 2(2)(b) of The Municipal Assessment Act. It is my understanding that the treaties applicable in Manitoba, Nos. 1 to 5, make no reference to taxation or the exemption to taxation. I think it would be inappropriate for me to venture an opinion as to whether or how such proposed provincial legislation relates to treaties.

Therefore, he received no opinion from his colleague, the federal Conservative Minister of Northern and Indian Affairs. So again, I am sure it was not the Minister’s intention to put erroneous information on the record. Therefore, I am simply correcting it for his behalf.—(interjection)—

The Minister says from his seat, he tabled a letter. Therefore, he contradicts himself. On one hand he says he received an opinion and yet the letter clearly states from the federal Minister that there is no opinion. Gosh, a Tory is a Tory.

Mr. Chairman, we can keep on with this issue if the Minister so desires or we can do it on No. 4. What I would like to get from this Minister, given the fact that although we think we have a minority situation, in fact we have a caucus of 36 here. There is a majority situation. We can see the complimentary statements which are exchanged between the Minister and the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). There is no such thing as a minority Government. It is a coalition Government.

\* (1600)

I will once again ask for the third time, or the third different occasion, will this Minister support Bill No. 37 and allow it to pass through as speedily as possible?

**Mr. Chairman:** Before I recognize any Members further, I would remind all Members that I am allowing considerable latitude on this subject. I think we should get back on track.

The matter under discussion is item 2, which deals with the Municipal Board. I would appreciate very much if the Honourable Members would dwell on this particular item.

**Mr. Roch:** Obviously, the Minister did not get up, he does not want to answer the question. All I am pointing out, Mr. Chairman, and I respect your ruling and your guidance, this is what was done last October 12 and I was on record saying that I was willing to pass on. The Minister today brought up the issue again. He brings it up sort of, but then again he evades the question. He is doing one heck of a skating on this issue. Never have I seen anyone so firmly on the fence as he is. I would like him to say today, will he or will he not support this Bill? Has he the courage to give an answer, yes or no?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, in my view it is simply not for me to say yes or no because I do not know. I am not even sure whether we are going to be debating or whether Bill 37 will be proceeded with. So for that reason it would be irresponsible of me to stand here and say yes or no to a question that is again very hypothetical.

I respect the Honourable Member for Springfield's (Mr. Roch) wishes for me to stand here in support of something that he has that basically my department wrote for him, that he has convinced somebody in his Party to allow him to take forward when at the same time his Leader said, do not proceed with this Legislation until you have an opinion from Ottawa, a legal opinion. He has the gall to put something like this forward for consideration of this House against the wishes of his Leader?

Now he wants me to respond, yes or no. Well I say to you that the question got the same answer that the question really deserved. It is simply a non-answer because I do not believe it is worthy of an answer.

**Mr. Plohman:** To get back to line 2.(a), I believe we are dealing with line 2.(a), page 144. I just wanted to ask in response to this information that was tabled by the Minister as to the assessments, whether he also has the same information for all of the municipalities in Manitoba as a group. In other words, I do not want every community broken down this way, but I asked for the global information. In other words, what is the global assessment and debt just to get a comparison to the average. I would like to have that and with that I would be prepared to move on to further lines in the Estimates.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, we will be pleased to get that information for you on that, on an average global basis.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 2.(a)—pass; 2.(b) pass.

Resolution No. 124: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$353,800 for Rural Development, the Municipal Board for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990.

Item 3 on page 145, Municipal Advisory and Financial Services. Shall the item pass—the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch).

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, last year the then Minister of Municipal Affairs said, and I quote from a Hansard of Tuesday, November 29, 1988, "In the coming year we may have to take a serious look at the Municipal Act because it may very well be that it is not in sync with The Freedom of Information Act. It would appear that presently we have a problem that The Municipal Act allows information to be held in confidence that perhaps might need to be amended in the future."

To the best of my knowledge, there has not been anything done yet to bring this about, and according to my information no plans have been formulated to comply with the intentions stated by the former Minister of Municipal Affairs. If I am wrong I would be happy to be told that it otherwise is happening and if indeed I am correct I would like to know what is happening or why has there not been any action in this area.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, it is certainly our intent to change the legislation but not without consultation and discussion with those who would be affected by it.

**Mr. Roch:** So if I understand correctly then, the status is the same now as it was on November 29, 1988. I guess we did not expect to have both Acts into sync, to quote the former Minister.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I indicated in my opening remarks when we entered into this protest that I was contemplating looking at revising portions of The Municipal Act and that still stands. There are a number of areas that need some revision and we intend to carry on with that as soon as time allows.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister whether there are any changes with regard to policies affecting local government districts and their status. Is there any review being undertaken by the Government or any consideration to look at changing the status of any LGDs to municipal status right now?

**Mr. Penner:** No, not at this time. I have not been given any reason why there should be a status change.

**Mr. Plohman:** There has been some discussion in the past, and it has come from various sources insofar as the relative wealth of the LGDs. Some of them are obviously relatively very poor in terms of their tax base, and others are quite wealthy compared to some municipalities.

Obviously, municipalities get a lot less service than the LGDs in terms of funding from the province. So I just asked the Minister whether there was any consideration, and he obviously is not looking at that

issue at the present time, either unilaterally or in conjunction with the LGDs.

How many staff and resident administrators are there in the province under this SY contingent here? Is this part of their salaries—the administrators—and how many are there?

**Mr. Penner:** There are nine resident administrators.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 3.(a)—pass; 3.(b)—pass.

Item 3.(c)—the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. Plohan:** I am not certain which line some of these fall into, but I want to ask about the issues of withholding school taxes. I believe the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet was involved in an action to withhold school taxes from school divisions and not collect it from their property taxpayers.

I would like a report from the Minister on the status of that issue. I ask him whether there is a resolution of that issue and also whether any other municipalities are involved in that activity?

I know, for example, that the R.M. of Ethelbert, for example, a number of years ago was actually withholding funding from the school division that was coming to them.

\* (1610)

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, this is one of the first meetings that we had when I became Minister of Rural Development. It was with the Council at Lac du Bonnet and they put their concerns before me. We discussed it at that time, and basically I think that matter has been resolved in Lac du Bonnet. We have not heard from them since then.

We have had since that time also discussions with the MAUM organization in this regard. They of course have had some concerns, which they have expressed on an ongoing basis I guess for a number of years. Basically, I think we are satisfied now that in a large part their concerns have been or will be addressed in the near future.

**Mr. Plohan:** Mr. Chairman, I think it is worth it, and the Minister would at least give some specifics as to what their concerns were and how he resolved them in this magical meeting, because they undertook some fairly drastic action. He said he had one meeting with them as soon as he got into his responsibilities and it is resolved. I would like to know what they brought forward and what action he was able to take on their behalf to resolve it.

**Mr. Penner:** I guess this is one time I am not going to make the statement that my Deputy says I might want to make, although I believe it entirely true. He said maybe I should indicate to you that part of the answer might be that it was my trusting face and my ability to discuss very openly issues such as this. I am sure (interjection) but really the issues they had and the concerns they expressed at that time were that

they were in large part being the collection agency for the school division and in large part being blamed for the amounts of money that were required by school division to finance the operation of the school board and the schools. It is those concerns that were expressed.

