



First Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARR, James	Crescentwood	Liberal
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 28, 1990

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the gallery where we have from the Garson-Tyndall School forty-five Grades 5 and 6 students. They are under the direction of Maureen De-Tiero. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Core Area Initiative Renewal

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): The Core Area Agreement is an agreement, Mr. Speaker, I think all Members in this Chamber can be proud of. The former Conservative Government under Sterling Lyon negotiated the Core Area Agreement with the former Liberal Government. We were able to renegotiate the Core Area Agreement with the changed Government, the Mulroney Government.

It has had tremendous success. It has not been perfect, but there has been \$165 million of public money for about \$486 million of private money in terms of the renewal of our city.

Mr. Speaker, it has also been a model of urban renewal, because it combines both the physical renewal components and human goals and objectives in terms of renewal of the City of Winnipeg. In fact, it won an international award this year in terms of urban renewal.

My question to the Premier is very simple. Has he contacted the Prime Minister of the country to ensure that we will have a renewed five-year Core Area Agreement for the City of Winnipeg with the principles of both physical and human renewal as the core principles of a renewed Core Area Agreement?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that matter has been under discussion and in process for some time. The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), as the representative of the provincial shareholder on the Core Area Initiative group, has put forth the proposal that that ought to be extended by one year.

While we are in the process of re-evaluating and ensuring that we learn from both the successes and the not so successful aspects of the first two Core Area Initiatives, and we certainly have no difficulty in saying that evaluation and review are part of the natural process of arriving at the new mandate for a third Core Area Initiative, we believe that that third Core Area Initiative would be productive provided it is targeted and directed in ways that continue to improve the City of Winnipeg.

Certainly that commitment to a renewal of the agreement has been stated publicly by this administration, and we will continue to work co-operatively to try and achieve that.

* (1335)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House his own Minister stated that the winding down of the Core Area Initiative was part of the realities of Government. It is in Hansard.

I would ask the Premier: Why is his Government's negotiating position to extend the Core Area Agreement? Why is it not for a five-year renewal? Why are we not going for a federal-provincial agreement for urban renewal?

Certainly Winnipeg has been left behind in terms of funding for False Creek, the SkyDome, Harbourfront, the St. Lawrence River cleanup, Mr. Speaker.

Why would the Premier not be going for a five-year renewal? Yes, change some of the administrative components, but why are we not going for a five-year renewal of the Core Area Agreement with the three levels—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the Member for Concordia that any renewal is subject to a review to ensure that we learn from the experiences of the last 10 years to ensure that we know what are the goals and objectives and priorities of any renewed agreement. That cannot be done adequately without a complete review and evaluation.

Under those circumstances, we are suggesting that a one-year extension is the right way to go as we develop the terms of reference and the objectives of a new proposal. You do not just throw \$25 million, \$30 million, \$35 million on the table and say, spend it as you will. You put forward a proposal that reflects what should be the priorities, what should be the goals and objectives of a new agreement.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, you do not wait until quarter to midnight to start evaluating a project that is worth that much to the City of Winnipeg and the people of this province. You do not wait till the last minute to come up with a position. You do not wait till the last minute not to know what you are going to be proposing to the federal Government. This Government has been in office three years.

My question to the Premier is: Why has he not contacted the Prime Minister to develop a long-term, five-year proposal? Why does he not know what the successes and failures are? Why does he not have a position for a five-year renewal? Why have we had to wait till the last minute as we always do with—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Filmon: The Prime Minister was not the one who negotiated the last agreement, was not the one who put -(interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite is being facetious, and I will take him at that. I know that he did not talk to the Prime Minister

with respect to the renewal of the last agreement -(interjection)- No, he did not.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that these matters are on the table in discussion among federal and provincial Ministers, and they will be proceeded with in due course.

