

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 23, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to at the present time table the Report of the Manitoba Task Force on Meech Lake, the report on the 1987 Constitutional Accord. At the same time I have a very brief statement, copies of which I have available for Members throughout the House.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Chair of the Manitoba Constitutional Task Force on the Meech Lake Accord submitted the Task Force's report to me. I am presently tabling it formally in the Assembly.

I understand that it has been agreed that the House will adjourn for approximately one hour at 2:30 p.m. in order to permit members of the Task Force to take part in a news conference on their report in Room 255. Other Members of the Assembly are invited to attend as well.

I believe I can speak for all Members, and in fact for all Manitobans, in saying how much we appreciate and value the considerable effort and many hours of thoughtful deliberation that went into the preparation of this document.

First, I want to congratulate each of the Members of this House on both sides who participated in the work of the Task Force.

The original Meech Lake consensus was described at the time as a remarkable achievement. In many ways the consensus and the constructive compromises reflected in this report are no less remarkable or significant for our province and for our efforts to contribute in a positive way to strengthening the unity of Canada.

With us today in the gallery is the Chair of the Task Force, Professor Wally Fox-Decent. Wally, you and your staff and colleagues are to be commended for the excellent work that you have done. The same applies to the staff of the Clerk's Office and to the numerous others who contributed to the report over the past several months.

Many of the most important contributors to this process however are not with us in the Chamber today. They are the hundreds of individuals and organizations from all parts of Manitoba who took the time to appear before the Task Force and to offer their views and recommendations.

I believe the public hearings carried out by the Task Force were the most extensive of any in the country on the Meech Lake Accord. That fact alone should help ensure that the report is studied with considerable care

in Ottawa and every other provincial and territorial capital.

I believe both the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and the Leader of the Second Opposition Party (Mr. Doer) may also wish to make some observations at this present time, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

\* (1335)

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition):** Monsieur le président, je suis très heureuse avec notre discours sur l'Accord du lac Meech. C'était un grand privilège.

### (Translation)

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy with our report on the Meech Lake Accord. It was a great privilege.

### (English)

It was a particularly special privilege to work with Wally Fox-Decent and Kathy Brock and all of their staff. Wally was a humorous and rewarding chairperson. Kathy is an incredible writer, and I think that will be reflected today in the presentation that we will receive at 2:30 p.m.

I also want to thank my colleagues here in the Chamber who worked on this report. The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond), the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) and the Member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) all contributed to this report in a very special and unique way.

It is one of the highlights of my political career to date to have worked with these individuals who left, I believe, their partisanship at the door of each and every occasion of their meetings and did what they felt was in the best interests of Manitoba and, hopefully, they believed was in the best interests for all of Canada.

I believe this consensus-building was a remarkable achievement, but it was an achievement because, although we live in a milieu in which there is incredible partisanship and on occasion negativism, none of that at any time pervaded the discussion process that took place as we tried to prepare together this consensus report on Manitoba.

I thank you all for working with me. I am privileged to have worked with you, and I hope our report will be received and endorsed by all of Canada.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I want to join today on the submission of the report to the Legislature, the comments that have been placed on the record. I have been very, very proud to participate with all the Manitobans who took such a long and careful look at the Meech Lake Accord

and participated fully in this very, very important national process, our Constitution.

I also want to pay tribute to Wally Fox-Decent and Kathy Brock, in terms of working with our committee, and our constitutional lawyer, Vic Toews, who also helped us out on some of the constitutional legalities, and to all the other Members of the Legislature who participated on this committee, some of whom were on the formal report and signed the document, others of whom joined us in the public hearing process through nine Manitoba communities; I believe, across the province, northern, southern and urban centres of Manitoba.

I believe Manitobans have reached a consensus through the public participation process, and I believe the final document is well-informed and reasoned in terms of the perception of ordinary people in this country of their Constitution. I believe the finalization of this report, agreed to by all political Parties, will add to the constitutional process in Canada.

\* (1340)

As has been recognized by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), this is an all-Party report. I believe this all-Party report can become the catalyst to developing improvements over the next eight months to deal with the legitimate aspirations of Quebec but also to deal with the legitimate aspirations of our northern people, our western people, women and other groups that feel negatively affected by the proposed Accord. So I look forward to this document being used as a catalyst to improve the Meech Lake Accord, and I look forward to all Manitobans working in unity to help that improvement process take place through the federal-provincial meetings and other public processes that are necessary to improve our Constitution. Thank you very, very much.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### Water Resources Arden Ridge

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, last year we saw this Government's management style when it sought to arbitrarily move two doctors from the Selkirk Mental Hospital to Brandon's hospital. As a result neither facilities ended up with doctors.

Similarly this year we are seeing this Government's plans to pipe water from the Assiniboine delta aquifer from an area which itself already has creeks, dugouts, and sloughs drying up in order to supply water to the Plumas area.

My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. What plans are there in place to truck water into the Arden Ridge area of the aquifer should the drought of this fall continue and the effects of it continue?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** I thank the Honourable Member for Selkirk for that question. I can indicate to her that only yesterday I had

the opportunity of flying over that particular part of the province, and I am fully aware and share the concerns of the residents of that area about their water supplies.

While the bigger question of water sourcing is one that this Government is addressing, we have made certain recommendations and have found certain concerns being expressed in that area and are seeking alternative resolutions to that problem.

I can assure the Honourable Member and the residents of that area that this Government will do everything that is necessary to ensure that water will be made available to them, no doubt with the adequate services of the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Rural Development, and all the forces that we can bring to bear to ensure that in this interim period that emergency water supplies are made available to those people.

### Irrigation Report Tabling Request

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** Although I am sure all of us in this House support the need for some farmers to irrigate in order to maintain the farming practices necessary for the Carberry District, can the Minister of Natural Resources though table a report with the details of the effects of irrigation on those dry farmers living nearby wells of irrigators? Will he be able to forward that report to the dry-land farmers so that we can understand more fully the needs of the irrigating farmers and how both of them can live together on the same aquifer?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I am more than prepared to provide that information, but I would encourage the Honourable Members in Opposition that this is precisely the kind of information that would be made available to them in detail during the consideration of Estimates.

We seem to have a great deal of difficulty getting the opposition Members to begin to examine, not just myself but all ministries, how their departments are operating during the course of the Estimates. I would ask the Honourable Member to take that to heart. I will see that kind of detailed information is made available to him.

### Water Resources Plumas District

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, over the next five years, approximately \$1.4 million is planned to be set aside in the delta aquifer area for repair and maintenance of drainage ditches.

Can the Minister explain why this amount is to be put aside in order to drain spring run-offs from the Plumas area and another set of millions are to be put in place in order to give them water in the summer and winter? Is this the management style and is this the only management scheme that this Government can come up with?

\* (1345)

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, again I earnestly invite the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) to raise these issues with me during the discussion of the Estimates. I am not being difficult with her, but really this is the kind of information legitimately requested by the Opposition that I am more than prepared to give during the consideration of my Estimates.

### Arts Policy Review Committee Hearings Schedule

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** I have a new question to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Mr. Speaker, the Arts Review Policy Committee is to set in place its hearings as of Wednesday this week. Yet, there are many organizations who are not aware of when and where it will be sitting. In fact I spoke to one committee member who did not know, as of last Friday, where it will be meeting this week.

Can the Minister explain why this lack of information is not made available, or the lack is there, for the community? Why is she not making this information available to the organizations?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer that question. The arts policy review has been set in place, and it is going to be holding public hearings throughout the province. There were hundreds of copies of the arts policy review's timetable and schedules sent out throughout Manitoba, so I am sure that most people are aware, all groups and organizations have received that information. If there are a few that the Member is talking about, I would hope that the organization that received that information would pass it on to its members.

### Participation Criteria

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** To the same Minister again, how can this committee review an arts policy when there is no criteria set in place for participation?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation):** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the public hearings are participation, and if the Member feels that through participation and making presentation to the committee is not a form of participation, I do not know where she is coming from.

**Mrs. Charles:** Mr. Speaker, there are many groups that have not been informed of this committee and many groups who have asked for participation in the committee hearings. They have asked for the criteria to participate, and none has been given. The brochure in fact had to be redrafted and yet was not sent out to all available communities. Who was on this list of organizations that this pertinent information was sent to, and who was not on it?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I will get the information for the Member on the details of each and every organization that received a copy of that.

\* (1350)

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate on the redrafting of the paper that was sent out, a paper was drafted and the Arts Policy Committee did the responsible thing. They went to members, several members, of the arts community and asked for their input so that we would have a full, complete, and detailed pamphlet distributed throughout the broad cross section of arts communities in the province. That was the reason it was redrafted, and I believe that was very responsible on their part.

### Native Education Post-Secondary Funding

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). During our public hearing process, one of the most dramatic hearings I believe took place in one of our Native communities, Garden Hill. Not only the issues related to Meech Lake were made public, but also the tremendous injustice the Native people felt towards the cutback in post-secondary education for Native people was also brought very clearly to the attention of the committee.

Subsequent to that date this Legislature passed an emergency resolution and debated this issue on June 2 of this year. We know the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) has sent a letter on behalf of Native people. I would ask given the fact that there was an all-Party agreement to debate this issue, and a suggestion that the Government lead a delegation to Ottawa, to oppose the changes in post-secondary education: what action has the Premier (Mr. Filmon) taken to reverse the decision that we all agree was contrary to the best interests of aboriginal people in this province?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to say that the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), as well as the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), and myself have all written directly to the federal Government urging them to change their position on this matter to ensure that funding for post-secondary education remains sufficient to meet the needs of all those aboriginal people who want to have post-secondary education funding for their children and their families.

I might say that there has been continued discussions and dialogue between the two Ministers I referred to, the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs and the Minister of Education, and we believe that progress is being made, that indeed there is some recognition of the injustice that is being created in Ottawa. We are optimistic that we may see a change in the policy.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we look forward to a reversal of this arbitrary action, on behalf of the federal Government, towards our aboriginal people in Canada.

## VIA Rail Transportation Ministers' Meeting

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my second question is again to the First Minister. Earlier his Government announced the strategy to call upon all Transportation Ministers to have an immediate and urgent meeting with other Transport Ministers and the federal Transport Minister dealing with VIA Rail.

I would ask the Premier whether the Transport Minister has indeed set up the meeting upon the request of the First Minister, and if he has not, does the First Minister feel that we will have any success in changing the Government's position without direct intervention to the Prime Minister of this country to reverse a horrible decision for Western Canada and Atlantic Canada, particularly with the cutback of VIA Rail?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm first of all that activities that have taken place in the past few days, including as late as this morning, that we have as indicated the other day a joint communique that has been drafted between the Government of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway, Transport and General Workers and the Manitoba Federation of Labour. I will be making contact with both Leaders of the opposition Parties asking whether they would want to also endorse this communique. I will be forwarding it.

We have a meeting set up for Tuesday of next week, and we are developing the scenario in terms of who will all be going there to make presentation to the Commons Transportation Committee. Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, I am also meeting with the federal Minister of Transport the day before to discuss the province's position as well.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the last train leaves west on the southern route in 11 weeks. We believe that action must be taken at the highest level of the federal Government.

## Day Care Federal Funding

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition):** I have a further question to the First Minister. Last year the Prime Minister of this country in front of Western Glove announced the \$7 billion Child Care Program for this country. We found it rather ironic that he would announce that program at the Western Glove location. It was the same location as the Premier announced his child care policy, and second, ironic because we had to fight the federal Government to get a child care facility in Western Glove. In fact it took us three extra months to convince our federal counterparts that it was a good demonstration program of a workplace child care centre.

My question to the First Minister is: given the total reversal by Perrin Beatty, the federal Minister, some

two weeks ago at the Ministers' meeting, has the Premier taken any action with the Prime Minister to reinstate the promise he made in this community just a year ago in front of the Western Glove dealing with child care and the need for child care in this country?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the Member that Liberals and New Democrats in Ottawa opposed the passage of the legislation prior to the federal election in 1988 that would have seen the national Child Care Program put in place. Then of course all of that matter died on the Order Paper in Ottawa and was left unpassed because of the positions of Liberals and New Democrats in Ottawa opposed to that child care legislation to be put in place. That funding would have been put in place had it not been for the opposition of Liberals and New Democrats. Unfortunately we are now back to the drawing board to try and develop a new national program for child care, both a legislative and a funding commitment that we believe is necessary in order to be able to improve the funding and the availability, the accessibility, the flexibility of day care throughout our province.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and New Democrats stood with the Nurses Association in Canada, we stood with the Child Care Association of Canada, we stood with the Anti-Poverty Organizations of Canada, we stood with Child Care Parents in Canada, we even stood with the Senator that chaired the committee, one Mira Spivak, in this country against a profit child care system, and for an affordable, accessible program in this country. Let the record show that, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the First Minister is: the Prime Minister's comment dealt with funding contributions to the Child Care Program, the \$7 billion. The Prime Minister has reneged on that promise. When can we expect a reintroduction of the \$7 billion that we were promised in this community a year ago?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, what we have seen here is the New Democrats' approach which is ideologically motivated, structured, in fact straightjacketed by ideology. Because they believe that there is no place for independent or private child care in this country, they are unwilling to support any national program of child care that includes that option to people, Mr. Speaker. They want no choice for individuals, no choice for families, no choice for people who need day care, and they are prepared to kill day care in this country rather than see a choice being given to people.

## Parent-Child Centres Funding

**Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice):** My question is for the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). There are five parent-child centres in the inner city which provide a valuable service to families. These centres are supported by Child and Family Services of Central Winnipeg as an excellent community-based prevention program. Now we know that the Minister has met with individuals from the parent-child centres and she has received numerous letters of support from agencies and parents who use this service.

\* (1400)

Mr. Speaker, these centres have depended on outreach funding from Child and Family Services, funding which has been tenuous at best because of the administrative changes in the administration of this fund. My question to the Minister is: will the Minister tell this House does she support the philosophy and objectives of the parent-child centres?

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):**

Yes, I too have had many letters from people interested in the parent-child centres. I have met with a group on that subject, along with the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), and we have undertaken a review of parent-child centres because the Member said that they were funded by outreach grants from my department. Some of them were, some of them were not. It has been a scattergun approach, I guess, if you could say that, and they have been funded differently. We have undertaken a review of that and will be discussing it and making decisions shortly.

**Ms. Gray:** I have a supplementary question for the same Minister. Does the Minister see a role for her department, either directly or indirectly, through the Child and Family Services agencies to work with the parent-child centres in an attempt to stabilize this tenuous funding and allow the parent-child centres to continue to operate as an excellent prevention program in the community?

**Mrs. Oleson:** Mr. Speaker, as I had indicated before we are reviewing that and we will be making a decision in the near future on how and what we can do for these centres with regard to funding.

### Closure

**Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice):** I have a final supplementary to the same Minister. Two of the five parent-child centres may close their doors in early November. Can the Minister indicate to the House, in that she has a meeting this week with the Parent-Child Centre Board, what reasonable steps the Minister will be prepared to take to ensure that in fact this valuable service does not close its doors in November?

**Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services):**

As I indicated, I will be meeting with them later to discuss their funding problems.

### VIA Rail Winnipeg-Capreol Service

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia):** Forty-six years ago CN encouraged their employees and others to build cottages in the Capreol area. To date, citizens of Manitoba and northwest Ontario have built a total of 500 cottages. The only access to these cottages is by rail. My question to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) is: at present VIA Rail provides service to the area, leaving Winnipeg Friday night and returning Sunday. Now in the new schedule, VIA Rail will leave Saturday night and return

Monday with only one coach carrying 54 passengers. Will he speak to the federal Minister and demand to maintain the present service, that being Friday night and returning Sunday, and increase the coaches to accommodate ridership?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, the group has made contact with me already, and I will be meeting with them shortly to discuss their concerns about it. I already want to indicate that I will be raising that concern with the federal Minister when I meet with him next Monday.

### All-Party Presentation

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia):** My first supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister is this. He just recently tabled the document on the discussions which he has had with labour and other officials in the City of Winnipeg. I appreciate that report, Mr. Speaker, but one question that remains to be asked is: will he now take the two critics in the Opposition with him to Ottawa to prove to this federal Minister that he has the support of all the Parties in Manitoba?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that we just completed finalizing this document just actually a half an hour ago. It is for that reason why I have just given it to the Leaders of the Opposition.

I want to discuss it with them after they have had a chance to look at it, whether they want to be a part of that. If both the opposition Parties feel they want to be part of this presentation that we will be making, if they find it agreeable, then I am prepared to try and make arrangements in terms of the delegation that will be heading to the federal Government next week.

**Mr. Mandrake:** I do appreciate the answer of the Minister, and I am sure both the critics will be more than happy to attend.

### Rail Line Abandonment Government Position

**Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia):** I have a final supplementary to the Minister. During the Estimates on September 28, 1989 -(interjection)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

**Mr. Mandrake:** During the Estimates on September 28, 1989, this Minister stated he would invite both critics to discuss rail line abandonment. When will he be calling this meeting?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** I will accommodate a meeting between all three of us as soon as we can arrange it.

Right now I feel the priority has to be with VIA Rail, and we are trying to organize that aspect of it. Certainly in conjunction with that, I feel we will have the opportunity to discuss it at future meetings.

## Thompson General Hospital Physician Recruitment

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** My question is for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and it is in regard to the critical shortage of positions in Thompson.

This past week Thompson residents learned that two more physicians will be leaving the community, leaving us with only six permanent positions and only one surgeon and one obstetrician.

I hope the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) will not make light of this. It is a very serious issue - (interjection)- well, I think the Minister of Northern Affairs might want to put some of those comments on the record, but at some other point.

I have an important question, Mr. Speaker - (interjection)-

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**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. The Honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs, on a point of order.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs):** The Member for Thompson wanted me to put on the record what I said from my seat. The reason they probably left is because they are disappointed with their MLA.

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

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

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**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I wish the Minister of Northern Affairs would not make light or try to make political points out of a very serious issue. I think that is an insult to the people of Thompson, his last statement, and I will not respond to such a ridiculous comment.

I am trying to give my preamble to a question which points out that we have a very serious physician shortage in Thompson. We are going to be left with only one surgeon and one obstetrician for a community that sees 830 births a year. That could result in literally dozens of women having to be sent to Winnipeg for deliveries unless replacements are found very soon. Also, the departure of the two physicians threatens the status of two other physicians, so we may end up with four doctors.

My question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is: what action will the Minister of Health take in conjunction with the Thompson General Hospital and the community to find replacements for the badly needed number of physicians we need in Thompson?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday of last week when the knowledge of the very sudden departure of those two physicians from Thompson came to our attention, we were indeed concerned because the sudden departure,

without any notification to the hospital or to the staff, did leave a significant potential reduction in service.

The nine physicians that are left practising in Thompson will no doubt attempt, to the best of their abilities, to fill the gap, but there is no question that we have taken this issue very, very seriously. As a result the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower immediately, as of last Wednesday upon hearing of the sudden departure of these two physicians, has been pro-actively seeking replacements on an immediate short-term basis for those two physicians so that Thompson residents may continue to enjoy a high level of physician service in the area.

\* (1410)

**Mr. Ashton:** The actual number of current positions is six. I confirmed that this morning with the hospital administrator. The others are on a short-term assignment.

## Immigrant Physician Licensing

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** I would like to ask the Minister, will he support the initiative that has been taken by the Member of Parliament for Churchill to have the immigration period short-circuited, given the fact that there may be as many as two doctors who are interested in locating in Thompson on an urgent basis? Will the Minister intervene with the Immigration Department and the College of Physicians and Surgeons to facilitate the placement of these doctors?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into a numbers debate with my Honourable Friend, but the latest information I have is of October 18 on physician numbers in Thompson, indicating that nine physicians are serving the community of Thompson.

Mr. Speaker, from time to time over the past 17 or so months that I have been responsible for the Ministry of Health, I have signed Waivers of Examinations for offshore-trained physicians for their placement in rural and remote areas of Manitoba. Those Waivers of Examinations have been recommended to me by the Standing Committee of Medical Manpower on the basis that the College of Physicians and Surgeons are satisfied that their level of training is adequate to protect patient safety and to deliver quality medicine in Manitoba.

## Thompson, Manitoba Clinic Setup

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** My final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact the status of two doctors is currently threatened because one of the major clinics in Thompson may close, will the Minister support the concept of the establishment of a city-sponsored clinic that would not only actively recruit for physicians in the future, but also provide facilities for those positions when they do locate in Thompson?



**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Well, Mr. Speaker, the sudden departure—and let me tell my honourable friend from Thompson the frustration that I feel for the people of Thompson. This has caused significant difficulty for them and certainly for the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower because there was no advance notice whatsoever of even an intention to leave by these two physicians. It was a very sudden departure and it has caused problems as my honourable friend indicates in that they were also, I believe, the owners of the Burntwood Medical Clinic and that has caused some difficulties with the other practising physicians in Thompson.

We have taken this issue very seriously. When I was in Thompson for the northern Cabinet tour we did undertake discussions with the hospital and with some of the proponents of that community clinic. The Health Services Commission is open to any reasonable approach that the citizens of Thompson might wish to make to us for resolution of that problem, Mr. Speaker

### **Migratory Game Birds Act Treaty Rights**

**Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa):** The Fort Alexander Band, The Mathias Colomb Band, and the Southeast Tribal Council are in the process of negotiating with the Department of Natural Resources regarding the joint management of natural resources on and around their reserves. In spite of this fact, there has been a significant increase in charges and convictions of Treaty Indians under The Wildlife Act, The Fisheries Act, and The Migratory Bird Act over the past two years, Mr. Speaker.

My question for the Minister of Natural Resources is simply this: does this reflect a change in Government policy?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** No it does not, but I acknowledge that the policy in question is undergoing challenges in the courts, and we are getting conflicting judgments coming out of those courts. The federal Government has instructed us that they are in fact proceeding with further appeals and we await the outcome of those appeals.

**Mr. Herold Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, then what is the reason for the dramatic increase in charges against the aboriginal people? Is it the case where the Government is perhaps trying to build a case against the Joint Management Agreements, or is there really a problem with the nature and the kind of hunting and fishing that the aboriginal people are engaged in?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the suggestion that the department is acting in a manner other than what has been their practice, which has in the main been to charge only those very serious or blatant offences under The Migratory Game Birds Act.

I acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that in this interim period there is reason for some questioning of the current policy. I have advised the department that I will be reviewing that policy pending a particular case that is

now scheduled to go to the Manitoba Appeal Court sometime in January or February.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, if the Manitoba Appeal Court, Manitoba's highest court, upholds the rulings already made at the provincial and the Queen's Bench level, then obviously the policy will have to be re-examined.