We indicated that we would attempt to deal with this matter on an ongoing basis and it would not be resolved very quickly, but give us some time to try and come to some point whereby it would be acceptable to both school boards and the municipal councils or the municipal organizations to work very co-operatively in this whole matter. I believe that they have given us that mandate to work out some solution for that. I am not in a position to indicate what part of that solution might be, but I think we have come a long way in trying to resolve this matter of concern. One of the problems I suppose that they have had over the past years is indicating that they believe that they incur an expense in the collection of these taxes and so again they would like some resolve too, those expenses being carried by the municipality.

**Mr. Plohan:** Obviously the faith and trust that the municipality has in the Minister will wear thin with the passage of time if no solution is forthcoming. What the Minister is saying is that they have given him an opportunity to resolve the issue to everyone's satisfaction.

Can the Minister indicate very quickly then what kind of actions he is contemplating to eliminate this difficulty that exists between the municipalities and the school divisions insofar as the collection of the taxes and submitting the money to the school divisions? Clearly that issue has arisen over the years because the school divisions, while elected and made up of elected officials, are not accountable directly to the level of taxation that is a consequence of their programs. That has frustrated municipal councils in the past.

There is a difficulty there that the municipal councils have really no say in the budget-making process for the school divisions, yet they have to collect the money on their behalf. They feel that they should not have to take the flak for the programs that are undertaken by the school division and the trustees. How does the Minister intend to resolve this, through some communications process with the public, some reporting mechanism that would show more clearly the impact of the school trustees' decisions on the tax levels, or what is it that he is proposing? He says he has come a long way so I do not know where he has come and where he is going.

**Mr. Penner:** I suppose when one would remove the total tax collectable then of course you resolve the problem. I think we have come a long way in resolving the problem that they had insofar as we are now removing 35 percent of the ESL that school boards or that municipalities were required to collect. That 35 percent they do not have to collect anymore.

As we move along there might well be reason to believe that some day this whole problem will be solved and therefore I say give us a bit of time. I have said

this to municipalities, give us a bit of time, that maybe within the not too distant future we can resolve the concerns that they have had. I am simply not going to stand here and indicate during the process of the Estimates debate what other options there might be to address their concern.

**Mr. Plohman:** I take that, Mr. Chairman, from the Minister, from his answer, that he believes the assessment to reform process may lead to some resolution of this issue in terms of removing or decreasing the emphasis of property taxation in this country for the funding of education. If that was the ultimate result of the assessment reform, naturally that would eliminate that problem. So I would assume, and the Minister can correct me whether that is the process that he is talking about, that he has come a long way and that he hopes this will address this issue rather conclusively.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask him then—secondly, he mentions the 35 percent, is he talking about the Farm Land Rebate Program, the School Tax Rebate Program? He shakes his head in the affirmative, so I understand that is the program he is talking about. Now we have had some discussion in this Legislature before about that, and the fact is there was a program in place before which put more money into the hands of the farm communities, the farmers out there, resident farmers, farm operators, than the present program is doing.

So I do not think there has been a major change that the Minister can point to if he wants to be completely fair with this Legislature and completely open as a result of his Government coming into office. As a matter of fact, what his program has done is provided a lot of this assistance to absentee landowners who are not farming in the communities, in the municipalities, but in fact own the land and may live anywhere else. Some of them are large landowners, lawyers fronting for syndicates and so on, that own property. In fact, they are collecting a large part of this rebate program.

(Mrs. Gwen Charles, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

\* (1620)

So what we have then is that the local farmers are in fact paying somewhat more, 90 percent of them are, 95 percent. I did a survey in the R.M. of Dauphin and the R.M. of Mossey River, two rural municipalities in my constituency, and I found from the information that we gathered from the municipal offices that in fact well over 95 percent of the farmers were getting less of a rebate under this Government's program than under our previous program which put a cap at \$500, as opposed to a percentage.

I do not know if the Minister is aware of that and would agree that is a fact that most operators, farm operators, were getting more under our program than under his Government's program. Therefore that is a non-reason to say he has made progress on this issue at the R.M. of Lac du Bonnet, because there has been no major positive impact because of his 35 percent, which was 25 percent the year previous. There has

been no positive impact so how can that be used as something that has kind of alleviated the tensions and pressures between the municipalities and the school divisions? In fact, that is not an answer. If he is saying the assessment reform process is where he feels this will be dealt with, then I accept that and we will of course wait for that legislation to be introduced in this House.

**Mr. Penner:** Madam Acting Chairperson, it is certainly a pleasure to have you in the Chair at this time. Maybe the order that is required in this Chamber from time to time would be better addressed by yourself than it has been in some other areas. I welcome you to the Chair.

In response to the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), as far as questioning the impact of the 35 percent rebate, I find it rather interesting that he would say that there had been no impact to the farm community. Fifteen million dollars, or \$15.5 million is a lot of money to the farm community. He would have to answer to some young farmers in rural Manitoba who have either leased land or are operating owned land, those kind of things, that would indicate very clearly, and they would indicate to him very clearly that they are quite pleased with the program that we had initiated and so are most farmers in the province, very pleased, with the 35 percent rebate of education support levies that we are making at this time.

Those farmers who are leasing land, in a large part, negotiate their leases annually or whenever they come up for renewal. I would suggest to the Honourable Member that those farmers drive a fairly hard bargain when it comes to paying out leases or negotiating leases.

I would suggest that the reduction in farm land taxes by the Provincial Government to landowners will be part of the negotiating process to bring down the percentages of leases in this province and most part. I believe that has in fact proven to be the case in at least in the part of the country that I come from, and I would suspect that would rather hold true in the rest of agriculture Manitoba.

I want to leave no false impression in this Chamber as to what we might or might not do. I said previously that I was quite satisfied with the discussions that we had had with those municipal people who were concerned about the collection of education taxes by municipalities. I believe that discussions will, in the final analysis, lead to a result.

**Mr. Plohman:** I just wanted to refer back to what the Minister said because he has chosen to distort what I said about the Farm School Tax Rebate Program which was instituted by our Government in 1987 first, and resulted in some \$9 million or \$10 million going back to the farm operators in this province. That money went to the operators if they were leasing or whatever the case may be; if they were farming the land, they received the benefits.

Under the current Government's program, the rebate goes to the owners of the land whether they farm it



or not. It is not necessarily passed on to the operators who might be leasing or renting the land, and in many cases it goes out-of-province. As a matter of fact, a significant amount of the additional money that is put in by this Government, and the Minister shakes his head and I hope that he will find out, he will endeavour, and I will ask him to provide us with those figures, and I would ask him to ask his staff for the next sitting, whether he can provide us with the figures as to the amount of money that is being sent out of this province to absentee landowners as a result of the rebate policies that this Government has put in place. He talks about \$15 million in benefits. How much of that is going out of province? That is what I would like to know and I am asking the Minister for that information.

Secondly, I want to point out that since we had a program of \$9 million or \$10 million increased to some \$12 million I believe the first year, and the current Government had a 25 per cent cap, now up to 35 per cent and increasing, the Minister seems to indicate, to \$15 million, it demonstrates that the impact was not as significant as he led to believe when he mentioned it as a factor in resolving this issue because there was already a benefit there when he took office, before he became Minister of course, but before his predecessor became Minister, of some \$10 million to the farmers of Manitoba.

So the difference is the incremental difference between \$12 million and \$10 million perhaps, if \$12 million flowed last year, and perhaps it was less than that. But the point is, a lot of that went out of province, so in fact, there was no more benefit to the farm operators in this province under his program than under the previous program. As a matter of fact, there was actually less to the vast majority because money was not flowing out under our program, out of the province, and under his program, it is.