Core Area Initiative Phasing Out

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

The Minister has spoken of the winding down, the phasing out of the core area program. Given that between 1981 and 1986 there was a 72 percent growth in the population of aboriginal people in the core area, a 35 percent growth in new immigrants, an 18 percent growth in single parents, could the Minister explain to the House how he plans to wind down the future for these Winnipeggers?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Member across the way and also the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer)—when I was talking about winding down, I was talking about winding down the second agreement. Let us make that very, very clear on that side of the House.

We have made it very, very clear that we want to look at the different priorities for the next agreement. The Leader of the Opposition also mentions, he must realize even in the second agreement there is a budget allocation for the management to do that evaluation. He agreed to that when he signed that, and it is in the second agreement. That evaluation process is being done and we received that evaluation process. That is why we want to extend the agreement for one further year.

Mr. Speaker, also under his particular administration they were seven months late in starting that particular agreement.

* (1340)

Government Alternatives

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): We have raised the future of the Core Area Agreement in Question Period and in Estimates, and we have received no commitments from this Government.

My question to the Minister is: What is the bottom line for this Government? Are they prepared to pick

up the pieces when the federal Government backs out?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, maybe the Member from across the way wants to speculate and not—I believe in negotiations with the other two levels of Government at a meeting that will be held. I will not negotiate on the floor of the House.

I must mention to the Party across the way, we are on record as saying we agreed to an extension of the core to make sure that the evaluation process is carried out, unlike the previous administration, who did no evaluation whatsoever because they were late seven months in starting that particular agreement.

Evaluation

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Last summer the Urban Futures Group conducted an investigation and held hearings into the Core Area Agreement, and the general consensus was that we should be looking at how to renew that agreement—not if. The Minister has committed himself to hearings beginning on January 25. Is he prepared to put on the table his evaluations of the Core Area Agreement at that time?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it was this Minister who started the negotiations in a letter of November 5 to the other two levels of Government to see what their process would be under the new core agreement. The evaluation process is being handled now by the management, and when we receive that evaluation, we will determine what our priorities are for that next agreement.

Core Area Initiative Government Position

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): I have a question for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

It was June 22, 1989, that the Liberal Party in Manitoba asked this Minister to begin evaluating the Core Area Initiative, Mr. Speaker, and we asked him to do it again on April 25. Nothing has happened. We now hear that the Government of Canada is not prepared to enter into any negotiations until there is a full consultation. The three partners will be meeting on Friday, and we would ask the Minister to tell the House now what position he intends to take to that meeting?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I outlined in my letter of November 5 the position that we would like to proceed with. We said we would like an extension of the Core Area Agreement for one further year.

The Member across the way mentions that they asked for it in '89. Mr. Speaker, maybe that is the way they evaluate programs, when only 40 percent of the monies were spent in 1989. We would not evaluate that way. You must remember that it was a seven-month agreement, late in starting, and the monies did not proceed. When he asked for those evaluations, only 40 percent of the monies were spent at that time.

Forks Renewal Corporation Funding Allocations

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, speaking of only part of the money being spent, we now understand that \$6.5 million of provincial monies has not been forwarded to The Forks Renewal Corporation.

Would the Minister tell us why and when he intends to fulfill the commitment of his Government?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Member from across the way brought that up. That is nonsense. First of all, if he had only come to the Minister and asked him—he will get the opportunity next Tuesday to ask those questions. The provincial Government is not committed to those monies until after the extension of York Avenue and St. Mary. In 1992 we will be obligated to put forward those monies.

Downtown Development Corporations Amalgamation

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, we now know that Jake Epp, the federal Minister responsible, believes that there ought to be a single downtown redevelopment corporation. The Minister has also put it on the record during the campaign that he believes that that is a good idea.

Will he take that initiative to the meeting on Friday? How soon can we expect that to become a reality?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in my letter, again of November 5, I outlined that to the other Members. This is the first time—I am glad that the federal representatives agreed to the amalgamation of

those two. We made that very public, and we made that public back in 1989.