### **Treaty Rights Negotiations Hunting**

**Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa):** Mr. Speaker, then the Minister might be able to tell us at what stage are the negotiations between the Government and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, which has been funded and charged with among other things the responsibility of determining just what are the Treaty rights with respect to hunting and fishing, and what some of the jurisdictional problems flowing from this might be, and what the problems might entail for Government? At what stage are these negotiations?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** The Honourable Member touches on a question that has been before Ministers' of Natural Resources for many, many years. It is a difficult area, the question of honouring and respecting Treaty rights.

Also it is a question of, on the other hand, carrying out the regulations that bind us as a signatory to an international Treaty that joins the United States and Mexico in the migratory game birds legislation, dating back to the year 1916. My department and I myself am fully committed to seeking out and searching out ways where we can co-manage the resources with our Indian brothers.

\* (1420)

I have again some interesting progress to report, and I invite the Honourable Member to let me get to my Estimates to make available to the Member that kind of information.

Mr. Speaker, as you are rising it would be against our rules in Question Period to get into this kind of discussion. That is what the Estimate process is all about, and I do invite all Members to please let us get on with the Estimates.

### **Rail Line Abandonment Manitoba Position**

**Mr. John Plozman (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, the issue of rail line abandonment is one that is very serious. It is becoming more threatening to Manitoba because of the recent announcements by CN that they want to abandon 40 percent of their rail line network in this country.

Manitoba would be hard hit, families in Manitoba and rural communities would be hard hit by such a policy. I ask the Minister what input has he had into the definition and defining of the rail line configuration in this country, in Canada, in order to protect Manitoba's interests?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I have indicated this

before and the Member I think is aware that the position that was put forward by the four western Provinces, in terms of rail line abandonment, our position has not changed in terms of how we feel about this.

Our concern is that we feel that the federal Minister and his staff possibly never interpreted the position that was being put forward. I intend to raise it with them again and, as I indicated to the critic from the Liberal Party, I will try and arrange to have an all-Party committee meeting maybe set up so that we can discuss exactly what course of action we can take. In the meantime staff is looking at the implications of it, what courses of action we can take, and I will keep the House informed of what develops.

### Report Response

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I was not asking the Minister what his basic position was. What action was he taking to ensure that position was carried through at the national level?

Recently the federal Ministers of Transport met in Calgary and in the communique they indicated that a federal report had been distributed to the provincial Ministers for their response. I ask the Minister: has he responded to that report, which is to define the criteria for an essential rail network, and can he provide the Opposition with a copy of that report and his responses to it?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, we have not responded to the report yet, however, we are drafting a response to that and I am prepared to make the communique or the paper available to the Members opposite as well as the response once I have that drafted.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Speaker, I remind the Minister he received that report on June 6, a number of months ago already and he has not responded to it.

This Minister says that he has one critical issue, VIA Rail. There are many critical issues in transportation and he has to be able to deal with them all concurrently. He has to be able to walk upstairs and chew gum at the same time.

I ask this Minister: has he set a date for this meeting so that the opposition critics can meet with him to provide some incentive for him to move forward on this issue?

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that I am having is that the previous Member, or the Member for Dauphin, who was the Minister, could not chew gum and think at the same time, and we are trying—

**An Honourable Member:** Right on.

**Mr. Albert Driedger:** We will try and resolve those problems right now.

### Moray Street Bridge Environmental Impact Study

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** Environmental concerns are raised with increasing frequency, Mr. Speaker. This past week at town halls for both councillor and school trustee candidates, things like environmental education and various local proposals were questioned and discussed. One continuing debate relates to the lack of a thorough environmental impact assessment as required under The Manitoba Environment Act which became effective on April 1, 1988, for the proposed Moray Street crossing.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) on CBC Radio stated that provinces that do not carry out full environmental assessments on major projects may expect to have to face court challenges, and he also purports that the environment is one of the Government's priorities.

To the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings), when can the Birchwood Neighbourhood Association expect your response regarding a full review of the environmental impact on the community, in light of the fact that they met with you on June 27 and apparently a commitment was given for a response within two weeks? This is almost three months later.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I would only be too glad to respond to that question because at the time that I met with the organization, and if they did not include the Member opposite in this information then perhaps she has not been fully briefed before she asked the question.

I indicated that I would respond quickly on whether or not there was any intention on my part to review, and in a major way, the decision that was made previously not to include this bridge under an environmental impact assessment. Since then, as I have stated in the House previously and stated to the public, I have received additional legal advice regarding the status of this, and that once we have finished examining that, I will be making a decision on whether or not this will be included as a development.

Mr. Speaker, I think that probably we need to deal with these issues with some degree of candor, but at the same time with some degree of sensitivity, seeing as how this is in the middle of the municipal elections in Winnipeg.

**Mrs. Yeo:** People are asking -(interjection)-

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### The Pines Project Environmental Impact Study

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** Mr. Speaker, people are asking where are the studies? Is there any move toward assessing the environmental impact on the proposed Pines Development? What environmental impact will it have on the river, on the community, and in fact on the continuing viability of the airport?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, there is an ongoing question continually



regarding whether or not developments are considered developments under the auspices of The Environment Act or whether they in fact should be dealt with responsibly under planning and land use considerations.

Mr. Speaker, far too often what happens is that occasions arise when people who are adamantly opposed to certain projects see The Environment Act as a way of blocking those projects. We have an ongoing debate, one which there is no black and white, as to whether or not developments of certain types should be dealt with under The Environment Act or whether they should be dealt with under planning and land use legislation. That is where the grey area arises. That is what allows people to stand up and demand that there be an environment hearing on almost everything.

### Winnipeg Water Protection Group Crown Corporation

**Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek):** Does the Minister of the Environment have any plans to create a Crown corporation for the almost 2,000-member Winnipeg Water Protection Group similar to the one funded by the province known as the Association for Clean Rural Development or ACRES?

\* (1430)

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that the Member from Sturgeon Creek would try to link the two together.—(interjection)—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. The Honourable Minister of the Environment.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, the Association for Clean Rural Environment—I hear the alternate Liberal environment critic, Mr. Sand Box.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Order. I am sure the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) would like to hear an answer to her question.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, the editorial comment from the Opposition is that they are all environmentalists. Does that include the question, wanting to pump water out of the Assiniboine delta aquifer for 25 miles and question whether there might be some alternate supplies? Is that included in their environmental thinking? I presume it is. Water in the Town of Arden is only five miles from the Delta aquifer. That is where the supply is. Where do they think they are getting the water from? Mr. Speaker, it is embarrassing to think there are people in this Legislature who would confuse the WPG and ACRE in the mandates that ACRE has been given.

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

Order. The Honourable House Leader, what are your intentions? The Honourable Government House Leader.

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions with the opposition Parties, and I believe if you canvassed the House you would find that there would be leave for the House to recess until 3:30 p.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave that this House recess until 3:30 p.m.? At 3:30, I will ring the bells for one minute to remind Honourable Members that the House will be reconvening at 3:30 p.m. The House is now recessed.

### RECESS

\* (1540)

### NON-POLITICAL STATEMENT

**Mr. Speaker:** As previously agreed, the Honourable Member for Gimli has leave to make a non-political statement. The Honourable Member for Gimli.

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** It is indeed a pleasure for me to congratulate Julia Van Der Zweep who is from my constituency and who was chosen Miss Blue Bomber yesterday at the football game. She received her high school education from the Teulon Collegiate and she is a 22-year-old registered nurse at the St. Boniface General Hospital.

I think she should make an excellent representative for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and for the Province of Manitoba. I congratulate her.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that in view of the fact that the House took a one-hour recess to have the press conference, it is by agreement that we are going to waive Private Members' Hour today. Is that agreed?

I understand it is agreed by the opposition Parties. I therefore move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), that the House adjourn and go into Committee of Supply, the next order of business.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** In the Chamber we will have Rural Development and, due to the Meech Lake Task Force news conference that we have now, Health will be in Room 254 and by agreement we will be waiving Private Members' Hour.

## COMMITTEE CHANGE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** With leave, I would like to make a committee change.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that the composition of the Standing Committee of Economic Development be amended as follows: the Honourable Member Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) for the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor).

## CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HEALTH

**Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer):** Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. We will call this meeting to order to consider the Health Department Estimates.

When last we met we were on item 1.(c) Health Advisory Network, \$500,000—the Member for Kildonan.

**Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan):** Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us how far they have gone with the Teaching Hospital Cost Review Committee?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** I forget how many meetings have been held. I think we could probably check Hansard and it would indicate how many meetings they have held. They have had five meetings.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I was not asking the number of meetings but how far they have gone into their evaluation process.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, they have their terms of reference, they have such documents that have been around since 1984 as Manitoba Medicare which really is the genesis, or one of the major reasons behind the teaching hospital cost review. That information is being decimated, discussed, sought advice upon, as well as presumably other comparisons nationally to assure in fact that Manitoba Medicare information is current and accurate.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can we have the copy of the terms of reference for the committee, please?

**Mr. Orchard:** I believe that was part of the information package that we left my honourable friend on Thursday last. If it is not, we will make that available.

**Mr. Cheema:** Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us, under the future review there is rural health services, and do they have any planning when they are going to start the rural health services under the Health Advisory Network?

**Mr. Orchard:** They held their first meeting in September.

**Mr. Cheema:** Can the Minister of Health tell us what are their initial priorities for the rural health services?

What area are they looking to be solved as Nos. 1-2-3-4?

**Mr. Orchard:** There is a complexity of issues that the committee will, in part or in whole, be considering. The issue of qualified personnel in rural Manitoba, not only physicians because the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower deals with that, but there are other physician difficulties, recruitment difficulties, outside of the urban centre of Winnipeg. One of the issues that they will be attempting to deal with is such issues as the infrastructure involved in health care delivery in rural Manitoba.

In part that will be reinforcement of what this Government started doing, in the last capital budget, wherein we approved for construction a number of projects in rural areas of the province in an attempt to bring, from an infrastructure standpoint, the necessary facility renewal so that communities could continue with the offering of high-quality health care services and the hopeful potential for successful recruitment in various professional disciplines to their area.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, can the Minister tell us what are the terms of reference for the physician recruitment, physiotherapy recruitment and for the occupational therapist recruitment?

**Mr. Orchard:** How do you mean terms of reference for the recruitment?

**Mr. Cheema:** What are the ways of looking at improving the physician supply in rural Manitoba?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I guess we could get into the whole operation of the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower right now, but that is funded through the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

There are a number of initiatives that they are currently undertaking with the advantage of having their funding doubled last year, doubled for the first time since the inception of the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower. That has allowed them to proactively pursue a number of policy initiatives. New initiatives will hopefully follow as well. We can discuss that, but I think—

**Mr. Cheema:** We will wait for the standing committee.

**Mr. Orchard:** Yes, if my honourable friend could keep his powder dry, I think the Commission line would be more appropriate.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, what are the alternate health care plans coming through this ministry of Health? To be more specific, in the community health clinic are the priorities not only in the urban centre but also in the rural centres?

Also last Friday in the Minister's absence there was a question asked to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) in terms of health care delivery in terms of elderly services in Manitoba, to be more specific in

terms of psychogeriatric care. I would ask the Minister how far planning has gone in that respect?

\* (1550)

**Mr. Orchard:** You see, Mr. Chairman, let me deal with this in the broader form under the Health Advisory Network first, and then specifically under some of the initiatives that have been undertaken.

We have a subcommittee of the Health Advisory Network, now the chairmanship of Dr. Nina Chappell studying health services for the elderly. That is going to be a very interesting subcommittee to sit on, because I do not think there are any—let me share with you some thoughts that are now a decade old. There were initiatives taken by the Honourable Bud Sherman when he was Minister of Health back in '77-81. From that came, I believe, formerly the Manitoba Council on Aging, if my memory serves me correctly.

Basically there was a survey, a fairly substantial survey as I recall, of what the needs for seniors were and what the identified needs were in the province. You know, a substantial amount of the replies at that time focussed not on money issues but rather on program issues and on education and information and awareness issues. As a result, the Manitoba Council on Aging was formed and I think has been quite successful as a focal point in the province for concerned individuals. The Manitoba Council on Aging is not uniquely made up of members who are entirely seniors. There is a range of age and location, et cetera, et cetera, of the Members of the Manitoba Council on Aging. They provide Government with some policy recommendations and some direction that they believe would be appropriately taken.

So what has happened over the past decade, I am quite sure, and prior to that indeed is Governments of various duration in the province have enhanced program to the seniors, program availability from a variety of ways, whether it be with adult day care programs and the personal respite care programs in the personal care homes, senior support services for seniors. I mean there is really quite a successful range of programs in Manitoba for seniors. In fact Manitoba has been recognized nationally and internationally as a program leader in terms of services for seniors.

I think it is fair to say, though, that there have been a number of program initiatives taken not only in Health, but through Family Services, through a number of different areas of Government. So now the Seniors Handbook, which is published annually, has turned into a very substantial document which outlines the programs available throughout the province for seniors. The Health Advisory Network Task Force is really now attempting to take a look at the wide range of services available through Government and non-government institutions as well. There are a lot of program and support services for seniors that are offered through the private sector, like discount shopping on given days, et cetera, et cetera, that are I guess you might say the private sector's recognition of the importance of seniors to the Manitoba economy and the importance of seniors as pioneers and builders of this province so that they recognize them in a monetary way through discounts on given shopping days.

The task force is really now going to I hope provide us with some information as to whether all of our programs are not duplicating or overlapping, et cetera, et cetera, because if we are seeing a duplication of program and service, we are not making effective use of limited dollars. That might guide us in terms of a central thrust of Government as we have seen emerge with the Seniors ministry as a focal point for co-ordination of senior services.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I think the Minister did not answer my question because I asked him a very specific program. The report came last year, that was in March 1988, on a psychogeriatric review committee. There were 17 recommendations. Out of that there were nine that were supposed to be implemented on an urgent basis. Can the Minister update what recommendation his ministry has followed so far, and what they will be implementing in the future?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, that question was taken as notice by my colleague on Friday. I will be providing my honourable friend, either in Question Period or when we get to the Mental Health section of Estimates with the full and complete answer.

My honourable friend might be pleased to know that the psychogeriatric teams, the three of them that were set up at a cost of approximately \$300,000 in the City of Winnipeg that were funded and staffed, have been operating quite successfully providing psychogeriatric training to staff in the personal care homes of the City of Winnipeg.

Given a hopefully successful implementation of that program, over the next number of months we might see fit to expand that program beyond the City of Winnipeg to make a similar or an improved program or a modified program, whatever emerges from our analysis of the existing one for rural Manitoba. Certainly the department and the commission have been complemented by the number of facilities who have utilized the services of those three newly established teams, much to the benefit of their staff and to the residents.

**Mr. Cheema:** I do not want to stall things here, but is the Minister saying that from September of 1988 last year we have raised this issue a number of times, and now he is saying we have to wait for another process before he can answer? I think this is the time that probably he should elaborate on some of the recommendations they have followed and to be more specific on the nine recommendations they were to follow on an urgent basis.

What has been the process for the last six months? How many meetings have they had with the various department heads and various other groups who were supposed to be part of this whole recommendation?

I think even last year we were very sure that this program for delivery to the mentally ill should be expanded into some of the rural communities. Dauphin is one of the areas where the population of seniors is more than any place else in Manitoba. When they are in the process of building a few personal care home

beds, maybe we should look at having expansion of the unit for the psychogeriatric care at Dauphin. Can the Minister tell us if he will consider that proposal and how far the recommendations have gone so far?

**Mr. Orchard:** With all due respect, my honourable friend appears to have a one-track mind as if to say that the only report that should guide our Government is the report that he has referred to consistently for the last year or so.

Mr. Chairman, we have undertaken a number of initiatives not only in Winnipeg but in rural Manitoba. If my honourable friend had perfect recall he would know that one of the six community projects that were announced in the reform of the mental health system was a program in the central region of Manitoba, a pilot project to assist with psychogeriatric individuals in the central region of the province. That is a new initiative of this Government as are the three multidisciplinary teams of professionals in serving the personal care homes in the City of Winnipeg.

There have been a number of initiatives by this Government to assist in that problem. My honourable friend seems fixed upon perpetuating, right or wrong, whether he understands or not, that nothing is going on. There are a number of initiatives very positively going on and there will continue to be.

My honourable friend says, well why have we not taken the program that we started in September and moved it throughout the system? Mr. Chairman, I have already explained that to my honourable friend. We believe it is a good system. We funded it because we believed it was a good system. It was some \$300,000 of scarce resource that we put towards the three teams in Winnipeg. It was some 100,000 roughly in central Manitoba that we put towards the central region program, all of which to attempt to provide us with expected outcome.

My honourable friend, every program last year said, well, how do you know whether this program is working? How can you tell if this program is doing any good? Here we are telling him that we set up these programs, and we have a strong evaluation component, and until we have them evaluated I am certainly unable with knowledge. This year, I am saying we evaluate the program, but this year he is saying why have you not expanded it, without evaluation? Some consistency is appropriate. We are moving on a number of areas with psychogeriatric care and we will continue to do that with or without my honourable friends understanding and co-operation.

\* (1600)

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I am not denying that a number of actions have not been taken. What I am asking for is very specific information. Why is the Minister refusing to provide that information?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I am not refusing to provide any information to my honourable friend, I am trying to educate him as to what we are doing.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, why is he insisting not to let all of us know how far those recommendations have gone? Why is he hiding that?

**Mr. Orchard:** I have indicated to my friend approximately 10 minutes ago that my colleague took the question as notice on Friday, and the answers will be provided to my honourable friend either in Question Period, at which time my honourable friends in the Opposition will start screaming and hollering about abuse of the Question Period, because I am providing him with a full and complete answer. He can do that—(interjection)—

**Mr. Cheema:** We can use the time now to answer those questions. You have 20 minutes.

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

**Mr. Orchard:** He can either wait for Question Period, or if he thinks it is an abuse of Question Period I will give him the full and complete answer in the Estimates. The full and complete answer will come to my honourable friend. He who has patience succeeds.

**An Honourable Member:** Soon.

**Mr. Orchard:** Do you want me to give an answer? The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in his naivety of the House—do you want me to give an answer before I have the information prepared?

**An Honourable Member:** An idea of one week, one month, one year would be sufficient.

**Mr. Orchard:** I might give it to you as soon as I get it.

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

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Chairperson, on Thursday our deputy critic was, I am sure, quite active in questioning, and I know from reading Hansard asked a number of important concerns particularly relating to the Health Sciences Centre. What I would like to deal with here, and some of this may be somewhat repetitious, I have gone through Hansard to update myself in terms of the questions that were asked by Dr. Cheema, but I wanted to get a direct sense from the Minister about why we are on the area of the Health Advisory Network.

In reading through his comments last year, and looking at the status this year, there seems to have been something of a delay in putting the Health Advisory Network into place, certainly in the case of forming some of the subcommittees. I know, in a number of cases, for example in the case of the Northern issues subcommittee, various deadlines were communicated to people in northern Manitoba. It was raised with myself, as an MLA from the North, there was a great deal of concern about the delays in dealing with that.—(interjection)—I would suggest to the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) that if he wants to contribute to the debate to do so in a bit more of an appropriate way than he has been today.

I thought his comments in Question Period were very inappropriate, and this is the Minister of Northern

Affairs. When we are talking about northern issues instead of making some of the ridiculous comments he likes to make, Mr. Chairman, today suggesting that there was some reason for the bats leaving town related to myself.

**An Honourable Member:** That is right.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, if the Minister believes that, then he has taken leave of his senses, if he ever had leave of them.

I made it very clear in Question Period, I wanted to deal with the problem solving concern. I wanted to deal with the Minister straight. I could have easily responded that it is all the Government's fault, but simplistic answers like that are not accurate, and I do not think the rather ridiculous comments of the Minister of Northern Affairs did anybody any service.

His job as Minister of Northern Affairs should be to deal with some of these concerns, not get into those ridiculous side comments. I hope he would explain that to some of the people in the North because I think they would be amazed at the Minister, instead of expressing his concerns, is trying to interrupt those who are trying to express it.

Before I was sidetracked by the Minister's comments, I was asking—there was a delay in the implementation of the Health Advisory Network, in terms of the subcommittees, and I just wanted to ask the Minister for the reason behind the delay and the formation of a number of the subcommittees.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, some of the subcommittees were struck before others. For instance, the Extended Treatment Bed Review has been operating as long as any, and several other subcommittees followed. It is a process of the Health Advisory Network wishing to do it right the first time. As my honourable friend will be well aware, a number of the issues that are before the Health Advisory Network as subcommittee issues and task force issues are issues that have troubled Governments of all political stripes for upwards of I suppose two decades.

The Teaching Hospital Review, my honourable friend might recall, if he listened to questions that I posed in the House from 1984 to his Minister of Health when he was in Government, are the numbers that show up in the Manitoba Medicare report real, are they flawed, are they reasoned comparisons, or has there been an error in their compilation? Well, I was asking that question since 1984 to a Government that could not answer those questions and I would like an answer on them yesterday.

I presume, since 1984, the previous administration wanted an answer on them. We, hopefully, will have that answer emerge from the Health Advisory Network and I guess I can say to my honourable friend that the perceived—in his words—delay in establishing the subcommittees has been rather a deliberate delay in that you want to do things and attempt to do things in a correct fashion to have the membership of those committees representative and knowledgeable of the issues being studied.

Since some of them deal with problems that have been before us for a number of years and, in some cases, decades, I guess I am prepared to share a little bit of patience in having the committee do its task in a meaningful fashion and a very deliberate fashion. If that means we are held back a couple or three months in terms of recommendations, or suggestions emanating from those task forces, I am prepared to accept those delays, and have had to accept them, for instance, on the Extended Treatment Bed Review because I wanted an answer fairly quickly on that, as my honourable friend might recall.

**Mr. Ashton:** I appreciate the difficulties in forming a representative committee and I know that perhaps we have some difference in terms of the approach of the Minister. I notice my Liberal colleague raised the question why certain organizations were not directly represented on the subcommittees. I am wondering if there then was any priority that has been shown by the degree to which those subcommittees have been put in place. The reason I ask this is, quite frankly, a number of people in northern Manitoba asked, for example, why the Winnipeg Hospital Review was formed and was active far ahead of the northern health care issues, and the rural health care issues, subcommittees. In fact, I understand the Winnipeg Hospital Review has met three times. In fact, the other committees were not formed until September so I would like to ask, is the priority on Winnipeg issues? Was this just one of those things? Did it escape the Minister's attention, the Minister's office's attention? What was the reason behind the delay in implementing the rural subcommittee and the northern subcommittee?