I think that the Minister should not overstate that as a factor. In fact, there are many farmers who think that this is not as good a program, not as fair a program that this Government has in place for rebate of school taxes, as opposed to putting a dollar figure.

**Mr. Penner:** Well, Madam Acting Chair, it is obvious that the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and I could stand here virtually all afternoon and maybe even the better part of the week and debate the merits of paying out or rebating school taxes on a percentage basis or lump sum as they did or whether you would actually pay it directly to owners, or/and operators. We could debate what the potential assumed benefit might be over the long-term to the actual operators. It is my view that in fact the contracts for leases being negotiated by operators presently would reflect that reduction in school taxes, at least by the operators that I have talked to over the last while, in negotiations that they have had with their landlords in negotiating new contracts for the upcoming years.

I would want to say to the Honourable Member that I would hope that he would concur that the benefits accrued to those that are children of deceased farmers that now own land should be recognized as rightful Manitobans paying education tax on farm land. If he

is saying to those people, we do not want to recognize you as Manitobans, be that as it may. I would hope that he would recognize that widows that own farm land would be able to get the benefit of a rebate which would accrue to that farm land. Pensioners, we have many, many farmers today, or landowners, that are not able to sell the land that they owned and have farmed for 70 or in some cases up to 80 years, at a level that they would want to, that they are able to properly retire and therefore lease their land to some operator, hang on to it in hope that the economic situation in this province will regenerate itself and others will be able to buy their land and they will be able to retire in comfort.

I ask the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) whether he in fact is telling the people of Manitoba now that those people, just because they farmed all their life and have retired, should not be considered as legal Manitobans and landowners, and therefore have a relief on the education portion of the tax that they are paying to the province of Manitoba, when in fact we do recognize those that are operating.

I say to the Honourable Member that I think it needs to be recognized that the ability of those farmers that operate, and they are mostly the younger farmers, should not be underestimated to negotiate a contract that will include a portion of the taxes that have been rebated. Therefore the benefit I would surmise is accrued to the actual farmers of this province, not as the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says, that most of the money leaves this province. It is simply not the case. I would be willing to discuss with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), under whose portfolio this very item that we are discussing in the Rural Development Estimates actually falls, and I would hope that he having just left the Estimates process that he might have raised this very issue with the Minister of Agriculture because it is really through his departmental Estimates that this item should have been discussed and debated. I would hope that he would have raised that very issue with him.

**Mr. Plohman:** I just raised this issue at this particular time because the Minister raised it in the context of an answer that he gave me on this issue at Lac du Bonnet when I questioned him about it. That is how we got on to this discussion. Maybe he could reflect on what issues he raises and if he raises them he must expect a rebuttal.

Let me just say though in concluding this issue I know we will disagree on the philosophy of this particular rebate. Clearly we have not taken the position that pensioners are not legitimate Manitobans or whatever he wants to call them. Obviously, they have in many cases lived many years in this province and contributed a great deal. That is not the point. We are viewing this issue as an assistance for farmers, for farm operators, not a break necessarily on school tax assistance.

\* (1630)

That is another issue. That is one that the Government has to deal with if they want to decrease school taxes for pensioners and for various people. There is a way

that they can do that. This was an assistance program for farmers, for farm operators, and that is why we gave it directly to farm operators, so that they would have the benefits of reduced costs in their operations, which is so critical to surviving. We do not want to see the benefits just trickle down to them which in many cases are diluted then. They do not get the full benefit. We want to see the benefit going directly to them and that is why we have taken that position.

I want to take issue with one thing the Minister said in his talks about hoping that the economics situation will regenerate itself in rural areas. I hope that this Minister as Minister of Rural Economic Development is not going to live on hope insofar as his responsibilities here. We will discuss more under rural economic development that issue. Frankly, if he is working on hope, he is not going to get too far. He has to have much more than that. He has to have concrete programs to assist the rural areas of this province with economic development so there will be those jobs, so there will be that activity, so there will be young farmers operating and so the price of land will increase perhaps and they will not lose their investments there.

The fact is, as long as this Minister allows his federal counterparts to abandon the rural areas of this province and without putting in place economic development programs, and he does not see that as his responsibility, then we are not going to get any action and things are not going to get any better for those people in rural areas. I would hope, and I look forward to discussing meaningful rural economic development programs and initiatives that this Minister is taking that will turn this around in rural areas.

**The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Charles):** 3.(c)—pass; 3.(d)—pass; 3.(e)—pass.

3.(f)—the Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** According to page 42 in the Supplementary Estimates, it says there under the activity identification, the grant formula is currently under review. Can the Minister bring us up to date on the status of this review?

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

**Mr. Penner:** I have just received the report on the committee that was established to study this whole area of policing service and police service grants and the contributions that various sectors in Manitoba contribute to the operation of the police forces. I just received it last night and I have not had the opportunity to take a look at it. If I read your question correctly, as soon as I have read the report I would be willing to share the information in the report with opposition Members if that is their wish, and discuss the contents of that report.

**Mr. Roch:** If I understood correctly, you received the report last night. Last year the Minister said he would have the report by spring at the latest. I guess it is a late spring, but in any case, once the Minister has read the report, which I assume he will do in the next few days, will he be tabling that report for all Members of this House?

**Mr. Penner:** I am not quite sure what the normal process is, Mr. Chairman. It is my intent to circulate the report to all municipalities. As you know, the - (interjection)- I could tell you a little story about the two ants and I know that you know that Gerry Forrest is quite a good golfer.

I know that Gerry Forrest and a friend of his went out golfing one day and they made a little bet as to who would have the longest drive. Gerry of course swung his club and hit the ball and it just went right down the fairway. It was one of the longest drives he had ever had. When they walked up and looked at the ball, they found that it was lying on top of a little anthill. Gerry said, see, to his friend, he said, teed up and everything. He took a swipe at this ball and there was ants and dirt flying all over the sky and the ball was still lying on top of the anthill. He swung again and the second time the same thing, ants and dirt flying all over the sky and the ball was still lying on top of the anthill. There were two little ants down at the bottom of the tunnel. They looked and they observed all this commotion going on up there and they saw the devastation that was taking place and all their friends dying and flying in the sky and one of the ants turned to the other one and said, you know, if we want to survive this barrage on our home, we had better get on the ball.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that if we want to survive this barrage and this onslaught and if we want to get through these Estimates maybe we also better get on the ball. However, getting back to whether we will in fact table the report in this House, it is my intention to table the report that was done or the study that was done by the committee that studies and circulated to the municipalities and towns that are involved. It is then my intention to table for the review of this House, that report. I think it can be very public, that document.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, I believe, and I can be corrected if I am wrong, but I believe it is normal procedure for the Members of this Legislature to get this report prior to it being distributed publicly.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I might concur with the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohan) that I have not seen anything normal in procedure or otherwise in this place and it would lead me to believe that anything, virtually anybody considers doing might be acceptable and normal in this place. But it is certainly my intention to share the information of the report with Members in this Chamber that we can properly address the concerns that have been expressed throughout rural Manitoba in addressing and putting some equity into the sharing of police costs.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, I take it from the answer that we should be receiving a copy of that report shortly.

There are several areas which are not receiving proper police services, either due to cutbacks or due to lack of staff increases for those areas which are experiencing growth. Is this problem currently being addressed?

**Mr. Penner:** I believe that what you are referring to is probably in regard to the RCMP costs, and I would

suggest that when the Attorney General or the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) comes up before Estimates that you might want to discuss that with him.