Health Care System Government Position

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): It is clear from the information that we tabled yesterday showing that while Alberta and B.C. may be able to manage in circumstances where the provinces have complete control over health care but that such an event would have disastrous consequences for Manitoba. That has been verified and reinforced by an article today in the *Globe and Mail* showing that B.C. and Alberta are now taking seriously the whole question of administering their own tax system.

I would like to ask the Premier, since he is not naive and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is not naive—they may be many things, but they are not naive. They know that provinces go into interprovincial meetings with hard positions, with clear positions. What is the position of the Manitoba Government with respect to maintaining a national health care system with national standards and national funding?

* (1345)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Johns must be running out of material. The fact of the matter is that I have said over and over and over again that we are committed to maintaining and enhancing the best possible standards of health care in this province that we can. In order for us to do that, we must ensure that the federal Government, regardless of political stripe, does not continue to cut back as the Liberals did throughout the early '80s, as the Conservatives have in Ottawa since 1984, on their support in EPF transfers for health care.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the Member opposite should automatically assume that because somebody has their own tax collection system that they do not have medicare. Quebec has had that for some time, an extended period of time, and they still get equalization payments. They still get all transfer payments—some would argue more than most provinces in the country than their share.

The fact of the matter is, having your own tax collection system does not deny you the opportunity to have all of these kinds of transfer payments. The issue is the transfer payments from Ottawa that are

not keeping pace with the needs and the obligations of Ottawa.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Then what is the hangup of this Government with respect to tabling its position going into the Finance Ministers' meeting next week? Will it show to the people of Manitoba that it is not being directed by the vision of Alberta and B.C.? Will it show that it is not prepared to abdicate responsibility for maintaining a national health care system in this country?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat for the Member opposite what I said yesterday, and that is that we will do absolutely nothing to jeopardize or to in any way diminish health care in this province. We will go out and we will ensure that Ottawa meets its obligations. We will fight against Ottawa to ensure that they do not do what they have been doing for a decade that has cost this province a billion dollars in the past decade in losses of transfer payments from Ottawa under Liberal and Conservative administrations. We will ensure that Ottawa maintains its obligations to support health care in this province.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, after Meech Lake the Premier said there never again would be any back-room deals. We are asking him today if he believes that. He wants dialogue and discussion about a very difficult issue facing Manitoba and indeed all of the country. Will he come clean and take this discussion out of the back rooms and into the open and tell us what position Manitoba is looking at and taking going into the Finance Ministers' meeting next week?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, there are no back-room deals. The position is clear, and it is being said openly. It has been said day after day after day this week in this Legislature. That Member opposite is being very foolish when she suggests that federal-provincial meetings do not take place in closed-door meetings. She attended them time and time again when she was a Minister. That is the process. -(interjection)- That is exactly what we have done. We have said publicly what our position is—publicly, clearly. If she does not want to accept it, there is absolutely nothing I can do to correct that.

Persian Gulf Crisis Economic Sanctions

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier.

Today in the House of Commons parliamentarians will debate Canada's involvement in what appears to be an inevitable war in Iraq. It is important that Canadians participate in the democratic debate before our armed forces are committed to war.

Does the Premier support the use of economic sanctions to their full extent before participating in an American led invasion?

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

Mr. Martindale: Can the Premier tell the House and all Manitobans if he has conveyed his Government's views on economic sanctions versus the use of military force since Manitobans may be called up if war breaks out and since Manitobans could be casualties in a Gulf war?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): No, Mr. Speaker.

* (1350)

Impact on Manitoba

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Has the Premier or the Department of Finance done an analysis of the federal Government budget cutbacks of \$350 million, with the money being reallocated to the Department of National Defence and the effect on Manitobans of cuts to U.I., Veterans Affairs, Indian Affairs, Transport and the Solicitor General?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have received no detailed information on that matter.