\* (1610)

**Mr. Orchard:** No, Mr. Chairman, it did not slip my attention, et cetera, et cetera, as my honourable friend is attempting to indicate. The Extended Treatment Bed Review is an issue that was given fresh priority and hence that is the first subcommittee of the Health Advisory Network that has been established. It is the one that has been given a tight rein to provide recommendations to Government. That was a priority, Mr. Chairman, because my honourable friend might recall a number of calls made in Question Period, because we did not really discuss the issue last year at Estimates time with Commission Estimates, but the redevelopment of the Municipal Hospitals is roughly a \$50 million project that has been before five different Governments with no decision made. In the meantime the Municipal Hospital issue has been before five different administrations of Government over a two-decade period of time.

The commitments have been made at Deer Lodge which have significant impact on the extended treatment bed count, and prior to the Deer Lodge commitment of circa 1980 commitments were made to two of the community hospitals in Winnipeg, again on extended treatment beds.

Now here I had a circumstance where there was a proposal to renew, off the top of my head, probably close to 700 extended treatment beds in the system



in Manitoba. The first question I asked is: do we need this number of extended treatment beds? The answer came back pretty clearly that quite possibly we do not, and quite possibly that is why previous administrations over the last two decades had not made the decision at Municipal Hospitals which has been before five administrations.

So the Extended Treatment Bed Review was one put in priority circumstances because there is capital investment of upwards of \$70 million involved in that decision. It has to be a right decision, because I have said time and time again the easiest dollar to commit by a Minister of Health is a capital dollar.

I mean you are an absolute hero if you announce capital projects the length and breadth of this province, but the difficulty is that every one of those capital programs carries with them substantial operating costs that go on from year to year to year.

I intend to make reasoned, knowledgeable, and hopefully intelligent decisions on the capital program, because of their major implications on the costs to future generations of Manitoba, costs that compete with some of the services, both my honourable friends in Opposition have said, we need to expand in Manitoba.

So standard treatment was a priority. The teaching hospital review is a priority, because as I say, since 1984 with the Manitoba and Medicare Report, just simply bringing our average cost per day down to the national average where it was in 1965 when the study first examined statistics, we were below the national average. In a 15-year period, we exceeded the national average in the two teaching hospitals. Nearly bringing this to the national average, if that is possible to achieve, has roughly a \$35 million annualized operating cost implication.

I think that it is important to have those answers when the whole system is crying for financial contribution. The Winnipeg role definitions is a priority, because let us never stop pause in remembering that, of the \$1.5 billion, \$750 million of that is spent in the hospitals of the Province of Manitoba. Of the \$750 million in excess of \$500 million of that, or a third of the entire health care budget, is spent at those hospitals, both teaching and community hospitals in the City of Winnipeg. Since they have a significant budgetary aspect on the hospital, their role in the system was considered a priority.

The rural health services was the next issue to be dealt with, and I think an important issue as the northern health issue was, not to say they were less important than the teaching hospital reviews, the Winnipeg hospitals role definition review and the extended treatment bed review.

It so happens the first three involve in excess of one third of the budget of Health and happen to all be in the City of Winnipeg. They were put on the fast track, by and large, so we can hopefully seek some intelligent answers quickly.

**Mr. Ashton:** I take it then, from the Minister's answer, one of the factors in the emphasis placed on the

extended treatment beds in terms of the subcommittee in this particular area, was—and he did not mention this—but it was the Conservative campaign promise not to cut beds in this area until there was a review. So in other words he wanted a review fairly quickly to deal with hospital bed closures, which he has referenced in his answer as being a necessity.

Is that in fact one of the reasons why this was given a priority, because this was a precondition in the Conservative election platform to have cuts in the beds in this particular area was a review, and the Minister wanted that as soon as possible in order to implement the cuts?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, Mr. Chairman, absolutely not. You see this has always troubled my honourable friends in the NDP, because with the election of a minority Government they had already printed their pamphlets to the citizenry of Manitoba about drastic cuts in health care, and they have tried to bring that myth to the people of Manitoba, because there have been no cuts anywhere in the health care system.

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend I know does not want to listen to the answer and certainly when he has the answer will not agree with it because it does not fit the narrow agenda of the NDP wherein they want to go throughout the length and breadth of Manitoba saying, look, see what the Conservatives are doing, they are cutting back on health care. That is not what the Conservative Government under Premier Filmon is doing or will be doing.

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend, when he was Government, was part of a Government for seven years that in each of those seven years the redevelopment of the Municipal Hospitals was before his Government, the Government that he was a member of. No decision was made. I cannot answer for the thinking in an NDP Cabinet room or caucus room, but all I know is that the proposition was before them.

At the same time during those seven years of Pawley Government that my honourable friend was part of, Deer Lodge hospital was undergoing a complete redevelopment. At the same time, for four of the seven years that my honourable friend was a Member of the Pawley Government, proposals were before the Government at Concordia and Grace Hospitals, not moved on, in fact frozen in 1987 when the capital budget was frozen by the NDP Government.

I said that is unacceptable. We will not procrastinate. We will seek intelligent opinion and we will make decisions based on that intelligent opinion on the extended treatment bed issue, of Municipals, of Deer Lodge, of Concordia, of Grace, all of which were frozen capital projects inherited from the NDP Government.

I want to make those decisions in an intelligent fashion because I do not appreciate having those institutions and their supporters and proponents dangled on the end of a frozen capital program like they were with the previous Government. I want to provide them with a direction and information. That was the genesis behind the Extended Treatment Bed Review and that is the decision-making process that hopefully will ensue from



the report. It has nothing to do with an election commitment that we would not order the closing of beds for budgetary purposes which the previous NDP Government did.

I want the record to show, Mr. Chairman, that in the entire history of medicare in the Province of Manitoba, only one political Party has ordered the closure of acute care beds for budgetary reasons, and that is the NDP under Howard Pawley. The Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was a Member of that Government making that decision. No Conservative Government in the history of Medicare has ever forced hospitals to close beds because budgets were constrained. That is a legacy of the NDP.

**Mr. Ashton:** It amazes me, Mr. Chairperson, the length at which the Minister will go not to answer a question. In fact, he certainly must have the record in this Chamber, perhaps maybe challenged by the Minister of Northern Affairs as notorious for his non-answers. They compete with themselves, I think, because I asked the Minister about the Conservative campaign promise. I have heard clearly. They said they would not cut back until the review took place. They did not say they would not cut back in terms of the bed closure.

I just threw it out. I just asked the Minister if this was part of his priority and criteria because he implied that in his answer. He stated that he did not want to close beds without having this review and it was important, because there may be excess beds, to have this review. The Minister is obviously very sensitive about this matter and I do not know why. I did not load my question with any lengthy preamble suggesting anything more than the Minister was living up to a campaign promise. I think he was answering—initially in his first answer he was closer to answering my question than when I actually put it to him directly.

\* (1620)

Without the rhetoric, I would like to ask the Minister, was that not the campaign promise of the Conservative Party which was that they would not deal with closures until this review was taking place? Is this not the reason for the priority given to this, to make sure before they do move with bed closures? I have not prejudged the Minister in this area, but have they not decided that this should be the priority because one of their priorities is to deal with—and the Minister himself referred to what he called an excess of extended-care beds. Was that not the campaign promise?

If it was not, if myself and a million other Manitobans misunderstood that, if this is another case of rewriting the campaign literature, can the Minister please indicate? Because they stated quite clearly I think in the campaign that they would not deal with cuts until the review took place, and after the review took place cuts would be made if necessary. It is a fair question.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, no. The reason why I am using such full answers to my honourable friend is because I know the NDP tactic. My honourable friend has moved from a gentle reference on beds closures to now putting on the record that the Progressive

Conservative policy is to close beds. That is a false impression, but my honourable friend has learned the Jay Cowan technique of innuendo and quotation better than any other northern Member or any other surviving New Democratic Member.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend asked the question: what was the policy? The policy was—because the policy in place of the NDP Government was forcing institutions to close beds because of budgetary reasons. That was the policy of the NDP.

The policy of the Progressive Conservative Government was that there would be no closure of hospital beds until a review and a budgetary review took place, and furthermore I can say to my honourable friend that hospitals cannot close beds for budgetary reasons, period. Period, and that has been the policy since Government took over.

Now, Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend wants to get into arguments on that and we can do that any time he wants, but the record we inherited was forced hospital bed closures for budgetary reasons by the previous Government. We have said no.

We have said to those institutions: if through program changes, i.e. that you do more of your surgery on a day surgery basis, something the Liberal Health Critic has said is a worthwhile policy direction, if that has led to the demand for fewer beds or change in technology, i.e. as in respiratory beds where more patients because of changed technology can live outside of institutions in their homes with appropriate support given to them through technology and those respiratory beds are not needed from a program standpoint, yes, closures will be allowed, but that has nothing to do with forced closures because of budget constraints of the previous NDP Government. That has everything to do with pragmatic administration of the health care system which we are attempting to foster into and correct.

So I hope my honourable friend's concerns and his questions have been answered. I hope that he can now move away from the innuendo that the Conservative agenda is to close hospital beds which he has attempted to put on the record this afternoon, because that is innuendo created in the mind of a New Democratic Party Critic and that only, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Ashton:** As I said, the Minister has become very sensitive in this. He went once again at great length for 10 or 15 minutes and there was one short statement in there that answered my question. That was that pending the outcome of the review, they would consider the bed closures. In fact, the Minister had indicated his opinion before that there would be bed closures.

Now, I do not know why the Minister has difficulty with allowing that to stand on the record without the rest of the rhetoric involved. I am not talking here about summer closures, some of which have taken place under the current Government. I am saying to the Minister he is living up to his campaign platform which was one big "but." I believe most people heard the first part of the statement, no bed closures. They did not quite hear the "but." We have seen the Minister expedite the Extended Treatment Care Review and I fully expect

from the Minister's statements, his own statements, that we will see bed closures as a result of that. Now, there is no innuendo involved with that. That is the Minister's own platform in 1988, the Minister's own rhetoric. He can try and cover it with all of the smoke screen he wants.

We can get into what has been happening in Manitoba the last 10 years, the last 20 years, the last 30 years, and what will be happening in the next number of years in Manitoba in the health care system. If the Minister wants to get on that debate that is fine, but that is not the question I asked. I just tried to get him to put on the record why the Extended Treatment Care Review has had nine meetings, why it has clearly had the priority, in the Minister's own words. I was giving the Minister credit for living up to his election platform. Is he now suggesting he is breaking that? If he is, I think that would be interesting news for Manitobans.

I know he and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) some times in the past have had differences of opinion about exactly what the interpretation of platform promises, Conservative campaign promises were in the previous elections. If that is the case, let him put that out. But I said—and there are a number of other MLAs here—I think it was a fairly clear statement. I have read the campaign promises of the Conservative Party and I think I stated them fairly accurately. I have listened to the Minister's answers and taken apart the rhetoric. I think it is fairly clear where the Minister is going from.

Why is the Minister so afraid—and he calls it innuendo. What innuendo? The Minister himself said that there would be the possibility—and to use his terms—program changes of having cuts in terms of extended treatment care beds. He has mentioned that before in Estimates. He has mentioned that in the past. Why is the Minister so sensitive about that?

I am not trying to create any innuendo. I am trying to say here is the Conservative platform in 1988, here is what the Conservative Government has done, and I am just asking the Minister to confirm that it is all part of their agenda. I think the answer today indicates that it is. Is that a fair statement, or were Manitobans misled in 1988 about the true intentions of the Government, or is the priority that the Minister is putting on this area just a personal concern, a matter that is his and strictly his alone, has nothing to do with the Conservative Party, it is his agenda. I am just trying to get a clear idea of where we have been at the last 18 months and where we are heading in the next year.

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, Mr. Chairman, as much as I have attempted to provide information to my honourable friend, he has stayed with his innuendo that the agenda of the Conservative Government is to cut beds, and he said it again. If he reviews my answers he would be able to see and understand fully that I never indicated that was an agenda of the Extended Treatment Bed Review Committee. But my honourable friend wants to put those words in other peoples' mouths, and I simply say that my honourable friend from Thompson (Mr. Ashton) does not enjoy the intellectual capacity to speak for anybody and to paraphrase anybody's words.

So I would appreciate it if my honourable friend would not try to play the cutesy game of the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) in terms of putting words and paraphrasing for the purpose of the NDP literature passed out door to door. This is what I said as a result of what the Minister said and therefore I know what he is going to do. That is the old NDP trick. It has not been discussed in this committee this afternoon, and I would appreciate my honourable friend would have at least the integrity to not attempt to paraphrase and to put meaning where meaning does not exist.

\* (1630)

As I indicated to my honourable friend, I am going to go through it again for him so that he understands the Extended Treatment Bed Review centres around four facilities in three construction proposals. Those construction proposals involve either renewed beds, i.e., replacement of existing beds as in Municipals or additional beds, not cutbacks of beds as my honourable friend wants to put in his NDP literature. It involves the discussion of new beds at Deer Lodge Hospital, some 88 of which will be added to the system, not cut from the system as my honourable friend wants to put in his NDP literature. So I do not know how much more clear I can be to my honourable friend unless I print and draw pictures.

So do not let my honourable friend, without the intellectual capacity to do it, attempt to put words in anyone's mouth as to what the intentions of this Government are.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, the arrogance of this Minister is incredible. Let him not lecture the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) about the medical practice or myself about intellectual credibility. This Minister is the master at rhetoric. If he put some of his abilities into giving some answers instead of building the splendiferous renditions of Orchardology here, I think we might all benefit and I quite frankly find his statements offensive, not just to myself. I am used to that from the Minister and his bosom body, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), who today proved his own inability to deal with a serious issue in a serious way, seriously affecting northern Manitoba.

This Government has to deal with a serious situation with a medical shortage in Thompson that did not exist 16 months ago. I am not blaming everything on this Government, I asked the Minister some straightforward questions today with some very legitimate questions and the Minister did deal with some of those.

I wish the Minister in his answers would deal with a question that was put. I have been quoting to him and I would suggest that he should read his own election promises, his own platform, because I think it was quite clear the Conservative Party made an issue out of bed closures and put in that but, subject to a review, and that is all I have been asking the Minister for is asking whether this is part of the review and he has basically confirmed on the record this is part of the overall review. Now if he can put aside the arrogance and I am not suggesting that there is any hidden agenda, I am suggesting that it is quite up front 1988. I am suggesting it was very up front on the part of the Conservatives.

I would also suggest perhaps that maybe many Manitobans did not understand the full intent, did not quite realize the meaning of the but, that was attached to this no closure of hospital beds. It was a but, and it was a condition and the Minister knows it. If he cares to read his own campaign promises, the ones that were put forward by himself and by his Leader in the election are quite clear. There is no intent on my part to insinuate anything. I have just been asking the Minister some very logical questions, questions by the way that have been put to me by other people who have been asking about what are the priorities of the Government as shown by its action on the Health Advisory Network.

Why has it moved, why have there been nine meetings of the extended treatment bed review? Why has their only been meetings in the northern issues and the issues affecting the elderly, one issue, in September, why has the rural health not met until September? Are there not critical issues facing those particular areas? It is now well over a year since the budget was announced initially last year which included the funding for the Health Advisory Network.

I am asking the Minister why has there been such a delay in dealing with some other very important issues in terms, in particular, the rural, the northern, and the issues affecting the elderly, why they only met in September?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, again let me correct my honourable friend in his statement because he persists, as I said earlier, that he took offence to without the personal intellectual capacity to put words in anybody's mouth. The Extended Treatment Bed Review—

**An Honourable Member:** If you had the intelligence to go with your arrogance you would be a formidable Minister of Health, but fortunately you do not.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I realize my honourable friend from Thompson is a little sensitive when the issues are explained to him accurately. He does not like the answers and I do not like the paraphrased summation that he makes without the intellectual capacity to do it, of what my answer is. That is all I pointed out to my honourable friend, and he did it again, where he said the whole purpose of the extended treatment review is to cut beds. I have said now for the fourth time the answer to that question is no, and I have explained it to him three times.

He can read Hansard and he will see the explanation of the Extended Treatment Bed Review. If that is not clear to him after he reads Hansard and tries to ascertain the answer, I will have someone with a greater communication ability within my department, or possibly Dr. Naimark, as Chairman of the Health Advisory Network, sit down with my honourable friend and explain to him the Extended Treatment Bed Review and its process. It would save committee time because, unfortunately for my honourable friend in the New Democratic Party, the answers he is getting do not fit the prewritten information they want to send out to their constituents, and I cannot help that, Mr. Chairman.

Now my honourable friend says, why have these committees been struck first and others not, as if to

say that the only program policy agenda of Government is the Health Advisory Network. In terms of northern health issues it was this Government, not the Government that he was part of representing Thompson, that put dialysis into Thompson, Manitoba. That was this Government. That was a proactive agenda to bring health care services closer to home in northern Manitoba. After seven years of requests since 1981, a community mental health residence will be built in Thompson, Manitoba, not by an NDP Government represented by the MLA for Thompson with Premier Howard Pawley at the helm, but rather by a Progressive Conservative Government with the NDP Member for Thompson in Opposition, this Minister of Health giving approval to that program with Premier Filmon and the Progressive Conservatives in Government.

Now that, Mr. Chairman, is a very positive initiative we have undertaken. It was this Government, just two months ago, that initiated emergency medical health program funding for the Thompson General Hospital, not the previous NDP Government, to deal with the shortage of physicians in Thompson, but a Progressive Conservative Government. It was not the previous NDP Government under Premier Howard Pawley and my honourable friend as a Member that extended 24-hour emergency hospital at The Pas, a constituency held for seven NDP years under Premier Howard Pawley, needing that service. It was not approved by the NDP; it was approved by the Progressive Conservative Government.

My honourable friend wants to talk about northern health issues. He can talk all of the rhetoric and all of the broken promises of seven years and Howard Pawley, and I will talk about delivery under Premier Filmon and the Progressive Conservatives under 17 short months.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Chairman, if we want to talk about records, perhaps the Minister would also refer to the intensive care unit that was put in place by the previous Government, the air ambulance which was put in by the previous Government, the adolescent health centre, a number of significant initiatives.

I find it also a bit offensive in terms of the dialysis. The Minister is talking about Premier Filmon and the great generosity, supposed generosity of Premier Filmon, when he should be giving credit to an organization I think deserves 100 percent credit for that, and that is the Kidney Foundation. It is an issue of great concern to me. It is one I have worked with on the Kidney Foundation over the years, and I can tell you that it has been their involvement. In fact the Kidney Foundation had to go through a recent lawsuit to be able to do it, but it is in a position of actually providing resources, capital resources, to purchase dialysis units, and the Minister knows that, and I find it a bit offensive in that way.

I have said, right at the beginning of Estimates, that I will give the Minister credit. I will give the people in the community and the people of Manitoba credit where initiatives are taken, but let not him get into this political rewriting of history, because if he wants to talk about doctor shortages he should look at the figures in terms of how many doctors there were in Thompson only 16

short months ago. We did not have a major shortage of doctors across-the-board, and particularly in the case of general practitioners. As I raised today, we do have a major shortage of doctors in the North.

\* (1640)

I am not going to lay the blame for all of that at the Minister's doorstep, and I said that today in Question Period, because I know the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) would rather have gotten into some of those back and forth comments that we sometimes make that perhaps, on greater reflection, really do not accurately assess the situation.

I am not trying to blame the Minister of Health for that, but before he paints this glowing picture of the health care system in the North, and tries to brush off why he did not have the first meeting of the Health Advisory Network subcommittee until September of this year, why he did not move on the concerns in rural and northern Manitoba until after the concerns in Winnipeg were met with, before he does that I think he should paint a clearer picture of the situation in northern Manitoba, and it is not a rosy picture.

If the Minister wants to go up and campaign on what has happened in terms of the health care system I will be glad to campaign him anywhere in northern Manitoba, not just in Thompson but throughout the North, major initiatives were taken and the Minister knows that.

If that is what he wants to do, if he wants to get down to that level of political debate I will debate him any time, any place, anywhere, including in my constituency, including in any constituency across Manitoba, both as the MLA for Thompson and as the newly appointed Health Critic for the New Democratic Party, I will debate him on that.

Before he tries to sneak that stuff on the record let the facts be clear in terms of the record in northern Manitoba. Let him, by the way as a Member of the Lyon Government, try and justify why there were serious cuts that took place while, when we took office in 1981, there was a major increase of about 16 percent in one year in the health care funding.

In the case of hospitals throughout Manitoba it took years to rebuild the damage that took place when we had a majority Conservative Government. I can tell you if there are any good things happening in Manitoba right now it is because we have a minority Government, and this Minister cannot introduce his arrogant right-wing agenda on the people of Manitoba.

You know, I am amazed how sensitive this Minister gets. I ask him a few questions about the Health Advisory Network and all of a sudden he gets into a defensive posture about trying to debate overall health issues. The reason is obvious, because he does not like answering direct questions. He has repeated the same things now for about the third and fourth time that he introduced in his opening statements.

If we want to continue throughout the Health Department Estimates I will do it and put the facts on the record. If the Minister wants to, in his arrogant way,

start going around and trying to take credit for initiatives taken—I would say credit where it should belong, and that is the Kidney Foundation of Manitoba—let him do that. Let him and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) put on the record the comments they put on the record today.

I am fine with that. I am glad to see they are showing the true attitude of this Government, but I am asking the Minister straightforward questions. These are questions that have been asked to me by northern residents in the case of the northern subcommittee, and in fact I had someone ask me seven months ago what the Government was doing. It had promised to have the Northern Health Committee put in place and it did not. It has only started to be in September.

In the meantime, the situation in the North has deteriorated rapidly, especially in the number of positions we have. The Minister need only look at the situation in communities such as Thompson, which he referenced earlier in terms of the medical shortages. The situation has gotten worse, and I have stated on the record the reasons for that. I am not blaming the Government, I am not laying it at the feet of this Government for the entire problem in northern Manitoba. There are outside factors such as the growth of the walk-in clinics in Winnipeg and the Minister knows that, such as the general situation in the supply of trained doctors. There are a number of situations that have been put in place.

That is why I have been asking the question why the Minister has said that he in a lot of cases will not move until he gets the reports from the Health Advisory Network, then the case of rural and Northern Manitoba waited until September. Why has he waited that length of time when the situation has been deteriorating and it is not just in northern Manitoba? The Minister, as a rural representative, should be aware of the situation in rural Manitoba as well in terms of shortage of doctors. I think every MLA in this House is. That is why I am asking him, why this set of priorities? Why did he, as a rural Minister, he as a Member who should understand the situation outside of the City of Winnipeg, move with the review of the Winnipeg hospitals prior to the review of the rural and Northern hospitals? Why did we have to wait six and seven and eight months even for the Minister to live up to his stated deadline? Those are the questions I would like the Minister to answer.