\* (1640)

**Mr. Plohman:** Yes, just one comment. We have heard a lot of concerns from municipalities on the policing costs and the need to reduce these costs and it is going to be a major challenge for this Government to deal with. We in the New Democratic Party are certainly wanting to see that report very soon and I just want to support the request that was made by the Liberal Critic that we would like to get that report very quickly so that we can undertake some discussions as well and get some reaction. I know the Minister will be doing that formally but we will all be out wanting to understand what is in that report and what the avenues and options are.

Certainly in 1980, '81 when the previous Conservative Government negotiated this agreement with the federal Government for policing costs with its escalating clause in it which has resulted in, I believe, doubling costs of RCMP policing in this province over the last nine- or ten-year period, we believe that the Government at the time really got taken by the federal Liberal Government at the time in the negotiations. We hope that with the discussions that this Government will be undertaking with the federal Government that we can now see some reversal of what happened there, because now at 70 percent it is an enormous burden to the municipalities to maintain this policing cost.

It may be that the Minister will want to review whether in fact the rural municipalities should be paying a greater share, as opposed to the towns and villages, and that is something he is going to have to deal with as he knows we did institute, I believe, a half mill assessment to the rural municipalities which was not a great deal but it got the principle established. Now it is a question of whether the Minister is going to be willing to pursue that further or whether the burden will stay on the backs of the towns and villages as opposed to the municipalities. It is a hot potato and one that the Minister will obviously want to deal with in the months ahead and we will be questioning him on it as well.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I concur with the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) that it is not going to be an easy task to address the policing costs in rural Manitoba. I guess that is why the previous Minister in his wisdom decided to put in place a committee made up of the Union of Municipalities representative, as well as MAUM representatives and others that would address this situation.

So I sympathize with the previous Minister. I believe it was under your administration when the committee was established, if I am correct, although I am not sure of that. I would have to check the records on that. It was done very close to the end of your administration's term and us taking over. I am not quite sure when that actually did take place.

However, it is quite a monumental task to undertake and I look forward to reading the report and seeing

what in fact the organizations in their wisdom were able to come up with as a solution to some of the problems in this matter. If we can address some of those inequities that were presumed to be there, then it is certainly our intent to do so.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 3.(f)—pass.

Item 3.(g)—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister what type of assistance does he plan to make available to municipal bodies for infrastructure improvements. I am referring specifically to projects like lagoons, streets, sewers, water, et cetera. As you are well aware, the whole rural infrastructure of many of our small towns and villages is not quite up to par and they are desperately in need of assistance in some areas.

**Mr. Penner:** I could not agree with you more, Mr. Chairman, that there certainly is a need in many of the parts in Manitoba to assist communities with the establishment of good water sources, good sewer sources, infrastructure development and the likes. We had last year, I guess when we took over the Water Services Board, a certain amount that was budgeted through the Department of Agriculture to Water Services and with the drought situation that we incurred the year before, and the tremendous need that was identified in supplying, especially water to many parts of Manitoba, it was deemed necessary to add to that budgeted amount \$1.1 million this year to help provide those communities in the greatest need to put in place that kind of infrastructure.

So that is I believe something that we as a Government have indicated all along that we want to address those needs in those areas most severely affected by either shortages of water, shortage of groundwater supplies, and other, and make sure that the infrastructure is there to enhance and encourage good, sound economic development in the rural parts of Manitoba.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, just for clarification, did the Minister say \$1.1 million? Another area which I would like to—if I understand correctly, that \$1.1 million is earmarked specifically for infrastructure as deemed necessary by the various municipal bodies. Am I correct?

**Mr. Penner:** To be very specific and very clear, the \$1.1 million was added to the budget of the Water Services Board to provide water to those areas in greatest need caused by the drought. So that is really what the additional \$1.1 million was in addition to the budgeted amount that was already there.

**Mr. Roch:** So if I understand correctly then, there is no specific amount earmarked, or no specific amount designated especially for the improvements of infrastructure over and above what is already generally budgeted for?

**An Honourable Member:** Not with this section.

**Mr. Roch:** Maybe I am in the wrong section.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I am not sure whether the Honourable Members would concur, but I would suggest that there is a line or there are a couple of lines in the Estimates that deal specifically with the Water Services Board, that we might discuss this matter when we get there, although I will answer the question that was asked now on this matter. It is the budgeted amount that was transferred to our department when Water Services Board was transferred to rural Manitoba as the budgeted amount that is identified in the Estimates. Then we of course added, by a special provision, \$1.1 million to that in the overall. So again I would be glad to answer the line-by-line questions once we get to the portion that deals with Water Services Board.

**Mr. Roch:** We will deal with that item then under Water Services Board.

Mr. Chairman, there is another area. The whole area of rural ambulance and firefighting services in many cases tends to be underfunded and in some cases even understaffed. At other times, especially in the area of ambulance services, although not exclusively there, there is a lack of properly trained staff. As well, there seems to be a lack of provincial co-ordination in this area. Is there anything being done to attempt to correct or rectify this situation?

**Mr. Penner:** I believe, Mr. Chairman, again, that this item really should be discussed when the Department of Health Estimates are being discussed, because I understand that there is a line item that would indicate grants to ambulances which is expended through the Department of Health, and the program delivered through the Department of Health. I am not quite sure whether I understand the question and what he is referring to in putting some co-ordinated program in place, or better co-ordinated program.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Roch:** Possibly the question should be asked in Health, but unfortunately the Departments of Health and Rural Development are running concurrently, and I am tied up here in Rural Development. If need be, I will have one of my colleagues ask those questions in Health.

To clarify what the Minister asks as far as co-ordination, we are well aware in Winnipeg, for example—and I will use Winnipeg because it is the largest urban centre in Manitoba—if you need an ambulance or fire truck or police, you dial 911. It is co-ordinated centrally; whereas, out in rural Manitoba, it is difficult. The different areas have different numbers for the different services and sometimes different numbers for the same service depending upon which part of the municipality or township that you are in. It can pose a problem, at times fatal. It is a long standing problem, and I realize there are no easy and fast solutions, but I believe there tends to be a movement towards more of a centrally co-ordinated type of an emergency response system. Maybe this is not the proper department or possibly MTS is the area, maybe Health, maybe another department, but given the fact that it does fall within the area of rural Manitoba,

possibly Rural Development should have at least a role in helping to co-ordinate this type of a system.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, thank you to the Honourable Member for clarifying what he meant by proper co-ordination. I have very similar concerns to what the Honourable Member for Springfield expresses. I believe that there is an area where services could be more adequately supplied. I have written to the Minister of MTS and asked whether it would not be possible to develop a 911 line across the province, and therefore, if that in fact could happen, I think we would have a much better co-ordination of direction, effort and ability to supply the service through ambulance, fire, and all those kinds of things if that was in place.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, that is exactly what I was leading up to was a central type of 911 system. I say 911 because it is a commonly used one in North America.

The Minister indicated that he wrote to the Minister responsible for MTS. Has he received a response yet, and if he has, what was it?

**Mr. Penner:** We have not had a response from the Minister. I am looking forward to it. It was only recently that the letter was written.

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** Mr. Chairperson, further to the MTS 911 line, as a Member of the Town Council for the Town of Selkirk, we had asked through MAUM Association for that type of response, and under previous administration were told continually that was impossible. We have asked in MTS committee last year whether that was possible and were told it was impossible, but other jurisdictions, we are aware, do have that.