Minister of Health Apology Request

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Yesterday the Minister of Health rose in this House and gave the wrong information. If the Minister would bother to phone Deer Lodge Hospital he will find out that 90 beds have been available as of May 1989. If the Minister cannot simply have the math to add up 18 months, it is not our fault. That is the reason probably he is not the Finance Minister and he will not be.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister please do the honourable thing and apologize to this House?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): After you, Alphonse.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I remind the Honourable Minister that we refer to all Honourable Members in this Chamber as the Honourable Member for whichever constituency or the Honourable Minister of whichever portfolio.

Deer Lodge Hospital Extended Care Beds

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister tell us then when the 90 beds at Deer Lodge Hospital will be finally made available for public use?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as a result of the announcement of the findings of the extended treatment bed review—and I reiterate to my honourable friend that in January of this year, with an interim report at which the recommendation of the Liberal Party was to implement immediately, leaving out an entire quadrant of the City of Winnipeg, the northeast quadrant of the City of Winnipeg, I elected not to take that advice. Prior to the call of the election, I made an announcement in terms of the commissioning and use of those beds at Deer Lodge Hospital, an announcement that was claimed to be by my honourable friend purely politics.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend that the latest information I have is that we expect to have the first of four wings operational by the end of this year.

Health Advisory Network Cardiac Care Report

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, last year the Minister of Health made a promise to have the study done on cardiac by-pass surgery. I did ask him the question yesterday. I will give him another opportunity.

Can he tell us finally when that report will be made available?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I indicated to my honourable friend that ought to be available in the near future.

I want to tell you some of the initiatives that we have taken as Government before receiving the recommended report. We have urged that both of the teaching hospitals adopt a common approach to cardiac surgery in this province of one million

people. That is not a new recommendation. That recommendation was made in 1982 and through a series of events was not expedited.

Mr. Speaker, we now have the two boards, senior management of the two teaching hospitals, working collaboratively on the development of a provincial cardiac care program for the Province of Manitoba. I will look forward to my honourable friend in full discussions—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Core Area Initiative Education Programs

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education.

During the Estimates process as recently as November 13, the Minister of Education indicated that programs funded by the Core Area Initiative dealing with aboriginal training and education, the unemployed, visible minorities, women and the disabled were all, and I quote, valuable programs.

What steps, if any, will this Government take to ensure that funding for these programs, which the Minister called valuable, will continue if the core area is not renewed?

* (1355)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): As the Member heard earlier in Question Period, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did indicate what the process was in terms of the further negotiations on the Core Area Agreement. Let me indicate that indeed there have been many valuable programs that have been undertaken especially in the field of education in the inner city.

Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that although there have been those valuable programs, from time to time it is necessary to evaluate them to see how we can expand on them. We will indeed be awaiting a new agreement or an extension of the agreement so that these programs can indeed be continued in the future.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) indicated that there was a prioritization of programs. They would look at priorities.

Can the Minister indicate how these programs fit into the priorities of the Minister of Urban Affairs and how he has fought for these programs in order to ensure that they will be renewed?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that through the course of negotiations in terms of getting an extension to the agreement or getting a new agreement into place, there indeed needs to be some prioritization of the programs that are now being offered. That does not only mean that those programs will be evaluated in the inner city. In fact, programs throughout the province have to be evaluated from time to time.

I mean we would be silly if we did not evaluate programs, prioritize and make sure that we improved on those that need improving. That is all a matter of the process that we are going to be embarking on in the near future.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Minister of Education could indicate what steps, what strategy is in place to deal with these programs so that individuals involved are not caught in the same situations that individuals involved in the BUNTEP and ACCESS programs are caught in as a result of inaction on the part of this Government and the federal Government?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows, this province put in some \$2.6 million additional to live up to the shortfall that was experienced by the lack of funding from the federal Government.

Mr. Speaker, I think that our priorities are very clear in terms of supporting programs that are important in this province. The same process would be embarked on in terms of the core area programs to ensure that indeed the valuable programs are not lost completely.