I am not going to get into the rather petty, personal insults, the arrogance of this Minister. Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) was not here earlier. The day that the Minister of Health can lecture the two opposition Critics on either intellect or the medical practice, I think will be a long day away. About the only thing this Minister can lecture us on, and he is an expert at it, he is better than I am, is in terms of arrogance, and perhaps the second thing is not answering questions.

So if we want to get down to that level let us put that clearly on the record. But, I am asking, why was there the delay, and a follow-up question to that is, last year the budget for the Health Advisory Network was \$500,000.00. I would like to ask whether that was spent and in what form it was spent. On which of these various subcommittees was the money spent?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, I do not want my honourable friend to put false information on the record so I am going to correct him. I only lectured one opposition Critic and that is the one who just finished speaking—and I did not lecture him—I simply cautioned him on not trying to put words in other people's mouths without the intellectual capacity to do that. I did not lecture in any way, shape or form my honourable friend the Liberal Health Critic because he has asked rather reasonable questions today and he has accepted answers in a rather reasonable fashion.

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend from Thompson is the only one who is ranting and raving and wildly flailing his arms and interjecting and getting terribly upset and exercised because my honourable friend from Thompson is trying to say, and I will paraphrase him, and he can correct me if I am wrong. He is trying to say that nothing has happened in northern health services delivery because we did not establish the task force of the Health Advisory Network to deal with northern health issues.

Mr. Chairman, I pointed out to him that was not the only sole, single focus of this Government's effort in exploring northern health issues and I attempted to put on the record for my honourable friend's elucidation a number of issues that have been resolved, long-standing issues that have been resolved in the 17 months we have been here, dealing with northern medical issues.

My honourable friend then came back ranting and raving about the air ambulance. I want to tell my honourable friend that as Minister of Transportation for the Province of Manitoba in late 1980, I approved the purchase of the first jet ambulance for emergency patient evacuation out of northern Manitoba in the history of this province.

My honourable friend from his seat natters away, executive jet, executive jet. Tell the number of Manitobans who were evacuated at 400 miles per hour from Native reserves, a 1000-foot gravel strip in northern Manitoba, that that plane did not save their lives, and trying to say that it was simply an executive jet shows the man's ignorance of the issues, and I am sorry to put that on -(inaudible)- does not understand the issues that he is talking about, and he tries to convolute any answer I give him.

\* (1650)

Now my honourable friend would be pleased to know that last fall in terms of air ambulance for a cost again of approximately \$300,000 we approved seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day emergency physician coverage for the air ambulance to provide safe patient transportation, a program that was not in place when my honourable friend was representing northern Manitoba from the Government's side of the House. So again all I am trying to do without offending my honourable friend from Thompson (Mr. Ashton), is point out that many issues of concern are being addressed throughout the health care system, including in northern Manitoba.

The northern Health Advisory Task Force Network will consider larger picture planning issues in northern

Manitoba in a reasoned fashion. It has met once already and will continue to meet and hopefully provide the Government some recommendations from those members on the committee who have an understanding of northern health services. My honourable friend from the New Democratic Party who says we did not strike the committee because we did not care about northern Manitoba might contemplate the answer to this very simple question. I asked his colleague from northern Manitoba—one of his MLA colleagues in December—to provide me names of people with knowledge and who would be willing to serve on the Health Advisory Network Northern Task Force. That was in December. Ten months later I have not received a single recommendation from his colleague representing northern Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, the Health Advisory Network did strike the subcommittee. I believe the members have some knowledge and some insight to provide and will provide recommendations to Government in a very non-political, non-partisan fashion and objectively provide guidance to Government in terms of program review, policy update and even funding matters, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I have a question regarding teaching hospital reviews. Can the Minister of Health tell us, that the other day in the House in replying to a question from the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) as regard to the ophthalmology program, if the cost is being considered in terms of under the teaching hospital review?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, not on the reinstatement of the ophthalmology program. No, that is not one of the things that we are looking at.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, if the Minister does not mind, can I ask him a question about the ophthalmology program right here? As you understand that I do have some information from various groups who are actively involved in this to establish the ophthalmology program, can the Minister of Health tell us, is he considering Health Sciences or Seven Oaks Hospital for such a program?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, that is a possible consideration because nothing is written in stone in terms of teaching programs. What I was going to say the other day when I was answering those questions to the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), is that one of the problems with the teaching program as I understand it is that the Royal College in giving accreditation because the accreditation was removed about five years ago now—one of the things that they appear to be, set upon is not the right terminology.

One of the criterion is the availability of beds for the teaching program. My honourable friend knows that the technology in ophthalmology has changed very incredibly so that—while I am only guessing, I could be out—probably 95 percent of the procedures can be done on an out-patient basis. That has put some interesting constraints on reinstatement of the program because we believe—I should not say we believe, I said it may well be that we can reinstate a teaching program

without a dedication of beds to the program by having an out-patient teaching program.

I took the opportunity to view a complete out-patient program in ophthalmology accredited for teaching purposes at Loyola University in Chicago. It works extremely well and should we be able to reinstate the program, and that certainly is an agenda goal that we have, my sense of it would be that we would want to reinstate it focusing on the technology of today, i.e., out-patient surgical procedures, not a dedication necessarily of beds. That may cause us a problem with the certifying body, but I think it is a problem we can get around.

I think we can be leaders in Canada with a reinstated program not solely centred around dedicated beds. Let me just try to briefly fill out the answer too. Some of the newly acquired equipment at the Health Sciences Centre would fit in the teaching program. I am speaking from purely a layman's perspective, but it certainly seems common sense to me that with the expanded surgical program in ophthalmology that is currently at Seven Oaks, that would offer an excellent training environment. I certainly have no aversion to having that incorporated into a reinstated ophthalmology training program. But I just want to say to my honourable friend that we are not even at, what I would call, a sophisticated negotiating stage with the Faculty of Medicine at this stage because a number of things had to take place first.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, we definitely applaud that 1 million was given to the Health Sciences Centre, and that was a big help. There is a serious concern concerning the number of ophthalmologists right now in northern Manitoba, and about approximately I would say one-third or one-fourth will retire after maybe three to five years. We are not able to attract many people to Manitoba.

Without this program, which is a very essential part to provide services, I think we will be causing damage not only to the U of M but also to the whole program as such.

Why I raise the question about Seven Oaks Hospital, how it could be used in this program without taking any side, whether it should be at Health Sciences Centre or Seven Oaks, I think we have to make this space used in the best way possible. As I understand, Seven Oaks Hospital does have some space, because of the unused space for the obstetrical services, and maybe a combination of the outpatient at Seven Oaks Hospital and a part of the program at the teaching hospital could be a starting point. That may help to decrease the initial cost and I think that will be to our advantage also to Seven Oaks. Because as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) said, the number of procedures being performed at Seven Oaks Hospital, and as the cataract surgery is done, on a daily basis people are going home after three hours and also that would give us some guidance that this Government is serious by making some of the hospitals for specialized services. That would definitely save money in the long run and also will establish the programs indefinitely.

This is in my constituency and I do not want to have a misinterpretation that I am asking for my own political

purposes, but I think costwise, and to have about 10,000 hours total you need that much area in a clinic to be in place. The only difficulty we may come across at Seven Oaks will be that some of the teaching staff you have to have on a full-time basis and the director of the program, but that is going to be a cost at any other hospital anyway. I think it will be a good idea to make a study in that respect and try to make sure that the program is brought in place and also at a reasonable cost so that we do not have to spend extra money to build up their space which is already available at Seven Oaks Hospital.

**Mr. Orchard:** I wonder if I might just -(inaudible)- he is entirely within the realm of possibility what he is suggesting because his guidance as to where we are coming from in this Government policywise—the Family Practice Residency Program, of course, is very much a part of Seven Oaks and we, in an assistance to make practice in rural Manitoba a more comfortable and acceptable practice for new graduates, with the additional funding to SCOMM, have expanded that program permanently to Dauphin. All I am saying is that if it makes sense, we are not tying all of the teaching programs to the two teaching hospitals if there is an appropriate role and fit.

In part, some of the Winnipeg hospitals' role definition may well point us to specific program areas and an enhanced treatment role in some of the Winnipeg community hospitals as a result of the Role Definition Task Force. Yes, I accept my honourable friend's comments in this regard and they are not impossible comments to achieve.

\* (1700)

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, as regards the Health Advisory Network, a last question. Page 2, paragraph 3, says one of the ways will be to inform both the general public and health services community about the matter being addressed by the Health Advisory Network. Can the Minister of Health tell us what is the mechanism in place to let the public know and have their input on all these important aspects and how they are communicating with them?

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, let me indicate to my honourable friend that the pamphlet he is reading from is part of the communication aspect and you will note that in the bottom of page 2, if you know of anyone who might be interested, it says, or have questions, comments, suggestions or advice to offer, please write to Brian Gudmundson. So you know that is part of it.

Now, in terms of the northern and the rural, a number of the communities, if not all of the communities will receive communication that the task force is formed and will be seeking their advice and their opinion. I do not believe the task force has even ruled out visiting some of those communities directly so that they can receive, if you will, onsite information on both northern and rural health issues.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, I think it will be extremely useful that if this information is not already



being sent to all the community groups, to all the self-help groups, to all the hospitals, I am sure it is already going to the nurses units in the northern areas and also to some of the family services clinics and to the counselling services. I think it is extremely crucial that people have input so that they can have communication directly with all the committee members, and have the input because I think each and every Manitoban is concerned. We are spending 1.5 billion and still are not getting the right services in some areas. I think it will be one way to save money in the long run and I will ask the Minister again how they are doing it, maybe they should consider that.

**Mr. Orchard:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice):** Can the Minister tell us what the extent of the mailing list is on that particular group, for instance? Do all of the professional associations who would deal in health related issues be receiving that information?

**Mr. Orchard:** As far as I know, professional associations involved in health care, community organizations involved in health care like non-Government organizations, heart association, lung association, personal care homes, the administration and boards, same thing with hospitals. It is a fairly wide distribution of the pamphlets and I just indicated that some 3,000 are printed and probably a couple thousand of them mailed out.

**Ms. Gray:** Would that include then the Manitoba Association of Social Workers and the Manitoba Home Economics Association?

**Mr. Orchard:** I cannot answer specifically for that but I am informed they are, yes.

**Ms. Gray:** Yes.

**Mr. Ashton:** When I left off with my questions to the Minister, he once again did not deal directly with the point. I really feel it is not appropriate for the Minister, I mean he would like to be debating strawmen in this current situation. He likes to build up these big strawmen and then debate those rather than the questions that were asked.

I asked the Minister a very clear question that has been expressed to me by people in the North about the priority given to the northern issues and my own question about not only northern but the rural areas. I did not suggest that nothing would happen in the meantime pending the outcome of the review of these particular committees, but I would point to the Minister's own words when he announced the Health Advisory Network. I have been reading through them from October of last year when he went through in Estimates about the Health Advisory Network and the importance he attached to its deliberations. At that time it was, I think, quite a major part of the Government's program.

The Minister criticized, for example, the Liberals for talking about a Royal Commission on Health Care, said this was a better process to follow.-(interjection)- Well, the Minister did criticize the Liberals on the Royal Commission, I am sure the Liberal Critic may wish to argue his case on that particular point, but I have the Hansard right in front of me. I at no time suggested that nothing would happen in the North until that was taking place, but what I did suggest to the Minister that there were growing problems in northern Manitoba and in rural communities. I mentioned one specific area that he is certainly aware of and that is in terms of the shortage of physicians unless the Minister try and once again debate strawmen.

I did not suggest the Government was 100 percent responsible for the problem. I am not the Minister of Northern Affairs. I do not make the kind of ridiculous statements he likes to make on the record. I did not suggest that. I did not suggest it in Question Period today when I asked some very important questions involving the Thompson General Hospital. Let him not debate that particular strawman. Let him deal with the basic question that I was asking and particularly in regard to the rural and northern subcommittees.

What I would like to ask the Minister and ask once again is, first of all, what was spent out of the \$500,000 that was budgeted last year? The Minister did not answer that question, where it was spent, and what the particular mandate is of the six committees that have been formed thus far so we can at least gauge where the money that was budgeted went last year, where it has been spent and what activities have taken place. I mean the Minister has announced how many meetings have taken place with the various different subcommittees, but perhaps if he could just give us some general information about what has happened over this past year since we discussed the Estimates last in October of 1988.

**Mr. Orchard:** Last year's budget was expended to the tune of \$58.00.

**Mr. Ashton:** It is a pretty staggering commitment on the part of the Conservative Government to this much-vaunted Health Advisory Network, but I would like to ask the Minister the mandate of the committees that have been formed, specifically the six committees that he referenced have already met. Perhaps if there is any detail on those answers it might be easier for the committee if he could provide that detail to us in writing. I know I would certainly be interested in it as critic to know exactly what their mandate is.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend seems troubled with a \$58 expenditure, saying that it is not much of a commitment to health care, but—

**Mr. Ashton:** No, I said it shows your commitment.

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, my honourable friend now has changed his story and he says it shows our commitment. That is not Government's commitment. Government undertook to establish the Health Advisory Network which we did. The Health Advisory Network had a

\$500,000 budget at its disposal. It met several times before fiscal year end, March 31, 1989, and only spent \$58.00. Now rather than say that is terrible, I think that my honourable friend ought to say the Health Advisory Network Committee Members were very responsible, they did not go out there and spend, spend, spend because they had the money.

My honourable friend might want to read Question Period. I will admit a little guilt here, I did kind of lecture my honourable friend from Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) about spend, spend, spend when he raised similar questions on Thursday. But, Mr. Chairman, what we will provide to my honourable friend is the same information package that I provided to the Member for Kildonan on the Health Advisory Network, the committees, their membership, et cetera, et cetera, because a number of the questions that he is asking today were asked and dealt with last Thursday, or Thursday last.

\* (1710)

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, I am sorry, I must have missed that one reading through the Hansard, the \$58 figure. I realize that should have jumped out at me. It showed such an incredible amount of commitment on the part of this Government to this much-vaunted Health Advisory Network.

All I would say to the Minister is, before he tries to twist it around and say how responsible the Members of the committees—I was not making anything other than the original question, but now that we have the answer I think the question should be not the committee Members responsible, I think they are eminently responsible people. I know of many of the people who are on those committees and I think they should be credited for putting their name forward and be willing to be part of this process.

The real question though I think that begs to be asked is the Government's commitment—and let us not forget, this is part of more than \$20 million of underspending in comparison to last year's budget, considerably more than that. We are talking about priorities here. I think that is the important issue whenever we are dealing with the health care system.

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

I ask the people of Manitoba, what kind of commitment does it show when you budget \$500,000 for this "urgently needed" Health Advisory Network and you expend \$58.00? I do not think anybody in Manitoba is going to be gullible to fall for the Minister's sleight of hand to suggest that this somehow was all of a sudden a health advisory network only needed \$58 when it was budgeted \$500,000 to begin with. Surely if that was the case, that would show nothing more than the gross incompetence of the Minister for coming to this committee and having as part of the budget for his department \$500,000 which he later spent the \$58 worth.

My original question, and I still do not think the Minister really has dealt with the whole framework I am trying to put it in, in terms of the priority of this Government, what happened to the much vaunted

Health Advisory Network? Is this like the Health Promotion Trust fund? Is the Minister going to be recycling this, announcing it and reannouncing and reannouncing it?

I realize we are into recycling now in terms of the environment, but surely the Minister can only recycle these things so far without either having to put up or shut up. I mean, \$58 out of \$500,000 budgeted in the last budget, is that a commitment? Is that the importance the Government shows to the Health Advisory Network? Three out of the six subcommittees did not meet until September including the rural subcommittee, the northern subcommittee and the subcommittee on elderly care issues. Is that the commitment of the Government?

Now if it has taken them this long to get the Health Advisory Network process in place let me ask the Minister this question: when will the Health Advisory Network process be fully under way, and in this case, when will the three other committees be put in place? When does he anticipate the subcommittees providing some form of report to the Minister or some recommendations whether it be in a formal or informal way?

I realize there may be some informal contacts with some of the committees, but what is the time frame he now is expecting as we head into the current fiscal year?

**Mr. Orchard:** I am quite willing to repeat these answers, because essentially there were similar questions that were asked on Thursday of last week in which I gave a time frame of expected reports on the extended treatment review being approximately six weeks from now.

I know my honourable friend is new as the Health Critic. He indicates that he knows a number of people on the Health Advisory Network, and I presume from that he respects their professional competence in their commitment to sit on this.

Mr. Acting Chairman, as I pointed out to my honourable friend and to Manitobans, when I announced the Health Advisory Network, there is only one bureaucrat, only one civil servant on the steering committee and that is my Deputy Minister. That was very, very deliberate, because if you look at previous royal commissions and task forces and review commissions et cetera, et cetera, if you take a look at them you will probably find them to be composed in the majority of civil servants so Government is controlling the agenda and I say run the risk of the accusation of controlling the conclusions.

I recognize that my honourable friend wants to find fault with everything that is being done by this Government, but the Health Advisory Network is responsible by and large for setting its own agenda in terms of creation of the task forces. We have given them the general areas under which we want problems to be studied and solutions proposed. Those general areas are part of the establishment of a number of task forces under the Health Advisory Network. Some of them have been meeting for longer periods of time than others.

I do not sit down as Minister and dictate the agenda day by day of the Health Advisory Network. They are volunteer people. They are not paid civil servants sitting on here and carrying out a mandate. They are by and large people with expertise and with concern that want to share their expertise, their knowledge and their abilities in problem resolution. If you want, it is the ultimate expression of good will in the partnership for health, because we are saying quite clearly that we do not have all of the answers to health care reform, to future health care policy: (a) within the ministry of Health; (b) within the political confines of the Progressive Conservative Party; and that is why we have chosen to bring in people from a very diverse background to give us and to contribute to the resolution of the problems their unique perspective, knowledge, community involvement, professional involvement.

Now, Mr. Acting Chairman, there is no question. I would be delighted to have 17 recommendations from the Health Advisory Network sitting on my desk waiting for decision making, but I do not have that. That is a criticism that one can level at me as Minister, and at members of the Health Advisory Network. I know my honourable friend does not want to do that because I think he respects the depth of expertise that is part of the Health Advisory Network and its task forces, so that I do not think that he wants to criticize those people—the chairman, or any of the others on the steering committee.

Mr. Acting Chairman, because this is a new concept and has not been tried in any other jurisdiction in Canada, I am prepared to take the slings and arrows of criticism of my honourable friend in the New Democratic Party for not having any decisions laid before me by the Health Advisory Network. Because I believe in this case that when problems have beset Governments for upwards of 20 years that even Manitobans with my honourable friend's political cards in their hip pocket are expecting this Government to instantly have solutions to all of those problems that so troubled and the solutions so evaded the previous NDP Government for 15 of the last 20 years of Government in this province. I am prepared to rely on the expertise that is there at the Health Advisory Network to provide me with reasoned reports.

If that happens to take an extra couple months, I guess I just plain and simple have to live with that, take the criticisms my honourable friend wishes to level at me, live with it, because I believe the process is appropriate and I believe the process will work for the betterment of health care in Manitoba—a goal I believe all Manitobans share, whether my honourable friend shares it or not.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, I know the Liberal Health Critic asked a number of questions in this area, but I am asking the Minister his time frame. I am not criticizing the members of the Health Advisory Network. It was the Minister who announced this process. The Minister put a lot of emphasis on the process and its conclusions. I am not blaming the members of the committee for not having met or been informed. Obviously that was something that was influenced to a large extent by the Minister's own actions.

\* (1720)

In fact, I would like to ask the Minister specifically, just so we can get an idea of the time frames we are looking at, when he appointed each of the chairs of the subcommittees, when they were fully appointed, when they were in place, and then when each committee held its first meeting.

To repeat the question which the Minister I think perhaps missed last time, he, in Estimates on Thursday, made reference I believe to the extended treatment bed review having its report out by November. So obviously that answer is in terms of that one out of the six have been informed. What type of deadline are we looking at? I mean surely there must have been some communication back and forth between the Minister and the committees as to when they would be giving him their reports. So I would like to get a time frame of when the Minister formed the committees, and basically when he anticipates their reports will be in?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Acting Chairman, the Health Advisory Network Steering Committee was struck in December of last year. The subcommittees, the task forces, I did not choose the members of those task forces. Those were chosen by the Steering Committee of the Health Advisory Network, and they established not only the timing but the membership of those subcommittees, because they are operating with some independence from my office on the task force make-up and agenda.

**Mr. Ashton:** The Minister a few minutes ago referenced to having asked an MLA for a name. Was that for one of the subcommittees and if so, what is the relationship between the subcommittees and the Minister? On the one hand, the Minister is suggesting the subcommittees are essentially reporting to the steering committee. On the other hand, the Minister himself has at least in this one case, and I would ask him if there are other cases where he had asked for names or recommended names, either the steering committee or directly. What is the Minister's role vis-a-vis the steering committee in the appointment of the subcommittees?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Acting Chairman, my honourable friend is quite correct. I asked in December of one of his colleagues from northern Manitoba for suggested names for the Health Advisory Network Task Force on Northern Health. It was my intention to pass those names on to the chairman of the steering committee, Dr. Naimark, for his consideration as people recommended by the MLAs who served the region to be studied. Whether those people would have been chosen for membership on the task force would be at the discretion of the steering committee.

I did not receive any recommendations from my honourable colleague for the North in the NDP, so therefore I never passed any recommendations on as to membership on the northern task force, nor have I passed any names on for any of the other subcommittees. As I have indicated to my honourable friend, in the make-up of the steering committee there is a great diversity of individuals from professional

background, community service background, from academic background, from where they live in the Province of Manitoba, and it is from that very diverse blend of individuals on the steering committee that I take some comfort that their collective wisdoms and knowledge will strike task forces that have the appropriate individuals as members. To date, I am satisfied that they have met that agenda.

That is why I have not been personally involved as Minister, or Government has been involved in the choosing of the memberships of the task force. I realize that is an entirely foreign concept to my honourable friend from the New Democrats who insisted on having their own people on pretty near everything that ever went on in Government. We have not done that because I do not want anyone to come back and say to me, well sure, that is a recommendation but what would you expect? All there was, was Party hacks and flacks on the Health Advisory Network and the task forces. That accusation cannot be levelled at this Government because we have genuinely tried to bring in people with expertise, knowledge and commitment to the issues being studied.

I fully admit to my honourable friend, that carries with it substantial political risk, because Government and this office and this Minister have no control over the decisions the task force come up with or the timing under which they come up with. I have been urging the task force on extended treatment bed review to speed up a report because that is needed for decision-making purposes. I am hopeful, after offering two different target dates for a report, that the one I offered on Thursday is achievable, that being the end of November.