Further to the situation, because this is Rural Development, is there a committee—(interjection)—under Rural Development that is concerned about—

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

**Mrs. Charles:** —support services for the smaller areas within rural Manitoba as to their volunteer fire, ambulance and emergency situation? Is there any concern in co-ordinated committee or effort that would be directed towards their concerns?

**Mr. Penner:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is a committee.—(interjection)—

I think there was at one time a directive given by the Speaker of the House that if there were groups of people that wanted to visit, and stand and visit, that they might in fact use the side of the Chamber or step outside.

**An Honourable Member:** Where is he when you need him?

**Mr. Penner:** I want to indicate to the Honourable Member for Selkirk that there is a committee that has been established to do exactly that, to look into the

possibilities of 911 numbers, to look at co-ordinated efforts in delivery or fire service and those kinds of things, and UMM, MAUM and our department have members on that committee. I understand they have had one meeting.

**Mrs. Charles:** About a year ago when I was critic of this department, I believe it was the Town of Churchill, the volunteer ambulance department that is, contacted me concerned about the fact that transfer payments made to the town itself for support of their volunteer ambulance services were not getting to the volunteer ambulance service.

I hope I am correct in that information, as a lot has passed since then, but is that the way that the money support for the volunteer departments would occur? If so, what guarantees are there that every community has a support service of ambulance and a fire department? Are there any guarantees through your department that the communities served even should in the unlikelihood but possible event, that a community, a town council, a municipality, could withhold funds to do the minimal support for those services?

**Mr. Penner:** I am pleased, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Member asked the question because it gives me as much an opportunity to get the information as it does her. I am not aware that there is any vehicle in place right now that would allow for the withholding or the transfer of funds to those fire departments or the ambulance services.

I would suggest again, as I did before, that you might want to raise this issue in Health Estimates, because the money that is granted to the ambulance services in rural Manitoba are directed through the Department of Health. I suggest you would get better answers there than you will get from me.

**Mrs. Charles:** I just have a statement as we are nearing the witching hour of five o'clock.

I am just concerned that any resident in Manitoba could have services withheld from them. I would suspect that your department, especially being renamed Rural Development, should have some control and knowledge of that situation.

**Mr. Penner:** There are I think in some areas in this province where it has been indicated that maybe those kinds of situations have at times arisen. It certainly would be and is a concern to myself as well as my department that those kinds of things should not happen under any circumstances, that services should be withheld because of funding arrangements, because of wondering who in fact would pay the bills.

I would suggest to you that we will hold those kinds of discussions, and the committee will deal with exactly those kinds of issues when we try to resolve this whole matter of proper funding for ambulances in other parts of Manitoba.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 3.(g)—pass.

Resolution No. 125: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,367,000 for

Rural Development for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass.

\* (1700)

The hour being five o'clock and time for Private Members' Hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

**Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same, and asks leave to sit again. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), that the report of the committee be received.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

## DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS PUBLIC BILLS

### BILL NO. 2—THE LANDLORD AND TENANT AMENDMENT ACT

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill No. 2, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le louage d'immeubles, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), who has two minutes remaining. Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

### BILL NO. 4—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (2)

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake), Bill No. 4, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health? (Agreed)

### BILL NO. 10—THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER ACT

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), Bill No. 10, The Beverage Container Act; Loi sur les contenants de boissons, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA  
INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL  
AMENDMENT ACT**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel de la Manitoba, and the motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the question be now put, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 17—THE EMPLOYMENT  
STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill No. 17, The Employment Standards Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 21—THE UNFAIR  
BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 21, The Unfair Business Practices Act; Loi sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 22—THE CONSUMER  
PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 22, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 23—THE CONSUMER  
PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (2)**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 23, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 26—THE REAL  
PROPERTY AMENDMENT ACT**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill

No. 26, The Real Property Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), the Honourable Minister of Justice.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, at the First Session of this Thirty-Fourth Legislature, the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) brought in a Bill like the Bill before us, Bill No. 26, The Real Property Amendment Act. At that time the Honourable Member was reacting as Members of his Party are often wont to do, to a very serious situation at the Winnipeg Land Titles Office. At that time people were waiting for unacceptable lengths of time to have documents reviewed at the Land Titles Office, to have titles registered, and so on. It was in that milieu that the Honourable Member for Elmwood brought forward this legislation dealing with services provided at the Land Titles Office.

The Honourable Member for Elmwood says that his bringing forward that Bill at that time was a coincidence. As a parliamentarian, Mr. Speaker, I find that being an Honourable Member, and I hope I am also seen to be an Honourable Member, I would accept the Honourable Member's word when he said it was a mere coincidence. I suppose to give strength to his suggestion that that was a coincidence we see the Bill again before us in this Session at a time when waiting periods for acceptance and registration at the Winnipeg Land Titles Office have been reduced and reduced significantly, thanks, we have reminded Honourable Members, to the dedicated efforts of the good people who work for the Government in the Land Titles Office, and thanks also to just plain good Government, Mr. Speaker, on the part of my colleagues and me.

They refer to the housing market. I did not bring my latest statistics with me today, but the number of registrations is not down. If it is down at all, it is not at all significant.

The Honourable Members like to suggest that somehow the housing market has a lot to do with it but they know, and they make that suggestion with their tongues firmly implanted in their cheeks, because they know, as does the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), as does the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that real progress has been made in attacking a problem that was left in the hands of the previous Government for far too long.

\* (1710)

I used to ask as we were watching that backlog reduce month by month last summer and fall, I used to ask myself, how is it that the Honourable Member for Elmwood could be part of an administration as a back-bench Member of an NDP Government for as long as that Government was in office, or as long as the Honourable Member was an Honourable Member, how is it that he could sit idly by and let this situation not only develop but also remain in effect? How could that happen and how can the Honourable Member retain his credibility by coming forward only months after being ingloriously thrown out of office as a Government and come forward and say that somehow he has all the

answers now, but he did not at the time when he and his colleagues were in office? -(interjection)-.

To the credit, I suggest in this instance and this instance only, of the Liberal Party, in this case have been able to see progress and recognize it for what it is. I believe Honourable Members not only by their silence, but also by the odd little pat on the back with respect to land titles, the odd little nod of approval for the good work being done by the good people who work at the Land Titles Office, I get the feeling that the Liberal Party recognizes the folly of the type of legislation the Honourable Member is introducing here.

First of all, asking that a lawyer from the Department of Attorney General be assigned to each Land Titles district and to each registration district under The Registry Act to advise persons in the preparation of documents and registration for filing—interesting proposal, we dealt with it last year. We told the Honourable Member then that we are making real progress. We are really bending every effort to try to serve the people who are served by the Winnipeg Land Titles Office—

**An Honourable Member:** I can attest to that.

**Mr. McCrae:** —doing our best to serve the people through the Land Titles Office. The Honourable Member, we asked him for his patience for just a short time longer, and you know it was not even very long before the matter was not only under control but being improved very significantly. So then the Honourable Member, he wants to see a lawyer assigned to the Land Titles districts all over the place. He wants to see lawyers assigned to those offices to assist people, but he does not want them to be responsible for any advice they give. This is an interesting concept.

I wonder if the Honourable Member has checked that with people like the Law Society or even the Bar Association to ask about the ethics of such a proposal. I really do have a problem. In view of all of the progress that we have seen, I would truly ask the Honourable Member to consider seriously moving to have his Bill withdrawn because it really—Well, I suggest the Honourable Member has been trying to be very helpful, and I appreciate the spirit of helpfulness that he brings to his work each and every day in this House, and the way that he conducts himself in and around Question Period.