Rail Transportation Safety Requirements

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Highways.

In recent weeks he has said he knew nothing about the changes to regulations affecting VIA Rail, the open sky committee here on Friday, deteriorating safety conditions in the rail industry and the railbus program that ended this past March, not two years ago as he had claimed.

Today I want to ask this Minister, can he tell the House what is the status of the end of train unit signals in this province? When did he last review this policy?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the questions that emanate from the Member

for Transcona invariably deal with the federal issues, not provincial issues. The issue with the end trail aspect of it has been concluded, I believe, quite some time ago. If there is any further information on it, I will get it for the Member.

Mr. Reid: Since his beloved Conservative Party changed regulations to end cabooses over three years ago, I would ask this Minister when he was informed that they were now dropping the requirement for displaying flashing lights at the ends of trains?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

Transportation Industry Safety Requirements

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the same Minister: Is this Minister so convinced that deregulation is making transportation safer in this province and is he so enamoured with the Mulroney deregulation privatization ideology that he is willing to sacrifice safety for the profits by those firms?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member's question is seeking an opinion. Therefore, it is out of order.

Would the Honourable Member for Transcona kindly rephrase your question, please.

Mr. Reid: I would like to ask the Minister what the policy is to deal with the safety, considering that these firms are now allowed to operate with the necessary safety equipment on the end of their trains.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I have some difficulty with the generality of the questions in terms of the safety aspect. I just want to indicate that the record of this Government in terms of safety for all people in Manitoba has been very, very positive.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to indicate that we have never supported the position of deregulation, ignoring the safety aspect of it. I take some exception to the slant that the Member gives to some of the questions that he puts on the record.

* (1400)

Bill 20 Notices

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have a question for the Minister of Finance.

Bill 20, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act is still in the second reading stage. It includes provisions requiring vendors to collect all taxes, all sales taxes without exception.

Why has the Minister of Finance issued notices dated November 19, 1990, requiring vendors in Manitoba to comply before the legislation has been passed by this Legislature?

Mr. Speaker, the public service and this Minister has to be reminded that we still have a parliamentary democracy, not an executive democracy. Frankly, it is contemptuous of this Legislature and its proceedings.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the question was. Maybe the Member would like to ask the question.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I asked the question very directly. Why has the Minister's department issued these notices before the legislation has been passed?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, for the very same reason we issue that notice with respect to sales tax on tobacco inventory before the budget has received passage, before the statute law amendment taxation Bill has received support. It is because if you give tremendous notice, time notice, before the law is ultimately passed, there are those in our society who would go out and do all of their purchasing before a certain point in time.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the Member that he consider this matter very carefully for the future, because this matter has been considered by Speaker Fraser in Ottawa, and it was a matter of very serious concern by the Speaker who ruled on this back in October of 1989.

The Minister refers to the budget. That is a different matter, and the budget was passed by the House. Mr. Speaker, this is contemptuous.

I have another question. Can the Minister advise whether there is a great deal of money involved in consumers refusing to pay the sales tax? Why is the Government moving on this now, and why November 19?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the question I guess senses a very important issue that no doubt will be

brought forward in debate under Bill 20, but let me say that there is an exemption in place that my department and indeed Government was feeling was beginning to be abused in some respects. This exemption had been brought in originally when the retail sales tax was introduced to this province in the mid-'60s, '65, '67, in that period of time. It served its purpose well; however, now it seems to be growing in the abuse around the exemption. That is why we are seeking the support of this Legislature to see it removed.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I wish the Minister would give us an idea of how much and why the 19th of November? What is so magical about November 19?

Goods and Services Tax Application

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have another question to the Minister.

Why did the Minister not ensure that the provincial sales tax would not be applied on top of the GST effective September 1 instead of January 1, 1991, as mentioned in the legislation, given the fact that many organizations in Manitoba are already collecting the GST in advance?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there are two different issues here. The GST that was collected in September by some organizations was for services or goods that were going to be used beginning in 1991.