**Mr. Ashton:** I think, Mr. Acting Chairperson, we are finally getting somewhere. In the case of one of the subcommittees the Minister has raised possible reporting deadlines. In the case of the extended-care subcommittee he has raised a possible deadline. What then has been his discussion with the other five subcommittees that have been formed, and what are his intentions with the remaining three subcommittees that he indicated are in the process of being formed at the present time?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Acting Chairman, let me tell you that in terms of the teaching hospital review, I believe that is the subcommittee in which obstetrics—no, pardon me—that is the Winnipeg Hospital Role study, that issue is also being fast-tracked because of the unique pressure experienced at St. Boniface General Hospital in obstetrical services, and in effect an underutilized service at Misericordia, Victoria and indeed even Grace Hospital. So that is a report that we wish to have some guidance, as a specific issue of the Winnipeg Hospital Role Review Task Force, and I cannot give my honourable friend an approximate deadline at this stage of the game as to when that issue might be reported to Government.

**Mr. Ashton:** I asked about the number of subcommittees. Am I to assume from the Minister's answer that no deadline has been set with the other reports? I mentioned the three that were just formed

recently, the rural health, the northern health issues, and the elderly care issue subcommittee. Has the Minister not set any deadline whatsoever for their report, even a guideline as to what those committees should be doing when they should be reporting? Is there no agenda been set for these committees?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Acting Chairman, my honourable friend is correct. There are no deadlines on reports from the other subcommittees. There is an understanding that when they have a recommendation to make to Government that all subcommittees and the steering committee of the Health Advisory Network are encouraged to report to Government as quickly as possible. I believe that the individual makeup of those committees has most of them being action-oriented and desirous of making recommendations to Government as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am growing increasingly concerned as we get into the discussion of this particular area. The Minister has set up a Health Advisory Network and initially there was a great rush to see it finished. It was urgent. This was vital to making decisions.

Last year in Estimates this Legislature approved \$500,000 funding for that in October of 1988. I realize that is a bit later in the year than is normally the case, but in October of 1988 that was formed. The steering committee was formed in December, if I am not correct, and since what has happened is \$58 has been spent out of the \$500,000 on the budget. The Minister has only in the case of one subcommittee indicated any real priority, has even discussed in terms of any particular dates, in terms of the reporting, Mr. Acting Chairperson. What does that say to the people who are looking to the results of the other aspects of the Health Advisory Network?

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Chairman, I just want to read for example the information provided me by the Minister himself to show the importance of the subject material they are dealing with. I want to deal for example with the rural health services issue and put it in the context of an issue that I raised today in the Legislature. It made reference specifically to the ongoing difficulties in recruiting health care professionals to small communities. The Northern Health Services Task Force made reference, and I will quote it in its entirety, in the second paragraph it talks about: this task force will consider cost-effective means to expand the scope of health services in northern regional hospitals which may reduce inter-hospital transfers to Winnipeg. It is to recommend means to improve recruitment and retention of positions and other health professionals.

Mr. Chairman, now we are faced with a situation in rural and northern Manitoba where there is an increasing problem in terms of maintaining positions in our communities. It is an ongoing problem, but it is becoming increasingly a problem. I cited the case in Thompson for example just today where the departure of two more physicians, and two more that are affected by that at the Burntwood Clinic, are putting our health

care system in jeopardy. In fact, what could happen as a result of the shortages in the case of the Thompson situation is we will be down to one obstetrician to serve more than 800 deliveries. More than 40 percent of those deliveries are high-risk deliveries. We are in the situation, unless the hospital is successful in replacing Dr. Bhat who will be leaving shortly, there may have to be people shipped to Winnipeg, not just in the tens but in the dozens and in the hundreds, especially in the case of high-risk deliveries. Now I am hoping it will not come down to that.

\* (1730)

I know the hospitals and various people in the community are working actively on it and I also will say the Minister is working on it. I take that from his answer today. I will say that he at least acknowledged today the fact that there is a problem and has indicated that he is attempting to do something about it. Here we have a rural subcommittee and a northern subcommittee.

I just quoted one issue—we could get into other issues—but an issue which is growing increasingly worse in Manitoba. I am not blaming everything on the Government once again. Let the Minister not try and throw out that straw man to argue with. I am not trying to blame it entirely on the Government. I am just pointing to an obvious fact that there is an increasing problem facing us in terms of physician shortages.

I am wondering why the Minister has gone through such an exercise to establish this whole Health Advisory Network, why we have six subcommittees in place and why the Minister has set up a budget in last year's Estimates of \$500,000 which is repeated in this year's Estimates at the same level, when what we see is quite a different picture from the rhetoric that surrounded it. We have seen \$58 expended. We have seen delays in the committee being put into place. That responsibly sits with the Minister. We have seen delays in terms of the Minister even setting any kind of agenda with the subcommittees.

Surely if rural health care issues are important or northern health care issues are important or, for that matter, Winnipeg issues are important, the Minister would have sat down with either the steering committee or directly, now that the subcommittees have been formed, and said to those individuals, I would really request that you have this report done on an urgent basis, these are important priority issues.

What we have seen is the Minister has only put priority on one particular area. The other five he set no deadline. Unless I missed something in the answer, I stand to be corrected. If the Minister has asked for the reports in the five committees that have been formed, apart from the one he mentioned and the three that are in the process of being formed, let him put that on the record. I look forward to hearing his clarification on that. Am I to understand that the Minister does not view these matters as being of the same priority as the other matters, that the Minister has set no deadline for the report? I mean these are dealing with important issues. Why has the Minister refused to sit down with

the subcommittees and stress the need for recommendations in these areas?

**Mr. Orchard:** I am fully prepared to discuss this at length with my honourable friend. First of all my honourable friend, and I already said this to him once today and he will pardon me for repeating it, Health Advisory Network and its subcommittees are not the only initiative taken by Government to resolve the various issues facing Government. What the Health Advisory Network is struck to do is to establish task forces involving people with experience, with knowledge, with the background outside of Government to provide recommendations to Government on the issues as placed before the task forces.

Some of the task forces had put before them specific questions to which Government wants a rapid answer. One of them is the Extended Treatment Bed Review which we wanted an answer yesterday on and have not received, but will.

The second issue of another task force, I have told my honourable friend, is the obstetrics planning in Winnipeg community hospitals and teaching hospitals which we want an answer on as soon as possible.

The other issues, if we have specific questions that we are not dealing with in other forms, yes, we will put specific questions to them and give them deadlines.

The task force is not the only issue going on. I will repeat for my honourable friend, if he wants, the number of new initiatives in northern health that we have undertaken in 17 months without a Health Advisory Network Task Force. I will explain to my honourable friend a number of rural health issues that have been addressed by this Government without a Health Advisory Network Task Force operating for the last 17 months.

This Government does not view the Health Advisory Network as the only vehicle by which problems are resolved. We want to bring together the expertise in the community to focus on the larger issue of policy planning, issue development, and issue resolution, because we do not believe that only Government has the answers.

My honourable friend says, what are we doing about physician recruitment to rural Manitoba? Again, I hate to give myself a good-news answer to my honourable friend, because I know he does not like those - (interjection)- he just said no, he does not like good-news answers, and that is correct because the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower was created 11 years ago by the Honourable Bud Sherman to address the issue of rural physician recruitment.

I will give you the circumstance, as of May 9th when I was sworn in to the office of Minister of Health, there was no Chairman of the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower and had not been since the appointment to the office of Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, His Honour Dr. George Johnson, who was chairing the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower. My honourable friends in the previous administration, for whatever reasons, decided the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower did not need a chairman.

Am I here to say they did not care about rural and northern physician recruitment and placement because they did not have a chairman? That would certainly be a partisan approach, but I want to tell my honourable friend that one of the first groups I met with was the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower. I established co-chairmen in Dr. Dow and Dr. Postl. The co-chair, the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower, they met in my office, that is the first time the chairman of the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower and the executive director had been in the Minister's office for approximately five years, and I found that astounding.

Am I to draw or conclude from that that the previous administration did not care about rural and northern physician recruitment because they did not regularly meet with the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower? I do not know whether I can draw that conclusion.

I can tell you that since I have been in the office of the Minister of Health I have probably had eight meetings with the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower, the co-chairmen and the executive director to discuss issues of medical manpower recruitment and retention to rural and northern Manitoba.

That is the reason why we doubled the budget to the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower, to allow them to expand for instance the family residency training program in Dauphin, to provide training in a rural environment and the other initiatives that have been undertaken. That is the largest increase to the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower since the inception of the committee 11 years ago by the Honourable Bud Sherman.

Am I to conclude from that, that because the previous Government in seven years did not expand the budget of the Standing Committee of Medical Manpower, they did not care about northern and rural physician recruitment and retention? I do not know whether I can say that or not, but if I was wanting to be partisan I would say they did not care, because they did not resource it and fund it adequately. We are putting our money where we think the priority of this Government ought to be.

\* (1740)

The MMA recently sponsored with the Faculty of Medicine present, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons present, with Government represented not only by my Deputy, but by the executive director of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and rural communities and northern communities involved, held a conference—and also the Department of Education was represented—to talk about the issue of physician recruitment and retention to rural and remote Manitoba. That conference was a first, probably would not have been possible in the environment of Government-MMA relationships that existed upon my entry to the office of the ministry of Health because my honourable friends, for whatever reason, wanted to make war with the physicians rather than to use them and their knowledge and their expertise to help resolve problems.

Now, am I to conclude from that that the NDP did not care about physician recruitment and retention in rural Manitoba, because they made war with the MMA rather than attempted to use their talent and their abilities and their knowledge in resolving recruitment problems to rural Manitoba? Well, if I was partisan I would say that, but I cannot delve into the minds of the NDP for seven years and why they let SCOMM deteriorate, why they did not fund it, why they did not put a chairman in place, why they did not hold meetings with the MMA.

My honourable friend attempts to indicate that this problem is Manitoba's problem. Maybe I should do my honourable friend a favour sometime, maybe I should take him to a provincial Ministers Conference wherein every Minister of Health from the provinces and the Territories are talking about the same disconcerting problem of rural and remote physician recruitment and retention. Let me tell you the environments are significantly different province by province, and I have to tell my honourable friend that we have significant advantage in some of our programming, in some of our resourcing, in some of our policies, than other jurisdictions, but the problem still persists.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, that meeting in Portage la Prairie, where we had Government, two departments, Health and Education, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Faculty of Medicine, the MMA and the communities from rural and remote Manitoba around the planning table in co-operation, was a positive step in beginning the long path to resolution of the problem, because Government absolutely cannot do it alone. Number 1, they are not trusted by some of the players that were around that table up until now because the motivations of Government in the past have been questioned by some of the players at that conference.

I believe that we have a working atmosphere of trust and co-operation that has been reinstated since May 9, 1988. I want to be very blunt. I intend to use that working relationship and the expertise from those various professional groups and organizations to help Government resolve the problem for rural and northern citizens asking for, and expecting, quality health care. I am going to be very, very selfish in using that kind of expertise that is there, not for partisan reasons, Mr. Chairman, but to solve the problem, because if one mandate was given to this Government it was to solve problems, not create them, and we are well on the road to problem resolution.

Now, my honourable friend wants to indicate that this Government cannot have much of a commitment because the Health Advisory Network is only now starting to meet and to deal with the issues. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Chairman. The Health Advisory Network is an important vehicle of decision making and recommendation and planning to Government, but is not the sole reason that Government takes action. This Government has taken action in a number of areas and will continue to do so in an attempt to resolve problems, problems that my honourable friend's Leader indicated in Question Period last week in many cases are inherited problems.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, I would like to get into a fairly lengthy discussion in terms of physician



shortages. I raised it in the context of the Health Advisory Network because it was referenced as part of the mandate of Northern Health Services Task Force. I probably will not do it at this point, but I know in discussions with the Liberal Health Critic it was perhaps suggested that we might deal with that under the standing committee line. So I would be quite glad to deal with it at that point and indicate to the Minister that if he wants to get into the historical situation that the problem is growing worse, and that is why I am asking for this indication of where the Minister plans to go, not that it is the only thing that can be done.

I realize the Minister today even indicated that he had taken some interest and would consider some action in regard to the case I raised in Question Period, but I did want to just—by the way going back to our previous conversation for the Minister's edification—put on the record the campaign promise of the Conservative Party. He suggests I somehow put words in his mouth or in the Conservative Party's mouth. In the election they talked about, we will put immediate halt to permanent bed closures "pending a comprehensive review," and that was the whole basis of my question, what the comprehensive review was, whether the subcommittee's recommendations were part of that review, and it is the Minister's own Party platform that was quoted at that point.

But I also want to deal with something else that the Minister and the Conservative Party said at the election in the context of the Health Advisory Network. They said in the election, and they were very clear on it, that this would be the basis of an action plan that would be put into place in 1990, and here it is from the Brandon Sun of Wednesday, April 13, 1988. The network of doctors, hospital officials' unions—while we saw that that did not happen, the unions were not included as part of it but I suppose we can deal with that another time—and the public would be asked to come up with a plan by 1990. That was it for the Brandon Sun of April 13, '88.

The Free Press, if the Minister cares to check the record, reported that once again the then Leader of the Opposition, the current Premier (Mr. Filmon), said that a health care advisory network composed of health care professionals, unions—once again they broke that part of the promise—and consumers from throughout the province will be formed to review the entire health system and recommend an action plan that is to commence in 1990 and will lead to a comprehensive realignment of the health bureaucracy. There are various other similar versions of that particular quote.

Am I, as we are sitting here in October of 1989, to assume that action plan will no longer be available in 1990? I have not seen any evidence today in terms of either the background of the Health Advisory Network with its \$58 of expenditures last year, the fact that it was not formed until December of 1988, the fact that we have only one out of the six subcommittees that have been formed thus far having anywhere close to a report ready, am I to assume that the 1990 action plan will not be in place, that campaign promise no longer applies, or am I wrong?

Is there going to be some indication of rural priority to the Health Advisory Network that we have not seen

thus far? I can indicate to the Minister, I am not interested in its academic findings and I am not even suggesting it is the only that can be done. I am not suggesting that the Minister wait to fill the vacancies in rural and northern Manitoba that are existing with physicians until this Health Advisory Network brings in its report of the subcommittee. But surely, if you have it put in place, and surely if it is part of the mandate, and surely if there is a problem and it is a growing one. There is a growing problem with shortages in rural and northern communities and other problems to which we can get into as we further discuss this matter.

But surely if there is a growing problem, and the Minister's own Leader has committed himself to bring in an action plan by 1990, surely I would say it is fairly legitimate for the people of Manitoba to expect having probably read these campaign promises that were outlined in 1988 that this Health Advisory Network would have come up with at least some sort of a report. I am not blaming the people in it, let us get that straight. It was the Conservative Party's so-called campaign commitment. It was the Minister's own commitment really last year during Estimates.

Has the 1990 deadline come and gone now, or are we going to have this much wanted action plan, I assume in time for Estimates in 1990 which would mean by April of next year? That is only six months away. Does the 1990 deadline apply?

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

**Mr. Ashton:** So the 1990 deadline has since been scrapped, I take it, from the Minister's comments. When he is saying no, is he saying no the deadline does not apply anymore, or is he saying no the deadline applies?

**Mr. Orchard:** Now my honourable friend has asked three different versions of the same question.

**Mr. Ashton:** No, I asked you a version and you answered no, and obviously you intended another answer, so I thought perhaps I would clarify the question.

**Mr. Orchard:** What was the question again?

**Mr. Ashton:** Does the 1990 deadline for the Health Action Network's Report which would lead to this much-fought action plan still apply? Are we going to see the action plan in 1990 or not?

\* (1750)

**Mr. Orchard:** It is the sincere intention of this Government to have the action plan.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Chairperson, I just have a couple of comments that I will defer to my opposition colleague. I know he has a number of other questions in this area, but if \$58 out of a \$500,000 budget in the last year expenditure is any indication of the Government's priority in the Health Advisory Network, some priority, and if the Minister's statement that he still has some sincere hope that this will be brought in 1990 is any indication of this Minister's sincerity and this Government's sincerity, I would say some sincerity.

I think what we have really seen in this particular case is a lot of propaganda by the Conservative Party in the election, and very little action. In fact, if the Minister could channel some of his copyrighted arrogance into some action in the areas that he himself says are important, I think we might see somewhere, as I said, Mr. Chairperson, some priority and some sincerity from this Minister and this Government. The role word should be incompetence and the Minister knows it.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend is really making something of a fool of himself, because we spent the whole afternoon discussing the Health Advisory Network for what narrow partisan purpose he had in mind, I do not know, other than for him to say that because we spent \$58 by March 31, 1989, that the Health Advisory Network obviously is doomed for failure because it did not spend, spend, spend.

I do not know whether that is a fair assumption of what one could conclude from this afternoon's discussion with my honourable friend from Thompson. I have consistently explained to my honourable friend, and this flies in the face of what he has told us twice already this afternoon and maybe a couple of other occasions prior to arriving here as Health Critic. He has always said that if this Government does something right, that he will give the Government credit, and then he pursues an attack on the Health Advisory Network as being—and I am paraphrasing his attack—as being the only vehicle to solve problems on northern and rural health issues.

When I start laying out some of the things we have done, and I did not even mention the double of ambulance funding, the first time in the history of the Province of Manitoba.

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

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**Mr. Ashton:** You have cautioned us, Mr. Chairperson, to make sure our comments are strictly relevant to the line item we are dealing with. I have been referencing the Health Action Network where there has been very little action. I do not think it is appropriate for the Minister to suggest that we are refusing to deal with other issues when, in fact, I just indicated a few minutes ago we will be dealing with other issues under the appropriate line of the Estimates, so it is not appropriate for the Minister to go into items which are not really appropriate to this. We are dealing with the Health Advisory Network. If the Minister wants to deal with other issues, we will deal with them under the appropriate line in Estimates. We should not put words in the opposition Critic's mouth and get into an irrelevant debate.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Honourable Member for his comments. A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Chairman, let me conclude quickly because my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), wants to pose some questions.

I have consistently attempted to point out to my honourable friend from Thompson a number of the initiatives that have taken place in the last 17 months, issues which we inherited in need of repair in the health care system. The Health Advisory Network will further that goal of repair and reform of the health care system, and it is a unique vehicle to do so in that it is not predominantly controlled by Civil Service appointment, hence by Government. It is a very independent and free-thinking organization and as such I think can provide Government with good advice. I am willing to wait with patience for that good advice.

In the meantime, we are continuing to solve such problems as residence for community mental health people in Thompson, dialysis in Thompson, northern physician emergency in Thompson, 24-hour service in The Pas, 24-hour seven-day-a-week air ambulance service, that has all been brought in since this Government, ambulance funding that has been doubled, SCOMM committee funding that has been doubled, co-chairing of the SCOMM committee, new programs to help and assist and recruit in the retention of physicians.

As I said to my honourable friend when he made his opening remarks some 10 days ago, you would almost think he fell out of a mushroom cap and just magically appeared today with the tenor of debate in questioning he has, because he has not lived up to his commitment to recognize positive direction taken, positive initiatives when taken and, Mr. Chairman, he wants to hang his hat on the Health Advisory Network. We will debate that issue this evening, tomorrow, Thursday of next week, Thursday of the week after, if my honourable friend wants—be pleased to—but the point being I have faith that the Health Advisory Network will work for the betterment of health care and reform of the system in the Province of Manitoba even if my honourable friend is a nay sayer in that regard.

**Mr. Cheema:** Mr. Chairperson, could we go to the next questions here? During the summer in the House we raised a serious question about the disparity between Health Sciences and St. Boniface Hospital as regards to the cardiac surgery. At that time, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicated that he had set up a committee. Was it a part of this Health Advisory Network or a separate committee? If he does not mind, he can tell us when we should expect a report from them.

**Mr. Orchard:** Not part of the Health Advisory Network but the cardiac care committee is operating independently to take a look at waiting lists and scheduling of cardiac surgery between the two hospitals and would be reporting. Hopefully by year end or early into the new year we will have the report from Dr. Israel's committee.

**Mr. Cheema:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, a final question. Can the Minister of Health tell us that any reports coming out of all the steering committees will be binding on the Government or not?

**Mr. Orchard:** No, the reports out of the committee are not binding on Government. They are like any other

Monday, October 23, 1989

study of the health care system where a Government may choose to implement any or all, or even none of the recommendations because Government does not have control over them. I am sure my honourable friend would see some difficulty if they recommend doubling the budget of the Manitoba ministry of Health. That would be a recommendation we would be hard-pressed to accede to.

**Mr. Cheema:** On a different issue now, can the Minister of Health tell us now what is the policy of this administration in terms of alternate health care planning for the future?

**Mr. Orchard:** Well, now, alternate health care planning means many things to many people. I guess I would have to ask my honourable friend what is his envisionment of alternate health care, because it may well fit with some of the direction and some of the initiatives that we are taking. Then again it may not, because we may disagree on what are alternate health care systems.

**Mr. Cheema:** I think it is extremely crucial and important for the public of Manitoba because we are spending, as I will repeat it again, \$1.5 billion, and still most of the people are not satisfied with our health care system. It is the general consensus all over Manitoba, and in fact in Canada and the rest of the western world, that we have to move away from the traditional so-called acute care situation in a hospital and move toward some of the areas of deinstitutionalization of patient care as, i.e., No. 1, to establish more community health care clinics; No. 2, have extended care facilities which we have.

We will wait for the bed review report but also providing more day hospitals, providing a psychogeriatric unit to the existing hospitals and also providing some more home care services. The Minister does not like this word when I say more home care services, but definitely there is the feeling among the public that this administration is not doing enough in terms of home care services because that is the one way of saving money. Definitely these are some of the aspects that I think we need to hear from the Minister.

What is the Government's policy, because it is not going to have a—the results of some of the new initiatives they are going to take, it is not going to show in one month or one year or two years. I think it is going to come in five years or 10 years time. Definitely we will applaud any initiatives which are going to help for the further planning for health care. We have consistently raised these questions because I feel very strongly that there is a general consensus among the public. They are ready to accept some changes as long as they are explained very well in terms of how these services will be provided.

This notion of beds, we spend 45 minutes discussing how the acute care beds, they are elections promises. I think the important thing we have to let the public know, as a Member of the Legislature, is what is the policy now. We cannot just go by what happened 16 months ago as long as there are clear-cut directions

coming from this administration, how they are going to use the beds as well as the out-patient clinics.

I will certainly wait for the Minister's comment after we come back, I think if he does not mind because that will save us time in other areas such as the Manitoba Health Services Commission, but it is extremely crucial for the public to know what direction this administration will take for the alternate care in Manitoba.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hour is now 6 p.m., I am interrupting proceedings. The committee will return at 8 p.m. this evening, and we will relocate to Room 255.

## SUPPLY—RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski):** I call this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in the Chamber, to order to consider the Estimates of the Department of Rural Development.