I really recognize the Honourable Member for what he is and I really appreciate his help in regard to this particular Bill, but I wonder if he would not see the wisdom in this case of saying to himself we pushed—I mean the Honourable Member can take some credit for himself if he likes. We pushed the Government to solve this problem that was created by my administration—that being the NDP administration. Along comes this new administration and they are attempting to solve the problem, making a darn good effort at it and, lo and behold, making some real progress. Now that that has all been done and success has been achieved, maybe the Honourable Member would see his way clear to withdraw this Bill from the Order Paper because it really does not add anything.

Now, the indication I get from the Honourable Member who says it is a good Bill is that he is not willing to see this Bill withdrawn or to see an end to this Bill. The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) refers to the din from the Government benches and I can say to the Honourable Member for Thompson the only din I am having a little trouble with is the din being created by the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), as well as the Honourable Member for Thompson, and the odd Liberal Member around here. But I must say the Liberals are in good behaviour this afternoon, although earlier today when they had an audience in the gallery their decorum was really lacking badly. Everything that the Liberal Party seems to have stood for a year or two ago seems to have disappeared today because I see plenty of evidence that they have lost control of themselves, although I must say during this Private Members' Hour, I see that their behaviour and composure is quite good.

The Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) wants to get into the act. I would ask the Honourable Member for Assiniboia and/or one or more of his colleagues to rise in their places today and support me in the position I take with regard to the Bill placed before us today by the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

The Honourable Member for Elmwood, with all the good will in the world I suggest, has brought this Bill forward in an effort to try to assist, but I do ask him to understand that there has been some real progress made. If there was any evidence needed that the Government has its priorities in place with respect to Land Titles services in this province, I would just ask the Honourable Member to look at the record of the past year and to consider that seriously.

I ask Honourable Members in the Liberal Party to join with me in expressing the sentiments that I expressed today; those sentiments of thanks to some very dedicated people who work for the Department of Attorney General, Department of Justice, in the Land Titles system, not only in Winnipeg, but all around this province. Certainly in the Winnipeg office there has been a tremendous effort made.

The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) has let it be known today that he sees a great deal of progress having been made at the Winnipeg Land Titles Office and we certainly appreciate his support whenever we can get it, which seems to be at every turn. It seems that at every turn the Minister of Natural Resources is there working with this Government of Manitoba, working hard to lend support to a lot of those good initiatives that Honourable Members in the Government of Manitoba are bringing forward. We do appreciate that help and support and it is so good to be able to work with the Dean of this Legislature and to hear, coming from behind my shoulder, little expressions of support when I rise to my feet. I really do appreciate that. Contrast those expressions of support with what we hear coming from the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker. It is a real study in contrasts, I must admit.

There are times when even Honourable Members in the Liberal Party cannot avoid lending support to good

works that are being done, and when they really have their backs to the wall and they really cannot oppose any longer, there is the odd little item that comes along when Honourable Members in the Liberal Party have to say, enough, regrettably we will have to support this particular initiative. We do get that now and again, and for those crumbs we are grateful indeed. We just like to see them a little more often because there are so many good things happening in this province and it is unfortunate that we have to hear the gloom and the doom and the negative side of every possible issue that comes forward.

The people of Manitoba are indeed tiring of that particular approach and it may be that in the days and weeks ahead the Liberal Party will take another turn in their approach. We may hear their other options for policies that undoubtedly if they do not have today they will have tomorrow, or next week or whenever. Depending on the issue, depending on the day, and depending on the time of day, we will know what the Liberal position is on a number of items.

For today I do ask them to support me in what I have been saying about Bill No. 26. I do not think the Bill is going to help. I think the things that have been done will go a lot further to help the people of Manitoba than what the Honourable Member is proposing. So with those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I would ask for support from Members of the Liberal Party.

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Swan River (Mr. Burrell), that the debate be adjourned.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

### BILL NO. 18—THE OZONE LAYER PROTECTION ACT

**Mr. Speaker:** Bill No. 18, The Ozone Layer Protection Act; Loi sur la protection de la couche d'ozone, the Honourable Member for The Pas. (Stand)

### BILL NO. 20—THE MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT

\* (1720)

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek)** presented Bill No. 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

**MOTION presented.**

**Mrs. Yeo:** Mr. Speaker, before I begin debate on this particular amendment, I would like to applaud the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) for one of the better five minutes of his speech that I have heard in some time. I could actually hear him from this side of the House, which is rather refreshing.

This particular Municipal Assessment Amendment Act has been introduced so many times that I think we could all speak to it with some ease. It is an issue of, like many other things in this House, equity and fairness. Why it was excluded in the past I have no idea. It seems to me that the Catherine Booth Bible College has as much justification to be included in the amendments to the taxation as any of the other colleges that are mentioned.

I have found it interesting to read through the debate in the past. The debate on the previous Municipal Assessment Act that was introduced by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger), and a lot of debate by that particular Member and by some of the previous Members of the NDP Caucus, and I think the more things change the more they remain the same.

Back in June of 1987 when the Member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) was speaking to The Municipal Assessment Act that was introduced at that time, he talked about the Minister of Municipal Affairs promising to bring forward a Bill with some changes. I think I have heard the same thing from the current Minister of Municipal Affairs, and in fact from the previous Minister, the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), who also indicated to me, you know, do not get too carried away with this particular Bill because we are working on our own Bill that will bring great changes to The Municipal Act and we are still waiting. We are still wondering where that particular Bill is.

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) in May of 1987 said this is the kind of a Bill that should not be treated as a political issue or a partisan issue. I wonder why when the Member for Emerson said that before, what has changed, why there is not acceptance on the part of his particular caucus, his particular Government?

The previous Member for St. Norbert said we are talking about institutions that obviously should be treated in a very similar manner to our existing universities, because they are teaching many courses that are university credit courses. I think that particular Member had a great deal of influence on his caucus, not as much influence on his constituents unfortunately.

The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) talked about rising to speak in support of this piece of Legislation which his colleague the Member for Emerson had introduced a second time, and went on to say what a great Bill it was. Then there is the Member for River Heights. He said in May of '87 that this particular college, the Catherine Booth Bible College, is asking to be relieved of the obligation to pay municipal taxes both for school and municipal purposes and property tax.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

**Mrs. Yeo:** He said that he was given to understand that in every other province in the country they get some form of property tax relief. He went on and on, and I will do as he has done in the past, take little pieces out of his presentations. He talked about church-related colleges in Manitoba that are affiliated directly with the university, and he gave his example, St. John's



College, St. Paul's College, St. Andrew's College, St. Boniface College, and they are all able to get support.

In many cases, the students pay substantially more to attend these particular colleges. Their tuition fees are often quite higher, and yet the employees—the teachers, the support staff, et cetera—take a much lower level of pay. We support the fact that students should have freedom of choice, and we support the fact that all students in our province should receive some sort of encouragement to go on to higher education.

I do not understand how anybody could argue with amending The Municipal Act to include, under Bible colleges, 2(8).1, adding an (e), because (a) is the Winnipeg Bible College and Theological Seminary; (b) the Mennonite Brethren Bible College; (c) the Canadian Nazarene College; and (d) the Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Why not an (e) the Catherine Booth Bible College? It seems only fair, only equitable and there is a great deal of common sense.