My legislation that is before the House, I will be seeking an amendment, and indeed January 1 will no longer be spelled as when we apply our provincial sales tax alongside the GST. We will do it if and when the GST is passed in Ottawa. If it is not passed, then we will have no requirement to tax alongside.

Goods and Services Tax Manitoba Hydro Billing

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Neufeld).

Earlier this month the Government indicated that it would be instructing some Crown corporations not to collect the goods and services tax, and we are prepared to go to some lengths to defend that decision.

In northern Manitoba, where Manitoba Hydro provides the energy to heat many, many homes, the cost of heating homes stands to escalate as much as \$20 to \$30 per month.

Can the Minister of Energy and Mines indicate whether he has taken a position with his own Minister of Finance with respect to protecting the interest of consumers and not having the goods and services tax applied to Manitoba Hydro bills?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we looked at all the entities of Government and the case of Manitoba Hydro because they are a competitive energy supplier to others who do not have monopoly positions.

Mr. Speaker, there were no grounds in which to safeguard the consumers of energy who purchase that energy through Manitoba Hydro. In that case they had to register with the federal Government. They ultimately at the board level decided whether or not they would, beginning in January, begin to apply the GST. That was strictly a board decision.

Northern Manitoba Home Heating Costs

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): If I understand the Minister of Finance correctly, although we did not hear from the Minister responsible, this Government stood by while a Crown corporation decided that they wanted the GST applied.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines. Can the Minister indicate whether his Government has done any survey on the number of homes that are heated with electricity as the only source of energy? In fact, in many communities in remote parts of this province there is no effective alternative.

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Yes, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba Hydro has that information. I do not have that in front of me, but I will get that information for the Member.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, my final question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines.

I find it rather remarkable that no one has considered the consumers in this battle, that this decision was made by the Manitoba Hydro board without recourse to the facts.

At the same time as Manitoba Hydro is going to be having the GST applied to its bill—Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister. Can the Minister

indicate whether his department has done any monitoring of the 39 percent increase in fuel oil prices that are affecting northern Manitobans, that are going to add between \$100 and \$120 a month to fuel bills in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Neufeld: I believe, Mr. Speaker, that decision was made by the Public Utilities Board, and our policy has been not to interfere with the decisions of the Public Utilities Board.

Health Care System Government Position

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

I think the First Minister would agree that medicare and its national standards and its national payment schedule is of vital interest to every single Canadian. Every day we watch as Ministers come in with big binders full of material.

As a result of the answers given earlier today, can the First Minister tell us if the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) is going into the Finance Ministers' meetings without a single piece of paper?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will meet with the Finance Minister and check and see how many papers he is taking into the meeting.

Mrs. Carstairs: From that I can only assume that the Finance Minister is indeed taking some papers in.

As a result of that, will the First Minister ensure that that documentation, which represents their Government position, is given to Members of this House and therefore to the public of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Lloydminster communique which the Member for River Heights has referred to a number of times in this House is a matter of public record. The report of the western Finance Ministers is a matter of public record and has been referred to by the Member for River Heights many times in this House.

She knows there are many items for discussion for which there are background papers that have been prepared for the meeting, and they have been made public.

* (1410)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, it is exactly because there is a Lloydminster communique, exactly because there is a report of the western Finance

Ministers, that we want to know what this Government's response is going to be.

Why will they not provide us with that response?

Mr. Filmon: The Premiers in August in Manitoba asked the Finance Ministers from across the country to get together and develop a larger consensus on how to deal with the problem of successive reductions in equalization and transfer payments by the federal Government.

Starting with the federal Government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, whom she worships very, very strongly, in 1982 and in 1983, major cuts in EPF transfers to Manitoba—I outlined them yesterday in Question Period, how they cost this province some \$600 million over the past decade. That was the beginning of the problems that plague the financing of medicare in this province. That is what we have to deal with. That is the problem that challenges us, that faces us. Finance Ministers are going to have to come to grips with an adequate response.