When the committee last met on Thursday, October 19, the committee had been considering item 9, Manitoba Water Services Board—the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Chairman, I have a question to the Minister on this Water Services Board dealing with the West Lake proposal. I would like to ask the Minister to outline to the committee the reasons for the licence being withheld, or withdrawn, that was issued August 1 by his colleague's department in a letter from Mr. Brandon to Mr. Griffin, general manager of the Water Services Board.

Just to start the discussion on that, perhaps a little bit of background on that from the Minister, in terms of why the Government is withholding proceeding on that issue at the present time?

**Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development):** Mr. Chairman, first of all before I answer the question I would like to leave with the Honourable Member for Dauphin the information that he requested at the last Session dealing with the projects that we were currently involved in through the planning process. I have a copy here for you if you would like.

Mr. Chairman, in regard to the West Lake project, maybe what I should do is explain to the committee that the West Lake project referred to by the Honourable Member for Dauphin is an area west of Lake Manitoba including the Town of Gladstone and the Plumus area. That area of course is an area that has been plagued by water problems I suppose for a long long time.

Those communities have approached the Water Services Board and PFRA and have requested a supply of water through some method. It was PFRA and the Water Services Board that indicated that the best way to supply water to that area was to find an adequate supply of water and pipe water to that area as the Water Services Board and PFRA have done in numerous other areas in the province.

When the supply of water was identified, which happened to be the Carberry aquifer, there was a

process put in place to review the environmental impact through the Department of Environment. I believe the Honourable Member knows, under the new environmental legislation a project of this nature does require a licence as do other projects. Therefore the Department of Environment became involved, and in fact did an impact study on the area and had initially indicated the issuing of a licence to draw water out of the Carberry aquifer.

\* (1550)

Through the public hearing process that was entered into by the Department of Environment, and I could ask the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) to expand on this if you would like, but through the public process it was very evident, very clear that there were grave concerns of people living either on the aquifer or in near proximity of the aquifer, in regard to the drawing of water for the West Lake project, and specifically directed towards the maintenance of a quantity of water over the long period of time.

I guess some of the other fears that were expressed from time to time were if you in fact draw water for this project, how many others will there be and who (inaudible) and also because of the calling into question the information that had been presented by both PFRA, Water Services and others by the people who are living either on the aquifer or adjacent to the aquifer.

It was the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) who decided to suspend the licence temporarily until we were able to—and as I had indicated before, require or get the services of a consultant that would be able to look at all other sources of water there, give us some costs and give us the effects and impacts.

In the final analysis, before the spring of the year, let us once and for all determine what the source of water should be for the West Lake area and that is where we are today.

We have called for proposals by consulting firms with some reference to some expertise on aquifers, on proposal call to do a study of all sources of water and some of them might not even have been identified in the studies that were done by the Water Services Board and PFRA.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister has indicated that after the licence was approved, and the Environment Department had done the appropriate environmental analysis to determine the impact and determined that they could grant a licence to provide water to the Town of Gladstone, the Village of Plumas, Glenella, and 700 farmsteads—and they are desperately in need of water, and it is becoming more acute all the time—from I believe the Assiniboine Delta aquifer. Is it also the Carberry aquifer or is that another name for that particular aquifer because the Minister used that term? In any event, there was a lot of response from the public.

I guess the first thing that comes to mind, and I want to ask the Minister a bit more in this regard, there were six alternatives reviewed, I understand, the PFRA

and Watersheds and Water Services Board, Jackson Lake Dam, Lake Irwin, Whitemud River Dams, Lake Manitoba, Firdale Dam and the aquifer, they found the most efficient in terms of costs was the one that was licensed, the aquifer, and the best quality of water.

So I wonder on what basis the opposition, other than political opposition to something that perhaps was not well understood, in terms of the information that was available was not properly conveyed to the people in terms of the impact that this water withdrawal would have on the aquifer and its levels.

Whether in fact it was just a natural reaction to such a valuable commodity such as water that was not well placed, in that the Minister and his colleagues could have simply undertaken a major information campaign to make these people aware that in fact, and the Minister can correct me, this would only draw down the licence that was granted 53.6 cubic feet per litres per second, that in fact would only be about 2 percent of the sustainable yield of this aquifer, 2 percent and that the aquifer is only 18 percent allocated. If those figures are not correct, then I ask the Minister to give me the correct ones, but if they are correct and it is only 18 percent allocated, what is all the fuss about? This is the sustainable yield of this aquifer. The sustainable that means that the officials of the various departments determine the allocation based on the ability of that aquifer to yield that amount of water in perpetuity, forever in the foreseeable, well more than the foreseeable, the non-foreseeable future, 18 percent. This is only 2 percent, and it is for human consumption when one considers that The Water Rights Act says human consumption is the top priority.

So I ask the Minister then: is this information available to the public, and has he made an effort to make it available to them so that a lot of their concerns perhaps could be dealt with?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member should know that the study that was done on alternate sources other than the Assiniboine Delta aquifer, that I suppose is the right terminology to use although it has been called by various names from time to time, indicated—and I should say that they were a reconnaissance done of probable costs of alternate sources of water. Therefore it was our view that we did not have adequate information to determine once and for all whether in fact the source that had been indicated as a source of water for that area was in fact the best long-term, sustainable source of water.

I think the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would agree that because of all the concerns that have been raised from time to time about the ability of aquifers to deliver over the long term, and I guess we could refer to the Ogallala aquifer—and that I guess is the most famous one that we have all heard about in the States—and the depletion of the Ogallala aquifer as many other aquifers in North America have been overtaxed and their ability to recharge has been far exceeded by human use. Therefore we thought it would be useful to make sure, to have a final look, even go beyond the requirements of our current environmental legislation that is in place, even go

Monday, October 23, 1989

beyond that, and look once more and satisfy ourselves that the concerns that have been raised by those people who made representation through the public hearing process of the environmental process, that those fears could once and for all be allayed.

In response to the questioning as to whether we passed on the information, I think Water Service Board as well as PFRA staff did their utmost to assure the people who were concerned about the ability of that aquifer to actually deliver the amount of water that would actually be required, currently, could be satisfied by the deliverability of the aquifer.

However, Mr. Chairman, when you look at the Province of Manitoba and the possibilities that we have in that area as well as some other areas of special crops production, job creation, we look at decentralization, we look at diversification, and we look at expanding our ability to create jobs in rural Manitoba, I say to you that I think it is inherent and I would hope that the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would concur, that we assure ourselves that what we are doing is the right thing, and that maybe some of those supplies of water we currently hold underground would best meet the need for future development.

\* (1600)

Human needs should always be first and foremost, but if there are large bodies of water such as Lake Manitoba holds that could be used and accessed, even if we spend a bit more money originally to put the system in place, over the long term it might be by far the most economical thing to do.

That is where we are at today. I believe it is important that Manitobans do everything possible to ensure that we will not damage, No. 1, our ground water supply, whether it is the maintenance to recharge aquifers or whether it is to damaging some other way through polluting or contaminating. I think it is important that we do those kinds of studies to satisfy ourselves that what we do that will affect—and remember once you tap that aquifer and build a pipeline, you can in fact draw water out of that area for a hundred years or more. I think those are the kinds of things we must consider before we embark on a project of the magnitude that we are considering, and I realize full well, as do my colleagues, the difficulty that this has put the residents of the Plumias-Gladstone area in. Therefore we put in place an amount of money, a quarter of a million dollars, that would be put in place for a trucking assistance program if it can be matched by the federal Government.

Remember, Mr. Chairman, up to now agriculture water has been provided by PFRA and last year the federal Government through PFRA initiated a trucking program, an assistance program for farmers to supply water for their needs, both domestic and agricultural, to maintain their livestock herds. This year, we, because of action that we took here, decided that we as a province would get involved in making sure that the impact of our decision was not only incurred by those that we had made the decision about. I would hope that the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would

concur that the decision that we are making is the right one in the long term, the best one, and if in the final analysis the Assiniboine Delta aquifer is the one that we must access for a supply, then so be it. My colleagues and I were simply not satisfied that the information we had was adequate to ensure that there were not other sources of water that could be accessed as economically or close to and over the long term might be, in fact, a better source.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, this is an area that could be examined for some time and, of course, there is not, because of the limits on Estimates discussion, as much time as I would like, but certainly I want to express surprise that the Government, if matched by the federal Government, will be spending a quarter of a million dollars for hauling water. The people there are desperately in need of water. Some 700 farms are affected, and because of the drought it is a very difficult situation for them.

I say, certainly it is important and it is good that the Government is willing to help, but the fact is that is not the long-term solution and the Minister knows it, so what he is doing is spending more money than he should be in this Government because he is not able to put in a long-term solution in a timely way. The studying has been done for—well, the Member for Gladstone (Mrs. Oleson) asked, what did we do? There were major studies undertaken since 1980, and they did examine six different alternatives. Rhetorically to the Member for Gladstone (Mrs. Oleson), whose constituency, whose Town of Gladstone is affected—but of course other areas of her constituency are affected on the other side, and I know the dilemma she must face on this issue. But I ask the Minister then, with those studies done, is he not to believe that they provided the kind of information that is required to make these decisions? That is the basis for most of the decisions that are made by the studies that are undertaken by these groups. They have the best qualified people.

The environmental studies were also undertaken by the Minister of Environment's Department, and the cost analysis was done, and the Minister is talking about Lake Manitoba. What they said about Lake Manitoba is this was the most expensive option and the poorest quality of water; and the Hummerston Exit for the Assiniboine Delta aquifer would be about \$8,338,000, and the Lake Manitoba would be \$12,419,000, at least 50 percent greater cost. So what is the Minister saying here? If those costs are correct, by far the most efficient way of doing this would be by the aquifer; and secondly—she asks us, just ask my brother, because she is worried about Glenboro. The fact is—and if I am wrong I want the Minister to correct me—18 percent only of that aquifer is allocated. This is on a sustainable basis. This is not that you take it out, 18 percent, and then there is 18 percent less water in there. You can get it up to 100 percent allocated and still have that aquifer exist for hundreds of years—90 percent or whatever allocated. That is on a sustainable basis, so what is the Minister trying to tell us? We are talking about 2 percent here for this operation, for this project—2 percent only.

The people are in desperate need there. We saw these people speaking on television; we have talked with them; we know they are in desperate need. So what is the Minister trying to do? He is talking about 2 percent allocation more above the 18 percent. He is talking about industrial development and greater job creation. Sure, that is great, but we are talking from 18 percent to 20 percent allocated. Then we have 80 percent left for all of these other good things that the Minister talked about. So are my figures wrong on this?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, your figures are correct in one sense. The figures that you have are estimates done on those areas that were seen as secondary options.- (interjection)- My colleagues and I are not satisfied that the costing done on optional sources of water were adequate and adequately done. Water Services Board will tell you that they did a reconnaissance of possibility and did some estimating as to costs of those other options.

It was deemed at that time that the Assiniboine Delta had enough yield to supply that area, and I think nobody has called that into question, whether it in fact does not yield enough water currently.

\* (1610)

However, which area is going to be next? Do we say no to them? If you say yes to one to draw water out of the aquifer and pipe it to a community 25 miles down the road, which community will be next? Morden, Winkler, Altona? Will they be the next ones? Winkler's aquifer is being overdrawn annually now, and I say to you that adequate studies should have been done before on that aquifer before the overdrawing of that aquifer actually occurred. Which one is going to be next?

For that reason, we took it upon ourselves to take another look to make sure that the costs of alternate sources or optional sources were done adequately; that we could tell the people over in the area these are going to be your long-term costs, these are going to be your ongoing costs without question. Certainly I am sure the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would concur that when the Minister or the Minister's staff meets with those communities, and say these are going to be your costs because they will not be borne by the province or by the federal Government, some of these costs must be carried by individuals in those communities as they have been in other areas. When farmers have to put their hands in their pocket and pay beyond \$5,000 to put a pipeline, a pipe to connect their household taps or their livestock sources of water, they want to know what costs are going to be incurred annually to supply those waters.

I do not believe that we had adequately done studies that we could go out there with assurance and say these are going to be your costs and this is what we would estimate your long-term costs would be.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I believe that we owed it not only to the people of the Gladstone-Plumas area but to all Manitobans to assure ourselves that we would in fact be providing water from a source that would have long-term sustainability.

I believe that it would also be remiss of me not to say that even if we had said that we would proceed with the project this year, that we would not have been able to start construction early enough after the environmental assessment was done to bring water to that area. Therefore we would have had to in my view support, through some sort of assistance program, the trucking of water into that area for this coming year.

If we can get the studies done adequately and on time maybe for next year we can start construction early enough on a system that will allow us to deliver water to at least some of those people and bring water closer to those people.

That is where we are today and that is what our concerns have been. I hope that the Honourable Member is not going to sit here and say we should not do the kind of study, we should not insure ourselves; that he is saying go ahead, plow ahead and throw caution to the wind and pay no attention to 1,100 people who have said, "be careful." So we listen to 1,100 people from that area, and we are going to be somewhat careful before we proceed. We are going to be adequately assured before we source any area for water. Maybe what I could do, Mr. Chairman, if you would allow, I would ask the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) to make a few comments as to why some of these things in fact happen.

**Mr. Plohman:** I would like to respond to the Minister and then the Minister of Environment maybe wants to respond to what I have to say plus what the Minister has to say, so it will be more encompassing for him. I am sure he will want to respond to my first statement that here the Minister is talking about me proposing, advocating, that we want him to throw caution to the wind and go recklessly forward without doing the proper studies.

The fact is these studies have been done. There is information here that demonstrates, and the Minister has not refuted those studies. The studies have been done on the alternatives. The costs have been determined. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) has excellent staff who know exactly what kind of water and how much is available in those aquifers. They have been doing these testings for years.

Yes, the Winkler aquifer has been overallocated, and it has been for years, because there was not proper planning years and years before. The fact is, we have a situation here where those same experts are saying, no, this aquifer is not overallocated, it is not even close to being overallocated, it is only at 18 percent, and what we are talking about here is 2 percent. We are talking about desperate needs.

Surely whatever system the Minister comes up with or the government comes up with in terms of priorities as to how water should be allocated would place this high on the list. If they do not, they should amend The Water Rights Act and say, no, human consumption should not be the top priority, if they do not agree with that. It is there, it is in the Act and the Minister is in essence violating that when he delays on this project because that is the top priority. I say to the Minister,



he should consider very carefully if he is or is not violating that particular Act when he holds back on water for human consumption while holding it for other means, when The Water Rights Act states human consumption is the top priority.

I ask the Minister and the Minister of Environment if he is going to respond to and perhaps indicate whether in fact those studies that have been done reflect the actual costs? Do they reflect the problems associated with Lake Manitoba water that would be the alternative that the Minister has talked about? He referred to Lake Manitoba, \$12.4 million for a pipeline, poor water that needs water treatment. Surely the additional costs would be tremendous. Who would have to bear them? The local communities—are they going to be expected to put up this extra money under those circumstances? Is it a fact that only 18 percent of this aquifer has been allocated and only 2 percent additional would be required to meet this need?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):**

Because this is the Department of Rural Development, and certainly the Minister for Rural Development is quite capable of answering the question, but because I am the Minister who suspended the licence for the Assiniboine delta aquifer, the licence for the wellsite, I would like to put a couple of words on the record to clarify the thought process that went into that. Quite frankly when you look at some of the concerns that are raised in this Legislature regarding whether or not environmental hearings should or should not be held, whether or not their hearings should be put in place of certain planning processes that are required.

There has been quite a lot of work done on the opposition benches, for example, regarding a bridge on the end of Moray Street as to whether or not it should have an environmental impact study, whether or not the development over Omand's Creek should have an environmental impact study. There are some legitimate questions about whether or not these are planning issues or whether they are environmental issues. This issue, I think, while it was one of the first times the Water Services Board has been required to subject a project to the Clean Environment Commission hearing. What it did by putting it before the Clean Environment Commission hearing was raise the broad issues of water allocation and prioritization across the province.

There was a problem out there that I think the Member for Dauphin probably fully realizes was there, from his previous experience. So he, along with us, has to consider the fact that Governments for years have not perhaps spent enough time looking at the broad-based needs for water supply across this province. I think he also knows that certainly there has been some plan that indicates the Assiniboine Delta aquifer could in fact be the hub of a centre water supply for a major portion of the province, and certainly to have accepted this project *carte blanche* would probably have entailed the acceptance of that principle as well.

\* (1620)

If there is to be some original blame that needs to be laid in this situation perhaps it should be right here

where I stand, Mr. Chairman, because perhaps we did not scope the hearings widely enough when we asked them to examine this issue, because we asked them to examine this wellsite and the amount of water it would pump. What happened was at the hearings they had concerns and reservations that were raised that had nothing particularly to do with this wellsite, but indicated a far broader concern on principles and policy of water service across this province—(interjection)—exactly. The Clean Environment Commission then made its report to the Department of Environment, which stated that this particular wellsite, in their opinion, had a particular ability to produce water that would satisfy the demands of the pipeline.

I know the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) understands the process, but I want it put clearly on the record that the Clean Environment Commission reports to the Department of Environment, and they were issued a director's permit. The way the legislation is written, the Minister of Environment and Cabinet and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council are the appeal to that permit. So the process worked as the legislation was laid out.

I was the appeal to that licence. We have not withdrawn the licence. We have however suspended that licence during the period we are using to gather further information regarding the supply of water from Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of things I could put on the record regarding the alternate supplies of water. I believe this project was brought forward very carefully with the idea that water supply from the alternate sources was priced, but not necessarily priced in a precise manner as to what the costs would be.

I think there are other things that need to be considered out there, and I am sure the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), who have both raised this issue, might want to consider.

There is a water treatment plant in Gladstone. Where it gets its water however is the question. They maintain the water they are getting out of the White Mud river is not adequate, that it is too costly to treat. Almost every small town in this province this summer had lousy water, unless they were in the eastern part of the province.

You cannot deny that towns such as Rivers—and I had a personal opportunity to observe their problems where they are taking water out of a fairly large reservoir but taking it out of the bottom, that water in dry periods is absolutely rotten. It would cause you to upchuck your cookies, if you will, to stand near the outfall into the creek at Rivers after that water has sat in that lake during a dry period. That is the problem every other community in this province has had to face along with the community of Gladstone.

The question is whether or not there is enough water coming down the river as well. That water is supplied from the outfall of the aquifer after it comes through the upper end of the Whitemud and out of the Lake Irwin reservoir.

So there were clearly a number of issues that were raised. Those issues, I think, and viewed in the time frame that the Minister just referred to a few minutes ago, indicate that it was wise to have some further consideration of the options. This is not in any way to be seen as a lack of willingness on our part to make sure that water is supplied into that area.

I think, however, you also have to remember that we are talking originally about agricultural supply. All of a sudden, the project, as it developed, was one of personal and household supply.

I guess my comments have now exceeded perhaps those concerns of the Environment Minister because I live directly in that area. The people in Plumas are my friends, and if you think that I made the choice I did on this one for any other reason than environmental and policy concerns, then certainly I can show you the opposite.

There is a concern to get water into that area. It has been identified as one of the hardest areas to supply. We have made our commitment through the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) that we will make that supply, that the decision will be made, but I think at this point it is very supportable in light of environmental concerns.

I would just indicate one other thing. That the degree of concern that was raised in the petitions that came to me as the appeal to this licence, the ones that carried the most weight to me were smaller in numbers. There were a large number who simply said: "do not pump out of the aquifer".

There were however, a significant number of appeals that came forward that said: "consider carefully what you are doing—long-term export out of aquifers; consider carefully whether or not there is enough known; consider carefully the impacts of future on future plans of the decision that is made today."

I think that while it is always frustrating to see Governments that are not acting as quick as they would like to, and it is ever more frustrating for the Members of that Government, but by next spring, I can assure you that decisions will be made and progress will be evident.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, in interest of time, I will conclude my remarks on this issue, and to just indicate to the Minister and to his colleague, we may have another opportunity in the Environment Estimates to discuss this further, but clearly we are going to be very interested in this issue I can indicate to the Members.

We are talking about 2 percent here. We are talking about human consumption, and I believe that the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) made my point when he said that the aquifers is huge and may supply the better part of the province. That means that is all the more reason why the ownership does not lie in those communities that happen to sit directly above the aquifer or on parts that were known or used in the past. That ownership is much broader than that, and they cannot be selfish about it and say, "this is our water".

This is something like offshore fisheries and so on after the 12 mile limit, and I think that the other communities have just as much right to that water as those people who are already drawing from it. Those communities—and that is the dilemma that the Government perhaps wants to wrestle with in terms of how they are going to allocate, but I say look at your Water Rights Act. You know that human consumption is top priority; you also know that this is only 2 percent, and surely in the desperate need that some have that this project could have proceeded while the planning that this Minister talks about—the long-term implications of works further applications of aquifers—is determined in terms of priorities. That could be done at the same time. We are only talking about a small amount here, but I will leave that, Mr. Chairman, at this particular time and just to indicate that we will be raising these issues in the future.

**Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk):** I realize that time is short, but having come in in just the last section of this discussion, I just want to put on the record that there are many reasons for not pumping out of the aquifer as there are for pumping out of the aquifer, and I hope the studies and time taken to improve the monitoring of the aquifer will pay off. Because if you lower the aquifer too far, you will not have the recharging of the streams, the dugouts, the wetlands, and so forth.

I would point out as well then that there are reservations that apparently have pipelines out in Lake Manitoba that are filtering the water and maintaining a good water supply for themselves. So there are alternatives, and that we cannot rush into this decision, but understanding that it is more environmental, I withhold further comments until that process takes place.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that comment very much. Those of us that live in areas that do not have the luxury of just punching holes in the ground and drawing water up realize what that statement means. Those of us that have to, for instance, take their water supply out of the Red River. I realize full well what it means to have costly water; what costly treatments are because that is the only source of water that some of our communities in this province have, and similarly I recognize the reference that the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) makes when he says that you in fact could almost virtually upchuck your cookies when you drain some of these reservoirs that have been stagnant for long periods of time, especially after a long hot summer without any recharge of fresh water into them. That happened only a very short period of time ago to our community when in fact our source from the river was jeopardized and we had to draw from the reservoir that has been built to supply water in periods of time when we do run into trouble, and it was simply unusable. I specifically recognize full well what some of these communities are up against and what quality of water means over the long haul. If there are other sources that are accessible, even if they are a bit more costly in the short term, maybe those are the kinds of considerations that we should make.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield):** Mr. Chairman, if I may, on page 56 -(interjection)-

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

**Mr. Roch:** —of the Supplementary Estimates under Activity Identification, it says at one point, provides municipalities—it refers of course to the Manitoba Services Board—it says, provides municipalities with feasibility studies and sewer and water technical financial assistance. Later on under Expected Results it says, technical financial assistance plus loans as applicable as well as feasibility studies will be provided to municipalities for sewer and water treatment works. Completed projects vary from nine to 15 per year. I would like to ask the Minister what type of assistance does he plan to make available to municipal bodies for infrastructure improvements? We discussed that, if you recall, briefly under a different section, but it was referred to this section where it was a more proper area to ask these types of questions.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the Liberal Party asks what type of assistance we are going to provide to communities. I am not sure what he is referring to, whether he is referring to total amounts of monies provided through Water Services Board to the various communities or whether he is referring to percentage cost sharing currently in place or whether he is referring to some future proposals. Would he clarify that?