I also have copies of letters that Major O. Robinson has written to the current Member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) saying we are grateful that you and your colleagues are sympathetic to the request of the Catherine Booth Bible College to receive the same exemption from municipal taxation as is given to a number of other private colleges.

If the Minister of Education has stated to Major Robinson that we support your request, why then do we not just pass this to committee? They are looking forward to the amendment being passed as swiftly as possible, and I too am looking forward to the amendment being passed as swiftly as possible.

There is another letter that says we are grateful for your interest in the college and possibly in our gaining the tax exemption status. Yet, in a letter that the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) has written to another individual, Mr. Robinson, he talks about having a new Municipal Assessment Act in place. That reminds me of the Member for Charleswood who some two and a half years ago said to the previous Government, we have been promised and promised and promised amendments to The Municipal Act.

So here we stand again. Here we wait for this amendment. Here we wait for equity which is certainly the right of this particular, very impressive college, that instructs a lot of very fine young people in our province. I would only hope that we in this House will come to our senses and add to the Act that was passed in August of 1983, the Act that incorporated the Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College, and now grant them the same privilege. I suppose you could say, because it is a privilege, and I think they would agree that it would be a privilege if they could be included under the exemptions in The Municipal Assessment Act.

It is true, sometimes the municipalities would say, you know, I am not sure whether this is a good idea because smaller municipalities have difficulty in forfeiting the particular exemption, and they rely on these exemptions. But the Catherine Booth Bible

College is located within walking distance of this particular building in which we are fortunate to work and debate. I would certainly urge my colleagues who are here in the House to consider this particular amendment and without any further delay, any further holdup, refer it to committee. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (1730)

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Community Services, that debate be adjourned.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

### **BILL NO. 24—THE BUSINESS NAMES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood)** presented Bill No. 24, The Business Names Registration Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'enregistrement des noms commerciaux), for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

**MOTION presented.**

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, in light of what has happened in the last couple of weeks concerning the firm known as Golden Universe Marketing Corporation and its activities in Manitoba, one can see a need for some of this consumer legislation to be dealt with with the greatest of urgency, but there is a provision in The Business Names Registration Amendment Act, Bill No. 24, that in fact in a way does deal with this particular situation. That is, under the current Business Names Registration Act, a company operating in Manitoba has 30 days in which to register its name, and so we find that companies such as this, and many others, are able to move into a province like Manitoba and have 30 days grace in terms of their operation without being registered.

This amendment, of course, would close that loophole that now exists and make it certain that a company could not operate at all for one hour, operate in Manitoba without being registered.

Now this particular company, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as of this moment is still not registered under the Business Names Registration Act, it is not registered under the Direct Sellers Act of the province, it is not registered under the Securities Commission, and this particular company in the last three weeks to a month has taken deposits from over 3,000 people at \$150 apiece. Now, just elementary mathematics tells you that comes up to nearly a half million dollars. That money is sitting in Vancouver. At least that is where we think it is right now.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, it is very troublesome that a province and a Government such as ours have would allowed companies to operate in such a fashion. I think that it

is time the Government moved and took every means at its disposal to introduce tighter legislation so that companies do not have essentially a free ride, are not able to come in and, before the Minister and before the Government knows what is going on, be able to do that much business in a province without being registered.

That is a pretty terrible state of affairs and I would think that the Government, I know that the Government would be concerned about this, but I think that consumer legislation has not been on their list of high priorities over the last 16 months. I think it is only recently that we are seeing some indications and some signs that they now have this new interest in consumer legislation, because perhaps they see the polls and they see that perhaps consumer legislation will get them some attention and some votes. Now they are prepared to act, but they are acting a little too late for a number of people in this province.

There is a number of people in this province who do not yet know how their deposits are going to be affected under the current laws, and what you have essentially is a Minister and a Government who are in no uncertain terms really aiding and abetting, because in fact they are providing an environment and a climate whereby business operations can do these things in Manitoba.

I give you another example in the case of the Alberta Beef Corporation where they have operated in Alberta and in Alaska and now they are operating in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know that this is the reason, but I would suggest to you that with an Unfair Business Practices Act, such as the one we introduced last year, I think a company who does their research, and I believe they do, because these companies tend to have batteries of well-connected lawyers in each city that they set down in. I think these lawyers do things for them, such as research the consumer laws of that province to get an idea as to what and how the Government would react if they were to set up shop there. It seems to me that these businesses would rather locate in an area that does not have tough consumer laws.

For instance, if any of us were to be tried or be charged with a crime in the state where Jim Baker has recently concluded his trial, I do not think any of us would choose to be tried by "Maximum Bob." I use that as an example to tell you that it is our lack of laws, a lack of tough laws, that will encourage businesses operating not according to proper business practices to set up in the Manitoba environment.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that it is not just the laws that are important. I mean it is the enforcement of those laws too. If you have a Government that can have the toughest laws in the country, but if they do not have the will to enforce them, then of course there is not much point in passing the laws.

We would hope that we would pass tough proper laws in this jurisdiction and that the Government would appoint Ministers who were prepared to take a tough stand and not simply be in the hip pockets of some of these corporations, or essentially sitting back as

passive observers watching these companies operate with impunity.

I use as an example of a company that has operated with just no regard for the law, Brick Warehouse of Calgary. We have suggested in this Chamber many, many times that it is amazing that a company such as this would be able to operate for something like 16 months now in Manitoba and not face charges.

I would like to see any other business operate in Manitoba that long, blatantly violating The Business Names Registration Act and not be charged as a result, Mr. Speaker.

I ask you: what is the point of a legitimate business registering in the first place? What kind of a signal are we giving to all those businesses out there who have paid their incorporation fees, have gone through the process to be properly registered, have jumped through all the hoops, and then you have this group from outside the province, cruise on in, hire a battery of expensive lawyers and just defy the law? What kind of a situation have we got here? For 16 months this Attorney General (Mr. McCrae), and now the current Minister, have refused to press charges against Brick Warehouse. The fines are starting to mount up. Maximum Bob aside, the fines are now in the neighbourhood of \$25,000 for every director or officer or every representative of this company.

So, now if the Minister is interested in deficit reduction, here is an avenue for him to explore. Get the money from a company that is blatantly violating Manitoba law, Mr. Speaker. I really am at a loss to know why this Government is protecting, or it is certainly seen to be protecting, this renegade company from Alberta. It is very interesting that the company set up a store in the Attorney General's (Mr. McCrae) constituency last year just a couple of months after he became the Attorney General. The firm itself is located in the riding of the federal Minister, and the whole situation is becoming to smell after a while.

\* (1740)

I mean who is in whose hip pocket here when a little company has had its name registered for 25 years and is not protected by a Government whose duty is to uphold the current law? If you do not like the law to the Minister who is scowling right now, if you do not like the law, Mr. Minister, then change it. Throw it out and say that anybody can come in here. That is what is going to happen more than likely under free trade over a number of years anyway. But if you do not like the law the way it is, then eliminate it, make it fair for everyone, and say that no business has to register. Why are small businesses putting out thousands of dollars of money to lawyers to go through the process to register their names when other companies like Brick Warehouse of Calgary get a free ride, can come in and set up shop and operate outside the law?

That is a terrible situation. I do not believe that everyone in this Government agrees with the policy on this issue.- (interjection)- I am not so sure. I think there are a few of them who want to do the right thing, but they are being thwarted and they are being controlled

by an Attorney General who has his mind made up as to what the agenda is going to be, and a Premier who is prepared to let him do what he wants. It is a very, very unfair situation that is allowed to develop here, and over the next while it is going to get more embarrassing for this Government.