**Mr. Roch:** The reason I am asking that in this section is because when we asked before it was felt that infrastructure was more properly dealt with under Manitoba Water Services Board. I suppose a question could just as easily be asked under Rural Economic Development, but what I am really basically asking is that many communities now, because of the situation with Rural Manitoba either due to declining population to maintain what they have, or on the other hand to those few areas which have substantially increasing populations and where they need assistance in the areas of lagoons and the areas of sewers, streets, water, when I say water I mean town water, would the assistance which is referred to in this particular portion of the estimates have any kind of impact on those areas wishing to expand or relocate lagoons for example?

**Mr. Penner:** Well, some of them certainly would. I can, Mr. Chairman, table for you a document that indicates fairly clearly what is happening currently in Manitoba in that regard and what the amounts of money are to the various communities that the Water Services Board has in involvement with now. I am not able to expand on what future involvement the Province will have if that is what he is referring to. I think we have many, many times indicated clearly that communities all across Manitoba, especially in rural Manitoba, need the financial ability to be able to provide the infrastructure that is required in order to maintain the very townsites in very many cases, and also to enhance employment opportunities through industrial development and other means. So basically the amounts of money that are currently being expended by the province to these communities is as indicated on the paper that you were just given.

**Mr. Roch:** I would take it though then that given the fact that there is under Other Expenditures, personnel services, transportation, communication, et cetera, and so on, I take it this is basically expenditures for administrative purposes. Would the assistance referred to be under the Section 12 which is Expenditures Related to Capital?

**Mr. Penner:** It is under Capital on page 148 of the main Estimates in Expenditures, and on page 64 in the Supplementary Estimates.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, on a different topic, there are several farmers, especially those on the river lots, who have still not received long overdue drought assistance cheques from Ottawa's very complex program for helping out those people that needed drought assistance. According to page 56 in the Supplementary Estimates, the last line under Expected Results, it says, funds have been set aside for drought related assistance if required. If there are any farmers who are entitled to drought assistance from the federal Government which have somehow been shortchanged, are they entitled to any funds from this department? Is that the \$1.1 million which the Minister referred to earlier in the Estimates process or is this a different and segregated fund apart from the other one?

**Mr. Penner:** The \$1.1 million that I referenced previously in discussions during the Estimates debates were to expand water supplies to those areas that had been last year and were again this year affected by the drought. It had nothing to do with the drought assistance that was provided by the province and the federal Government regarding crop shortages.

**Mr. Roch:** Then just to clarify, were these particular funds which have been set aside for drought related assistance if required, exactly what kind of criteria would be needed, would someone need to meet, to be eligible for these funds?

**Mr. Penner:** They were set aside, Mr. Chairman, to expand water facilities such as truck loading facilities in areas that did not have truck loading facilities, to drill wells in areas and look for water in areas that were short of water, to try and find sources of water, identify them, and provide those sources of water for communities.

Specifically, if you want a reference area that might be similar in nature, it would be the West Lake area, to provide to communities such as that, water by a pipeline and another, but basically to supply a supply of water to communities that have not got access to good quality water.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, getting back to the people who have been experiencing problems with getting their drought assistance from the river lots, is there any possibility that until the mixup, if you wish to call it that, is it clear in Ottawa that they may be advanced some funds temporarily through this fund, and that the province can recoup its money through the federal Minister responsible? The reason I ask is because it

seems that whoever is working on this particular program in Ottawa is completely unfamiliar with the whole river lot concept.

**Mr. Penner:** Well, I suppose I could concur with the thinking of the Honourable Member opposite that those people that are dealing with and providing information or calculating information on the Drought Assistance Program probably are somewhat unfamiliar with our river lot system. However, I want to make it very clear that this amount of money, Mr. Chairman, was not set aside to deal with the shortfalls that have been created by either unknowns or an inability to understand our river lot system in this province in calculations dealing with the drought payments that were made last year by the federal and provincial Governments. Therefore, I want it clearly on the record that the \$1.1 million that we set aside through Supplementary Estimates was clearly identified for water supply for individuals and communities who were affected by the two-year drought that had been experienced by some areas in this province.

**Mr. Plohan:** In just a short time period here, Mr. Chairman, dealing with the Water Services Board yet, I have a question about the current status of an application for a water treatment plant for Dauphin. Is there such a resolution and what is the current status of it at the present time?

\* (1640)

**Mr. Penner:** I believe that the water treatment plant that you are referring to has been at times at least identified by the Dauphin community as a project that they might want to see some federal assistance to, and therefore I believe the delays have been probably from both sides. They are currently in abeyance, I believe, in consideration for this because of negotiations going on with the federal Government on some form of assistance to communities that are in need of upgrading their facilities to meet environmental standards as well as an inability to afford some of the projects that you have been referring to.

**Mr. Plohan:** We have discussed the issue of the agreements and the need for federal and provincial funding obviously for these major projects, and I have put that on the record insofar as our position is concerned. However, I was really asking whether the Town of Dauphin has met all of their requirements so that in fact there will not be something going back to them saying, well we could not proceed that into the agreement or whatever, because they had not put forward their proposals on it.

**Mr. Penner:** It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that the application from the Dauphin community is before the Water Services Board. In reference to the question as to whether all criteria from the community had been met, it is my understanding that those have been met. I think the other day we referenced whether in fact the community could afford to borrow and the kinds of, to go and walk into the kinds of debentures that would be required to put this in place. I think the answer even to that is yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall Clause 9.(a) pass—pass. Shall Clause 9.(b) pass—pass.

**Mr. Penner:** We would like to, Mr. Chairman, with your permission, thank the general manager of the Water Services Board, Erv Griffin, for assisting here today.

**Mr. Chairman:** Resolution No. 131: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,927,000 for Rural Development, namely the Manitoba Water Resources Board, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass.

Clause 10, Rural Economic Development, which administers grants to the Regional Development Corporations and co-ordinates resources in support of economic development in rural Manitoba.

Shall Clause 10.(a) pass—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** I notice in the Supplementary Estimates under Grants it says that Non-Profit Community-Based Economic Development Organizations, this particular program was discontinued. Why is this so?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the question referenced to the Non-Profit Community-Based Economic Development Organizations is a program that was currently contained in the branch of Regional Economic Development and is under review.

As the Honourable Member might know, and if he does not, we are currently reviewing a number of the programs that were there to in fact assess whether they have been adequately doing the job or whether they have been adequately used or whether they in fact were the kind of vehicles that communities needed to be able to come forward with the response that we saw needed in rural Manitoba, namely to provide jobs in their communities. This program specifically has been suspended, and was suspended I believe when the program was still under IT&T.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, in the Supplementary Estimates it does not say under review or suspended, it says discontinued. There is a notation 1 under Grants and then by Regional Economic Development corporations and then again the same notation beside community-based, the non-profit ones, and it says, 1. This program is discontinued. So I have to assume that it is not under review and not just simply suspended unless it is permanently suspended, it is discontinued.

I notice that the overall budget in this area of Rural Economic Development is down significantly. If Rural Development is in fact a priority with this Government, I am just wondering why there is such a significant drop in this particular section.

**Mr. Penner:** You are correct, of course, that the Non-Profit Community-Based Economic Development Program has been discontinued. As I have said before, we are currently reviewing and assessing the needs of communities in rural Manitoba and that has of course not been completed yet. Once we have identified those needs we will be in a better position I believe to come

forward with the kind of programming that is required to regenerate and in some areas maybe even kickstart some of these communities. It is a decrease in the overall spending in Rural Development. Again that is something that was passed on to our department when the transfers of the branches took place.

**Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks):** When was that transfer of this department completed? When did this section of industry and trade become part of your department?

**Mr. Penner:** On April 21, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Minenko:** The Minister is suggesting then that even though this section was transferred a number of weeks before the throne speech and a month and a little bit before the budget speech he did not have any input with respect to the granting facilities or how any of the grants would be increased or decreased or evaluated. Is that what he is suggesting?

**Mr. Penner:** That is basically correct, Mr. Chairman. As the Honourable Member knows, the process for developing budgets and stuff like that is a long process and takes a significant amount of time. A two-week period simply does not allow for the total review of a branch or to assess the needs that one might assume might be out there. Again, we are doing that now in preparation for our next year's Estimates process.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Minenko:** The Minister also mentions needs, needs, needs, and I am just wondering if he could provide us a little advice as to what specifically he is looking at and what does he define as needs.

**Mr. Penner:** I guess, Mr. Chairman, as I would indicate to the Honourable Member, what he is really asking me to do is tell him what Santa is going to bring for Christmas before Santa comes. I would suggest to him that he is going to have to wait, as the rest of Manitobans will have to wait until we in fact come with some programs, if we can, if our economic situations will allow us to come forward with either programs that are needed or programs that are affordable to the taxpayers, and if the taxpayers will allow us to. I indicate that we can come forward with some programs to address the needs because the needs are certainly out there.

Anybody can meet with anybody, any community in this province, and discuss with them the needs of their community. They are many right across this province, and they are varied, as he would find out if he went through that exercise. So the needs are certainly there, but to sit here or stand here in this place and identify all of them that have been expressed by the various organizations and communities through my tenure, though be it short, would take a considerable amount of time, more than what we have allocated for today.

**Mr. Minenko:** I am not suggesting that the Minister should be Santa Claus. I think he is far from it. What

I would like the Minister to do is, the Minister has had this particular section within his department for six months now. He says that he has been out speaking to various communities and so on with respect to needs. What I would ask the Minister to do is—I am not asking the Minister to suggest what kind of programs he might want to put in place or may not be able to put in place for whatever reason. What I would like him to do is to perhaps—and I will leave it to him to select some of the requirements that are being raised to him—what are some of these needs that you keep talking about?

I realize that we would be here for quite a number of hours if we reflect on the performance of the previous administration and anything to do with economic development in this province, but I would certainly ask the Minister to perhaps highlight what seems to be the top five needs or requirements that he has been presented with certainly over the last six months and perhaps even before in his position as Natural Resources Minister.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, as I said before, if we want to get into this subject of the needs of rural Manitoba, they are many and they are varied, and I can certainly oblige the Honourable Member in his question if he wants me to. The total area, this whole aspect of rural depopulation, is a very broad and intricate one, and the need by the province to recognize that it exists in a major way is important. Communities all over this province will tell you that their young people are leaving and that they do not have the ability to provide the jobs in their communities to keep them there. The needs are varied and many: medical services, proper schooling, proper economic bases, proper job training. I can go on and on if you want me to identify the needs that have been expressed by the various communities. I can certainly do that. Job opportunities are lacking in virtually every area in this province. I have said before and I will say it again that if we are looking specifically only to agriculture to solve the needs of our communities we are barking up the wrong tree, because agriculture by itself cannot solve the economic dilemma that exists out there and stop the depopulation of rural Manitoba.

It is a much, much broader initiative that is required. One of the things that I think can happen is that rural communities must gain enough confidence in themselves to invest in their own communities as some communities in this province have done although through a whole series of economic adversities. Some of our communities have grown by leaps and bounds over the last 10 years. That is clearly indicated, but ask yourself why have they grown? Is it because provinces dump large amounts of monies into these communities? Is it because the federal Government dumped large amounts of monies into these communities? I would have to say the answer is, no.

Throwing money at problems will not solve the problem. There is something much deeper here that we have to address. We have to start building confidence in these communities, confidence in themselves, in their own ability to achieve the kinds of things that they want for themselves and their children, and by doing that, by encouraging development, by encouraging economic activities, by encouraging self-

confidence, by telling them that Government will not be everything to them. I think we can achieve those kinds of things. If we want to discuss this matter or debate this, I can go on and on if you want me too, we can certainly do that.

I think there is tremendous opportunity that currently exists and I had the opportunity to attend a conference of municipal leaders from all across the world in Perth, Australia, not too long ago. One of the main things that was discussed at this conference, and it was a five-day conference and there were people there from virtually every nation, including the Soviet Union, one of the key concerns expressed by all of them, by all the speakers that were there was the depopulation of their rural areas and their inability to keep those populations in those rural areas and the economic dilemma and the environmental dilemma that the migration of their masses to the large urban centre was causing them.

So I said to myself, we are not alone. I think every nation in the world is facing the same kind of question, what can we do or what must be do? I think that is a better term, what must we do to stop the flow of people into our urban centres.

It is not an easy one, it cannot be solved in 10 days and it cannot be solved in six months. It will be a long-term one and the decisions that are going to have to be made are going to have to be well thought out, and if programs can be developed to help some of these communities, then that is where society must take some action.

**Mr. Minenko:** We, certainly in the Opposition, understand the matters that the Minister has raised. Although I myself, a Member from the north end of Winnipeg, I certainly appreciate the concerns and we certainly had an opportunity earlier this year to meet with and spend some time in some of these locations, certainly in northern and western Manitoba. On individual trips which various members of our caucus have taken since April 26 of last year, we certainly have been able to get a better appreciation of that situation.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

The Minister has identified some of these needs, and from his remarks had said okay, well, you guys take care of it. When one of their campaign promises from last year's campaign was dealing with off-farm income they were certainly coming in, talking to people, and this Minister did in his own constituency, and said, we have a plan—we have a plan. It was evident from the previous Government's actions that there were some concerns there, but the Minister certainly from his comments just a couple of minutes ago tosses it back saying, they have to develop their own self-confidence.

\* (1700)

I appreciate that, and certainly as a Member of various organizations whose part of their title is self-reliance, I can appreciate that, but that does not constitute Government action. It is Government action—a decision has been made, presumably by the Minister, but certainly if this Minister was part of a Government that

was talking in last year's campaign about developing off-farm income, and he undoubtedly knew what the needs were last year, the year before when his Party was in Opposition, I am getting a little concerned when he says we are still studying the needs, we are still studying the thing. I went to a conference, we are not alone. Well, I think people in rural Manitoba are certainly looking for something a little bit more from this Government.

I certainly would, reading the supplemental materials, it cites as the objectives of this section of his department, to act as the lead agent for Regional Economic Development Planning. I would like to ask the Minister then, what are some of the initiatives that his Government has taken since last year's election to do exactly this, to be the lead agent in the provincial Government? Certainly in the last six months, what specific actions has this Minister taken, and his department taken, to be the lead agent? I think that is what is critical here.

For a Party that was sitting in Opposition since 1981, who ran the last two elections, in '86 and '88, the campaign that, we are good managers, well we have seen the record over the last 18 months, and certainly dealing in their campaign promises with exactly this problem, where is that leadership? What are some of the specific plans that this Minister has to in fact be the lead agent in a provincial Government for Regional Economic Development Planning?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Acting Chairman, the question that is asked is certainly a valid one. I appreciate the question that the Honourable Member has raised, because it is, as he states, our election promise to encourage development in areas outside of the City of Winnipeg that will lead towards the establishment of job opportunities. It is certainly our intent to proceed in that manner, but the one thing I suppose I shudder about almost every time I hear it mentioned, and it leads to people losing the confidence that is needed in this province to build this province, that is when leaders of either the business community or leaders of provincial political Parties or community leaders tell the rest of the world that we are a have-not province. That is the kind of rhetoric that causes people in communities that have seen their population dwindle, and dwindle, and dwindle, through economic mismanagement by an administration that was socially-oriented, that virtually put stops to development of industries and encouraged support mechanisms through Government.

I say to the Honourable Member, it is time that we stopped saying that we are a have-not province, that we encourage the beliefs in ourselves that we in fact have the resources to change, and that we can in fact tell our young people that the opportunities in this province are as good or better than any other areas of the world.

I would say to the Honourable Member that it is time that he and his colleagues start using rhetoric when they go out and meet with those peak communities, and tell those communities that we believe in you. We believe in you and we want to encourage you and we



want to be here to help you. We are in the process of reviewing the needs of rural Manitoba, and putting in place programs that will, in fact, be that encouraging factor that those communities have been looking for, for so long, that will stop the shuddering in their boots when the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) says we are a have-not province.

I would say to you, Mr. Acting Chairman, that we are very serious about putting in place programs that will in fact indicate to all Manitobans that we are in business to do business and that we are here to encourage the establishment of initiatives that will provide jobs.

**Mr. Minenko:** Mr. Acting Chairman, it is evident from this Minister's answers, you would think that during Question Period when those guys on that side can get up and grandstand and talk for hours on end in front of the television, that they can indeed have that luxury. But I would think during the Estimate process and certainly coming out of some of the statements of Members opposite, that they are prepared to provide some answers.

Certainly, when I asked a simple question of this Minister about what initiatives has he taken, his department, his Government is taking as a lead agent, what does he give me? They talk about rhetoric, like you know, this is exactly what many Manitobans rejected in last year's election, enough of the fine words and spewing forth of phrases. When Members of Manitoba will review the comments of this Minister, they will indeed know that they have no plan. This Minister gets up and what did he say, he said nothing.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

He took the Leader of the Opposition's (Mrs. Carstairs) comments completely out of context as he and his Government are woe to do, dealing with—and if he were to indeed review with some care the comments of the Leader of the Opposition he would understand they relate to matters dealing with equalization payments. It is indeed his Government's good fortune to have hundreds of millions of dollars rolling into the coffers, indeed is our fortune to have these equalization payments in Manitoba so we can provide the same kind of services that people in Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia have.

When I asked this Minister, quoting what I presume he wrote or ultimately that he is responsible for having written, to act as a lead agent, he has nothing, and that is of what is concern to myself as a Member and critic for Industry and Trade and other Members of this caucus. It is a simple question. Just give me one or two examples of the leadership role that you guys are taking for exactly what you say on the first line of your Supplementary Estimates.

\* (1710)

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, I suppose that what has been indicated in the Estimates here is our spending Estimates for this coming year, and as I said before that in large part these Estimates had been done through a process during the previous six months of

my taking over this department but also during the previous time prior to Rural Development being brought into this new department.

The first window of opportunity I suppose that I will have to indicate clearly what our program will be to address the kind of things that the Honourable Member is asking for, will be the next budgetary process. As as I said before, if the Member cannot understand this, I do not know how much clearer I can be in saying that we are in the process of developing programs that we hopefully will be able to bring forward in the coming year. I simply am not in a position to answer him directly and say it will be such and such or such a program. He will have to wait, as others will have to wait, until we are in a position to announce the kind of initiatives that we will take to do what I have stated in my Estimates for this year.

**Mr. Minenko:** Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate what the Minister is saying in that with the changes in the Government structure that this particular division was added—if that is the proper word for it—section was added to his department a few weeks, a month before the budget, and that perhaps he had a limited opportunity of putting his own initiative in place. Yet I am concerned that certainly he has not been either keeping track of what was done by the previous Minister or they simply let this section sort of waffle back and forth with that rubber rudder that I referred to in my speech in response to the throne speech. That is of concern.

I would like to then comment that the Minister, in response to a previous question, talked about rural depopulation, where a lot of the young people are leaving various cities. I can appreciate it out of Dauphin. The Member from Dauphin (Mr. Plozman) probably appreciates it much more having been a Member responsible for the area since 1981. But from what I understand there, having spoken to people who worked in the area, is that people are indeed leaving. How many more thousands of people have left towns, villages and hamlets around Manitoba in the last six months? How many more people will be leaving in the next period of time? The Minister says wait for it, Minenko, wait for it, you will get it sometime later. Sometime, who knows when that will be? How many more thousands will have left? How is this Minister addressing that particular problem saying, wait for it, Minenko, it will come along sometime. Well, it is evident that we are certainly not going to get a response to that question until maybe the next throne speech.

I would like to then direct the Minister's attention to the next paragraph in his Estimates where he deals with, to advise and assist businesses, community business organizations and municipal Governments to maintain, expand and create business and employment. I am just wondering outside of the grants to the Regional Economic Development Corporations, what other ways does the Minister's department intend to advise and assist businesses et cetera as it is stated in the Estimates Book dealing with the second objective of this department? What is in place, and which businesses and community business organizations, municipal Governments have indeed profited from that? If the

list is perhaps a little lengthy, I would be prepared to have the Minister take that as an undertaking, and within a few days or so provide me with a copy—that would be sufficient.

**Mr. Chairman:** Perhaps I should remind all Honourable Members that in this House all Members are referred to as Honourable Members and Honourable Ministers. The Honourable Minister.

**Mr. Penner:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that very much.

In response to the Honourable Member, I would suggest that one of the initiatives that we have taken upon ourselves, the department and myself and my staff, are that we have met on numerous occasions with the various community groups around the province: Chambers of Commerce, the village or town councils, city councils, banking officials, businessmen and their associations. We met with the Rural Newspaper Association after their conference last year and listened to some of the suggestions that they made to us. I believe that we have a pretty fair knowledge now of what Manitobans are saying about what their needs are, and some of their needs I think I have identified for the Honourable Member a little while ago. I appreciate very much his concerns because I think we are all concerned. I believe that we all are here because we want to do something to encourage the turnaround and make all of Manitoba an economic base that will encourage the job retention and/or the job enhancement in those communities that now are, as the Honourable Member is saying, losing their people. It is one of the most disheartening things for a rural Member to watch a community disappear. That has happened more than once in this province, and the economic as well as the social chaos—or disruptions may be a better word—that creates for families and communities as a whole is very evident, and I think we need to pay considerable attention to.

We will certainly try to provide the Honourable Member as soon as we can with a program that I intend to put forward, and if it is the wishes of the Chair, then I would ask that we proceed with the Estimates in dealing with other parts of the Estimates process at this time.

**Mr. Minenko:** I just have a couple of short questions dealing specifically with the REDC program. At this point I would like to just put on the record that, but for the limited time that we have, we feel in the Liberal Caucus this area is indeed a very important one and are certainly prepared to continue on for a number of hours of attempting to try to determine exactly what this Government's program is with respect to this area, but in light of time restrictions and looking to other departments that need to be considered, I would like to ask two or three questions to the Minister dealing with the REDC Program in that, have there been any recommendations for reform to the program, and which reforms are they?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, up to now, as far as the regional development corporations are concerned, there

has been very little reform, if you want to box reform, up to this point in time. However, I should say that there are some of the regional development corporations that are undergoing some substantial change. I believe the Parklands area is one area that is encountering some change now, and they are in the process of rethinking their structure on how to better provide services in their area. I think the Interlake one is another one that has just had the resignation of their manager, and that will cause them to reassess where they are. I believe that we are probably at a point in time where these kinds of reassessments must take place.