What will happen when we get into the second year and the third year and the fines double? What is going to happen at that point? Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) wants an election. As I said yesterday, call it. Have the nerve and the guts to call it. I do not believe that you do. I do not believe that the Minister does and he does not. He wants to take the chicken's route out and have us vote the Government down so he and his Leader can run around for 35 days and blame us for the election. Well, no it is not as easy as that to the Minister. If he wants an election he will have to call it.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I am having great difficulty in hearing the remarks of the Honourable Member for Elmwood. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

**Mr. Maloway:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are other elements to this Bill that are important to the Manitoba business community and if passed will certainly aid future businesses in their endeavours to get registered and operate properly in Manitoba. This Bill was introduced primarily at a time to help in the case of the Brick Warehouse and Brick's Fine Furniture situation, Mr. Speaker, but it is certainly not exclusive to that situation.

We have just dealt at some length with the situation involving the Golden Universe Marketing Corporation and many, many other businesses who basically are getting around or getting a bit of a free ride being allowed to operate here a month before having to register in this province.

Another element of the Bill was that Section 20, Subsection 2 amended would require that a judge could order a person to cease and desist from operating, and that is a provision that has been looked upon with some favour by people in the department and just a very, very positive contribution and a positive amendment to the Bill.

We made this Bill retroactive but the retroactivity, and I know that Governments are not comfortable with that aspect although it has been done before—the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) will no doubt be familiar with the case of the trust companies in Ontario where in a day, in an effort to stop the money from disappearing, all three Parties got together, the NDP, the Liberals and the Conservatives, and passed a Bill in a day to retroactively involve themselves and seize, I believe, the assets of these trust companies. So retroactive legislation has been done in the past, Mr. Speaker, under extreme circumstances, and if there is a will to do what is right, to make certain that this wrong is corrected, then I believe that certainly this retroactive part of the legislation should not stop us from doing the right thing.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by my colleague, the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), that the debate be adjourned.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

### **BILL NO. 37—THE MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT (2)**

**Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield)** presented Bill No. 37, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

**MOTION presented.**

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to introduce this Bill for second reading, debate in principle.

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

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

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before I got interrupted by the coalition colleagues across the way, we introduced this Bill—when I say “we,” I realize it is standing in my name, but it is we as a Liberal Caucus because, despite the fact there had been discussions at the invitation of the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) between himself, myself, and the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), the Minister just absolutely refused to do anything.

For whatever reason, when questioned last June he would not commit to doing anything. All he would say was that he would be proposing legislation, but he never did. It was expected that, given a summer recess, he would have time to prepare a Bill, a very simple one, ready for introduction in September. That never happened.

Essentially this Bill, Mr. Speaker—I realize it is not clause by clause, but all it does is add the words “by the Crown” after “trust” in the original Municipal Assessment Act. We had indicated to the Minister that there were various options available; that was his preferred one. We had indicated verbally that we were prepared to consider supporting that particular amendment if he were to come forward with legislation. Nothing was happening. Therefore, because of the lack of action, because of the Minister's inaction, we felt it incumbent upon ourselves to bring it forth because the issue here, Mr. Speaker, is the municipality's right to receive compensation for the services they receive.

There is the issue of a constitutional or aboriginal rights, and the issue of property taxations are two separate ones. The municipal bodies find themselves an innocent third party in what is essentially a dispute between provincial and federal levels of Government. It is unfortunate that, given the fact that it is the same Party in power provincially and federally, there is no co-ordination at all. Indeed, Manitoba seems to be suffering greatly, but that is another issue in itself.

\* (1750)

The point here is that rural municipalities, villages, towns, cities outside of Winnipeg because The City of Winnipeg Act already provides for property tax protection, essentially apart from property taxation, have virtually no other forms of revenue. For example, the one which is the most affected is Thompson. There are other ones too. Brandon, for example, has a 148 residential properties representing \$166,918.66 - (interjection)- Well, the Minister for Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says he wants more taxation, but I believe that is what would happen if we are to exempt large property owners from paying tax.

Now there may or may not be a constitutional argument for whether or not aboriginal peoples are indeed tax exempt or not through their tribal councils but, as I said earlier, the constitutional argument and this Bill are two separate issues.

In the short term, the municipal organizations, whether they be R.M.s, LGDs, villages, towns, need to be reassured that they will have the revenue necessary to provide the essential services such as firefighting, such as policing, such as many others which are needed, streets, sewers, sidewalks, road building, as the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) says, and I am glad to hear his comments because he certainly seems supportive, contrary to that of the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner)- (interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) says that we should try harder.

We are trying, but the fact remains you need two out of three Parties to pass any Bill in this House. It would be, in my opinion, incumbent upon all Members of this House to give this Bill speedy passage because, I repeat, the urgency here is for small municipal bodies to be reassured that they have the revenues necessary to be able to provide the services they need to provide. Right now they are concerned. They are pleased.

Several municipal organizations had written the Minister responsible for Rural Development to get this type of legislation enacted. Nothing was happening. All they were getting was a form letter stating that he was waiting for a response from the Opposition.

Well, he has received a response from the Opposition in a form of Bill No. 37, and in response to that from the municipalities there have been several letters indicating support of this particular Bill. The Members across the way are aware of this because many, if not most, of these letters have been copied either to the Minister or individual MLAs across the way.

I believe that the long-term issue of whether or not off-reserve properties bona fide held by tribal councils should be addressed in a different forum. In the meantime, in the short term, we have to be able to guarantee those municipal organizations they will not be short of revenues.

I started quoting a while ago on some basic statistics. I quoted Brandon. I quoted a specific amount, but it represents almost one-half of 1 percent of its total assessment.

Portage la Prairie has an estimated tax loss, if this were to be carried through, a potential tax loss, I should

say, of 2.5 mills. Lynn Lake, Dauphin, Swan River, all stand to lose several amounts, large percentages, several amounts of dollars in assessment.

Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before, the original intent of this Act, when it was first drafted in the early 1900s, was to at that time comply with the then federal Indian Act which prohibits the taxation of reserve land.

I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that it was the intent at that time to exempt off-reserve lands, because the potential for abuse is too great. However, if it were to be found by a court that sometime, at some future point, that indeed the lands held by Indian tribes are tax exempt, then it becomes incumbent upon the federal Government, as a trustee in such a case, to compensate the rural municipalities for any potential losses of revenue that it would then incur.

Mr. Speaker, there are several other items which could be said on this issue, but suffice to say that I would like to see the Members in this Chamber support this Bill, give it speedy passage to committee stage, bring it back to the House for third reading and reassure rural Manitoba that they will have no losses in their property tax revenues. Thank you.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), that debate be adjourned.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? No, we have only got one more to go.

### **BILL NO. 41—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (4)**

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia)** presented Bill No. 41, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (4) (Loi no 4 modifiant le Code de la route), for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

**MOTION presented.**

**Mr. Mandrake:** Mr. Speaker, before I address this Bill, that being Bill 41, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, I would like to place a few remarks on the record. This amendment is in no way reflective on the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), under no circumstances. He has been a very, very busy person this year with the forest fires, with CN layoffs, VIA Rail, and other problems that have cropped up so he has been a very busy Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I am proposing this amendment is because when this Government was in Opposition they raised the issue of radar detection on June 16, 1986.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 14 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).