\* (1720)

Whether the programs or the organizations as they currently exist and the way they are structured are in fact serving the needs for all areas is what is being questioned by these very regional organizations. Therefore the time I think is right to look internally for these development corporations to look internally and ask themselves what it is that they require or they need to do differently in order to provide a better service to their memberships or their regions. I think that is currently going—I know that is currently going on. As I said before, we have met with virtually every community at one form or another in this province during the last six months. There is a clear indication that they want to approach their economic development initiatives in a very direct, in a very profound manner. These communities are serious about providing jobs for their young people in their communities, and therefore I would not be at all surprised if we would see a substantial change in direction in many of these communities as to what kind of vehicles they, in fact, want to use to accomplish what they are setting out to do.

For the information of all Honourable Members, consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Health will continue this evening in Room 255. Room 254 was in use only for this afternoon.

**Mr. Minenko:** I was just wondering if the Minister could nod from his seat that the recommendations for reform are coming from the RDCs themselves then. Okay, the Minister nods that that is correct. So there is no real reform or recommendations for reform coming from the department, is that what you were saying earlier?

**Mr. Penner:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I did not say that, but as of today I am not willing to table in this committee or voice to this committee the recommendations that might be coming or considerations that we are making at this present time.

**Mr. Minenko:** I think a final question anyways.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, if you will, just to let me expand on that one a wee bit. I am a great believer in bottoms-up decision-making, and that is one of the reasons I spent countless hours meeting with virtually any group that wants to come in and meet with me to talk about their needs because I believe that those communities know best. I believe that the organizations

know best how they should be structured, what their needs are.

For that reason, maybe it takes a bit longer to make decisions sometimes, but I believe that if you get the input from those communities into these kinds of decisions, you will be far better served in the long term than just simply by ignoring them and plowing your own furrow and not paying attention to anything that goes on around you. So that really what I am trying to say is up to now we have listened. I think that the time for decision-making is near at hand.

**Mr. Minenko:** Just a final question, as the Honourable Member for Dauphin has some series of questions. With the hundreds of thousands of dollars flowing through the RDCs every year, last year it was \$634,000 and this year projected around the same, I guess, can the Minister advise us what system does he have in place, does his department have in place to ensure accountability which I am sure the Minister, as a good manager of a department, would want to have in place? What measures for accountability are in place dealing with the grants that are supplied to RDCs?

**Mr. Penner:** There is, Mr. Chairman, a fairly intricate system in place to ensure the accountability of the regional corporations although you recognize that they are entities unto themselves.—(interjection)—Right, to which we grant money and in return they are required to put forward, to present us with audited statements. I believe there is a review process of management in place on an ongoing basis to determine whether the job they do is adequate, provides in fact the kind of services that are required in the area, in the main, and that the action plans that they have are adequate. I am quite satisfied that the accountability to the province by the regional corporations is quite adequate.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, this is a very important area of this department, an area that has not been dealt with in any form since it has been transferred into this department. The whole area of rural economic development is critical, particularly at this time when we are facing unprecedented decisions at the federal level that are impacting on our rural communities.

We are seeing this, the impact of the CN layoffs, the impact of the VIA cuts, in transportation as it affects all areas of this province. We see it in the post office closures that are taking place with the bottom-line profits being the primary consideration for federal Crown corporations. We see it in the impact of the Free Trade Agreement, at Campbell Soup and the hog plant at Neepawa. We see it certainly with the GST when it is going to come into effect at 9 percent or whatever effect it does come in. It is going to very seriously affect the rural areas and northern areas much harder than even the larger centres because transportation is basically going to be taxed under that scenario and will further lead to disparities in the province and across this country.

Federal decisions that are affecting the viability of industries even in rural areas such as the Dauphin Alfalfa Products which will have to pay this GST and has a

market in Japan, will not realize any 13.5 percent benefit from the manufacturers sales tax, therefore will have their margin reduced even further. They only have about a 7 percent or 8 percent or 9 percent margin at the present time, so that is very disconcerting to people in rural areas at the present time, the impact of this tax.

At the same time all of these federal decisions are taking place, we have not seen the results of any efforts by this Government to put in place economic development planning for rural areas that can offset this, and particularly in co-ordination and co-operation with the federal Government. I look at the Challenges for Rural Development Westarc Group Inc. Study that was done. There are so many studies to be evaluated, I imagine, in putting forward programs but what we see here is a number of recommendations. One of the primary recommendations, the first recommendation in that study is for federal, provincial and local Governments to co-operate to establish, co-ordinate and implement rural development policies and priorities.

The Minister could well look at this study to find some solutions in the development of his policies and programs to deal with rural areas because we have seen from the questioning that has taken place here today that in fact the Minister does not have a program for rural economic development. He is working on it, he says, and in the next budget year we expect to see something. Well, I can tell him that it will be desperately needed at time and it will be needed not because the Liberal Member said that there was a rudderless Government before insofar as rural development. I can go through many different programs that the previous Government put in place to assist rural economic development and economic development in this Province.

The fact is, we are facing federal policies in an unprecedented way that are impacting on our rural areas, and when the federal Government shows no faith in the future of our rural communities, how is it that this Minister feels rural communities should demonstrate all of this faith in their own communities and should invest in their own communities when federal Governments, and to a lesser extent, provincial Governments are not showing that kind of faith and confidence in their future?

It is not enough to say do not use the word that we are a have-not province, do not use that term. You say we are a have province or do not use it at all, I guess the Minister is saying, because he would be lying if he said we are a have province. That word does not mean that we can change things by saying have not or have. The fact is, we are a have-not province relative to others. That does not mean the people of the province are not industrious and competent and do not work hard. They are, they are all of those things but they do not have some of the resources that other areas of this country have. They have not been blessed with the policies that favour eastern central Canada, like Ontario, with manufacturing and transportation. We are facing a lot of things against us when we start—we do not have the oil wealth that Alberta and Saskatchewan have, and gas like B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan have. We

are facing a lot of difficulties for development and it is not wrong to call this a have-not province.

\* (1730)

We have undertaken, we recognize that and we set up regional development corporations over the years. We have set up other programs to educate youth, Youth Business Start Program, Jobs in Training, Training for Tomorrow. All of these were programs, the Venture Capital Program, the Careerstart Program, business development centres in our rural areas, the Community Places Program to rejuvenate rural areas, the Main Street Manitoba Program, many different programs that this Liberal Opposition does not seem to recognize in their statements.

I take issue with those statements because I think we did a good job. We are facing insurmountable odds and it is not because local people do not have confidence. They have a lack of confidence, it is true, but they do not control enough of the economic wealth to make a huge difference. Some communities have, against all odds, some of them in southern Manitoba, like Winkler, Morden perhaps, and Altona and a few of those. This problem that we face in rural areas is widespread and it is getting worse because of federal policies that disregard totally the needs of rural areas. That makes it even more important and incumbent on this Minister to develop programs preferably in conjunction with municipalities but certainly in conjunction with the federal Government.

It is the lack of communication and the putting in place of programs at the federal level to help rural areas that we are facing these problems today.

One example I can give to the Minister is the thing up at Swan River, the particle board plant that was to be built there, the planning was taking place, lack of communication in terms of regional economic development aspirations and priorities. The people in Swan River saw this as a major opportunity, but while that was happening, while they were putting forward proposals for funding from the federal Government, the province was signing over those resources to Repap for the sale of Manfor. There was no co-ordination there. That was taking place without discussions between federal and provincial, without planning.

At least, if we believe the Member for Dauphin-Swan River, Brian White, who said this was going before Cabinet for approval for this plant and suddenly the province went and signed this forest away. What I am saying is that there is a desperate need for the two levels of Government to get together.

I suggest to the Minister that he use some of the suggestions in the rural development study that was done as a basis because it certainly identifies the needs that the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) was talking about. It identifies the needs and it identifies the kinds of programs and policies that have to be initiated to reverse those needs.

I am not going to spend time now asking the Minister what he has done and what he has not done, because basically I understand from what he said, there is no

action that has been taken. As a matter of fact, he sees the embarrassing situation that he has a 7.5 or 8 percent reduction in rural economic development in his budget this year. When the Premier (Mr. Filmon) sets up a Rural Development Department, they take away 7.5 percent of the funding and that has got to be embarrassing for the Minister. It is something that he has to reverse in future years if there are going to be any major developments take place to offset these terrible and devastating policies of the federal Conservative Government in Ottawa. The Minister has to recognize that and I hope he is in his policies.

He talked about decentralization. The one question I want to ask him is he the lead agency, the lead branch in his department for the Government, the Rural Economic Development Branch, for decentralization. Does that responsibility fall somewhere else? When can we expect some announcements, some decisions on decentralization that will assist some of these rural communities to turn around the deterioration that is taking place at an accelerated rate and an alarming rate, largely because of federal policies that are abandoning our rural areas in transportation, at CN and VIA, and the post offices, with the impact of free trade and so on, those kinds of things.

**Mr. Penner:** The decentralization process that the Honourable Member is referring to in his question is, and I think I have said this before, I said this last time I appeared here which is almost a week ago I suppose, indicated to him that there was a committee of Cabinet that had been established, a Community Development Committee, which is chaired by the Honourable Mr. Downey, which I am a member of. The task force that has been established, Mr. Ransom and Mr. Forrest will report to that committee, so the responsibility falls to the committee. That committee will of course report to Cabinet and the decisions will then be made by Cabinet.

I want to, however, refer to a few other issues that the Honourable Member has a habit of raising, and I do not fault him for that because that is after all the opposition Critic's responsibility, but every time a business closes anywhere in this province, he refers constantly to the Free Trade Agreement and the impact of the Free Trade Agreement, Campbell Soup, the poultry processing plant, downtown Winnipeg, and many others that he has referenced continually by the Free Trade Agreement.

Let me take the other side of the position on free trade. I would say to the Honourable Member that because of free trade, we were able to today hear an announcement by the federal Government which will create 500 jobs in this province, in the overall I would estimate and maybe even beyond that, when you take the overall impact of processing, of oats processing, in this province.

The initial announcement said 50 jobs, but the extra added economic activity that will be created by sowing a crop and transporting it and bringing it, I mean the additional jobs can be guessed at, will be created by this industry. A combine plant that will be built in Portage la Prairie will create many jobs because of free trade,

Monday, October 23, 1989

because we have opened new markets to the south of us for oats products, for combines, for many other things, the creation of 1,200 jobs in the forestry industry by selling off a provincially-owned entity to a large corporation which will expand way beyond their capacity that we were talking about, and the creation of jobs that we were talking about in a particle board plant in Swan River. The jobs accrued to even of the activities that will be enhanced in the Swan River area, and the jobs created there will be in my estimation beyond what a particle board plant could have provided in that area.

So I ask the Honourable Member, if he is saying that we should not have banked upon a large forestry industry to provide the 1,200 jobs that that industry will provide, whether we should not have entered into secondary processing, whether we should not have encouraged the establishment of a combine plant in this province and many others. Because I say to the Honourable Member, the Free Trade Agreement will allow us to access 250 million people, the markets for that we can supply there. Because after the Free Trade Agreement comes into its full effect some 10 years down the road, it will provide us with an opportunity to very freely market into, into that hugely expanded market.

Let me say to the Honourable Member that I am as concerned as he is about the transportation cuts that are being talked about by the federal Government. Our Minister of Transportation has indicated very clearly to these Chambers his concerns re the VIA cuts, re the rail line abandonment that is being discussed in some areas. We are as concerned as he is that the effects of federal Government decisions to Manitobans, especially rural Manitobans. Yes, we are looking at ways to alleviate some of the economic hurt that will be incurred by some of the smaller communities. Yes, we are concerned when mining companies talk about closing mine operations, although realizing full well that as a resource, that as a non-renewal resource, that when mines are open somewhere down the road mines will be closed, because those resources do deplete and everybody recognizes that will sometime in the future happen.

However, the human concerns that are raised and the social concerns that must be addressed when those kinds of things happen 20 or 30 years down the road, a Government must prepare for and so we have. I believe that we are going to meet at the end of this week, in Brandon, again to discuss in a much broader forum the needs of rural Canadians. We will sit down with our counterparts from western provinces as well as some eastern provinces and discuss what needs to be done by all levels of Government, federal, provincial and municipal Governments, to address the needs of our rural communities.

I believe that the initiative we took not too long ago—and again it was a federal-provincial initiative—to put some money into place, to do a study of what the needs were in the Pembina Valley region for the supply of water through the Agri-Food Agreement, is an indication that we are concerned and that we want to look at ways and means of assisting those communities to

address their needs, whether they be water or infrastructure or other.

\* (1740)

I say to the Honourable Member that, yes, we have the same concerns he does, although we are more optimistic than he is that the Free Trade Agreement that we entered into will in the long term benefit Manitobans far more than it will hurt them, as he said. I say to him again, take the positive initiative and let us not look at have not, let us not tell our communities that we are have nots and that we cannot, and that we will not, because these communities are looking for some encouragement from those of us who are supposed to be leaders in our community.

**Mr. Plohman:** Mr. Chairman, the Minister should remember that words and optimism are not going to get the results here at all, and platitudes. The fact is he has to put in place meaningful programs that are going to actually make a difference in rural areas. It is not going to be enough to say positive things, and it seems that is all he is able to say at this present time, that he is optimistic and he has all of these good things in his mind about what might happen. Really he has not taken any meaningful action to reverse and turn that trend around and to combat these disruptive federal policies.

I am just saying to him the Free Trade Agreement, in combination with all of the other things, will have negative impacts on much of our rural areas because we are not going to be able to subsidize, to establish rural businesses to the extent that we could when we were free from the agreement with the United States, because anything we do will be viewed as an unfair trade practice and would be countervailed by the U.S. Government. We will not be able to, under this agreement, establish for rural economic development reasons, for regional economic development regions, industries in many areas that need Government assistance to get established in the first place.

I think it is going to work against us, and that is what I am saying to the Minister, but that free trade debate will be the subject of other debates in this House. The issue is, though, one that he identifies as a lack of confidence. I say to him, it is very difficult for rural people to have any confidence in the future of their communities and any confidence for their children to remain in the rural communities and raise their families there when federal Government policies are taking place that are so destructive to our rural areas, one onslaught after another hitting those communities.

The provincial Government, I am telling this Minister now, is not doing enough to reverse that and to raise to the attention the terrible impact that these are having on our communities. He is not raising it with the federal Government to the extent he should and he is not putting in place programs to reverse it. That is what he has to do, that is his challenge as Minister, and that is what we expect from him, nothing less, whether it is in agriculture processing, fish processing, forestry processing, tourism. All of these areas have to be developed and worked on in the future and I hope that



this Minister will be putting more resources into the rural economic development in the years ahead, not less as he did this year, because there is no excuse for it, what happened to this budget this year. It shows a complete lack of priority, despite the words of the Premier when he created this department and said this is a priority.

**Mr. Chairman:** Item 10.(a)—pass; 10.(b)—pass; 10.(c)—pass.

Resolution No. 132: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,169,400 for Rural Development, Rural Economic Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990—pass.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would like to thank John McGuire for assisting in the Estimates process, our Director for Rural Development.

**Mr. Chairman:** Clause No. 11. Conservation Districts Authority, which provides assistance, financial and otherwise, for program development and implementation and co-ordinates or provides planning services to conservation districts. Shall Clause 11.(a) pass—the Honourable Member for Springfield.

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, I realize we want to finish this department by six o'clock. I just have a couple of brief questions.

It mentions in the Expected Results that an increase in new external dollars is expected to flow to local conservation districts programs. I ask the Minister where are those external dollars coming from and how much is expected to flow?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, there are a number of areas where through conservation initiatives in co-operation with other agencies, such as Ducks Unlimited and other agencies that contribute to conservation initiatives, I think the one program that you might be familiar with, that Ducks Unlimited has had substantial involvement in is the Habitat Enhancement Land-use Program of which we currently have a pilot project in the province in the Shoal Lake area. It is working very, very effectively to restore some of the wetlands in the province.

There are others that we could talk about. I think The Pas, the Pasquia area is one that Ducks Unlimited has been very involved and has spent quite some large amounts of money in. So the federal agencies through this soil accord, through the Agri-Food Agreement and those kind of things, landowners in large part contribute to conservation initiatives, so those outside agencies are the ones that we are referring to.

**Mr. Plozman:** I just wanted to ask the Minister whether he has any plans to establish additional conservation districts and where they are. I understand there was an Order-in-Council passed just recently for one that has been in the works for sometime and has been established.

**Mr. Penner:** The one that we passed an O/C on, it is called the Pembina Conservation District and it is made

up of Municipalities of Thompson, Louise, Lorne, and Thompson. There is another group that is currently discussing the possibility of another one up in the Shoal Lake area.

**Mr. Plozman:** The Minister mentions Shoal Lake area, is there also any movement towards a district in the west side of Lake Dauphin?

**Mr. Penner:** I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is some discussion going on in that area although it has not progressed to the point where the upper Assiniboine region has progressed to, so they are in the discussion stages, but that is as far as I am aware of the progress that has taken place.

**Mr. Plozman:** Is the Minister actively promoting the development of conservation districts at the present time, and is he prepared to provide funding for such increases?

\* (1750)

Obviously, when there is another district established, it means that there is substantial amount of provincial money that has to be added to the budget. This year we see a very slight increase in the Conservations District Authority budget. This does not involve the capital dollars though I understand for the conservation districts. This \$433,000 is only for the salaries, and \$137,000 for other expenditures for operating; it really is not the grants to the conservation districts. So in that section you would not need additional dollars in this section, but in the grants area you would need to bring forward substantial increases. Does he see that happening? Is he prepared to make that a priority of the Government to deliver the funding because obviously if he is going to create the expectations that a district is going to be established, obviously he has to be prepared to come forward with the funding.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, the initiative that we took last year to do the land and water strategy across the province was largely directed towards the establishment of water policy, land policies, and also to listen to the needs of people in areas of conservation and they were clearly identified through that process.

What is apparent or what became very apparent through that process that we needed to look at a fairly broad-based conservation strategy, and that is what we are in the process of looking at. We are looking at re-organization within our department, and that might well mean some realignments of programming in this whole area of conservation and conservation initiatives. I think it is clear that Manitobans have identified their concerns about maintaining the natural resources, the land and the water in such a way that it will be there for future generations. It is our intent to make sure that those kinds of programmings are integrated into whatever future developments we encounter or incur.

**Mr. Chairman:** Clause 11.(b)—pass.

Resolution No. 133: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$433,000 for Rural



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

Item 12. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Capital Grants: (1) Urban Transit Bus Purchases, (2) Water Development, (3) Sewer and Water, (4) Conservation Districts.

12.(a)—pass; 12.(a)(1)—pass; 12.(a)(2)—pass; 12.(a)(3)—pass; 12.(a)(4)—pass; 12.(b)(1)—pass.

Resolution No. 134: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,978,000 for Rural Development, Expenditures Related to Capital for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1990—the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

**Mr. Plohman:** Just before you pass that, I just wanted to ask one question. Because of the time, we have not touched on a number of issues. I just wanted to ask him if his is the lead agency through the conservation districts for Lake Dauphin proposals that would be developed, or is that under Natural Resources yet?

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Chairman, that remains under Natural Resources.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shall Resolution No. 134 pass—pass.

The last item that will be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Rural Development is item 1. Administration and Finance, (a) Minister's Salary. At this point I would request that the Minister's staff leave the House for the consideration of this item.

**Mr. Penner:** Before they go, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank all of them, including Alex Glasgow, the director for Conservation Districts, very much for assisting.

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

**Mr. Roch:** Mr. Chairman, I realize it is three minutes to six, and we want to pass this department by six so that we can go on to the next, but I would just like to mention just prior to closing that we have had some good discussions and lively debate during this discussion of this part of the Estimates.

I would like the Minister to seriously review some of the comments that were made especially in the opening remarks by the critics, and I guess I am especially referring to my own because, given the fact of what is happening in rural Manitoba and given the fact that, as he mentioned a while ago, what is happening worldwide, it is almost frightening when one sees quotes in other international magazines that it is expected by the year 2,000, 65 percent to 70 percent of the world's population will be living in cities.

I think there is a lot of room out there in rural Manitoba for attracting people, for getting people back to the rural areas, and I think that there has to be more than rhetoric and symbolism, and action is required.

I will hope that in the future on many matters the Minister will take the lead and encourage the

development of rural Manitoba, and on several of the issues that were discussed and debated. Having said that I suppose, Mr. Chairman, that I am willing to, despite the disagreements that we have had, let the item pass.

**Mr. Plohman:** I move, seconded by—no, I am just kidding. Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate to the Minister today that there was a number of areas of his answers during the Estimates that I was not very pleased with, not from what he said in terms of the policies and direction, but from the lack of policies and direction and detail in many areas.

I believe that he was evasive when it came to the Assessment Reform Proposals, where that was at, and what exactly was happening. I felt he does not have a good handle on his policies and programs for rural economic development in light of the federal onslaught that has hit us, and I hope that he will be able to get a handle on those in his department in the next while, turn that around and bring something constructive so that we can have hope in this province for our rural areas so that we can look to the future in a positive way for our children and grandchildren.

I believe that he has made some bad decisions insofar as his input into the West Lake Proposal, insofar as the impact there, and I will pursue that at other times. I know we will have an opportunity to discuss that with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

I hope that the Minister will be able to come back next year, if he still has the honour and privilege of being Minister at that particular time, realizing we are all temporary custodians, he may not be, but that he would have—and that is unfortunate in many instances, and many times when I was in Government I have to say that too. Mr. Chairman, I will not be very long, but that quite often Ministers change just when they are getting a handle on things. They move around, there is always those rotations, and you never see things and then everything is back to a study stage again. I think that slows down many good programs. So whether the Minister gets to that point or not, I would hope that he would be able to come forward with concrete programs the next time that we see him forward, and he would be a little more forthcoming in some of these areas for us.

\* (1800)

**Mr. Penner:** Just very, very briefly I would like to thank the Honourable Members opposite for the lively debate that we have had on some of these issues. I appreciate very much their concerns that they raised. I appreciate the comment that the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) made in respect to not being probably as forthcoming and as open as I might have been, although sometimes one is simply not able to. Hopefully within the next not too distant future, we will be able to respond to some of the wishes that the Honourable Member has.

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

Resolution No. 123: RESOLVED that there be granted to her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,117,300 for

**Monday, October 23, 1989**

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

The hour being 6 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings of the Committee of Supply. The committee will return at 8 p.m. this evening. Committee is recessed until 8 p.m.