From our perspective, the No. 1 issue is that we will protect and enhance and maintain the standards of health care in this province.

Health Care System Government Position

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to try to leave the impression that he supports national standards and a national health care system without tabling a single document. His Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has left the opposite impression, verified again by the Brandon Sun article, a Canadian Press article in the Canadian Press that clearly indicates—

Mr. Speaker: Is there a question here, please? Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Johns kindly put her question, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: My question to the Premier is: Will he say in no uncertain terms that provincial takeover of health care is not an option?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): How long has this Member been around Government and a part of Government? We deliver health care. The provinces deliver health care in this country. That is the division of power that is in our Constitution, Mr. Speaker. We have been responsible throughout this century for the delivery of health care even after a national health care system, medicare, was brought

in in the 1960s. We deliver it. When will she get it through her head?

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I have a committee change.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that the committee change moved on November 27, 1990, substituting the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) for the Honourable Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) as a Member on the Standing Committee on Economic Development be rescinded.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Vodrey for Render, McIntosh for Helwer, and Rose for Dacquay.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I have a committee change.

I move, seconded by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended: the Member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) for the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, after consultation with the Opposition House Leaders, I plan to call Bill 13. I understand it will be debated roughly to around three o'clock, at which time we will move into Interim Supply and conclude the consideration of Bill 19.

Then we will go into private Members' hour as the rules call, from five, and I think there is an agreement to recess at 5:45. The Lieutenant-Governor will then join us at ten to six to provide Royal Assent to the Interim Supply Bill 19.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to recess at 5:45 during private Members' hour? That is

agreed until ten to six at which time we will return for Royal Assent.

Committee Change

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon, with a committee change.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): I have an additional committee change, Mr. Speaker, last minute. My apologies.

I move, seconded by the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), that the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended by adding the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) for the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL 13—THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): It is indeed a pleasure to stand here this afternoon and speak once again on landlord and tenant legislation that has been brought before this Chamber. As everyone is aware that this is not the first time, I thought what I might do is just comment somewhat briefly on Bill 13 and talk a bit about the history in terms of what brought us to the stage that we are currently at.

As many of us are aware, it was several years ago when the then NDP administration had a committee struck that looked at the legislation that we currently had amongst many other things. That committee was made up of bureaucrats and representatives from tenant organizations or tenant representatives and landlord representatives. They met, from what I understand and in talking to many members of that committee, for literally over a hundred hours in trying to come up with recommendations to the current

legislation that exists that would make it, in fact, better legislation.

After those many hours of sitting down, they came up with a report. In that report they had 139 recommendations. I guess what is most important, Mr. Speaker, is when we look at that report, we have to be aware of the context in which the consensus was achieved. You had landlords, you had tenants convened in rooms in which there was give and take. In many cases, the tenants' reps would agree to something that the landlords wanted, because the landlords gave in—or I should not say gave in—but respected some of the needs and demands of the tenant representation on the committee.

All in all, what is most important is that the recommendations were based on a consensus. In any Bill that comes out of the recommendations from this committee, we have to be of the opinion, I believe, that to leave some of the recommendations out, or to add in something that was not there or was not recommended, could change the actual intent or the consensus that was achieved by the landlord and tenant representations that were made at the committee.

If you would have read through Bill 42 and read through Bill 13, in which I could say that I have read through Bill 42 fairly extensively.

(Madam Deputy Speaker, Louise Dacquay, in the Chair)

Bill 13, I did get to go over—maybe not as extensively as I would have liked—but in both Bills you will see that there is a major difference in terms of the recommendations brought up from the report.

* (1420)

The Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), as in Bill 42 and Bill 13, will say that the recommendations might not be inside the legislation, that in part—and I do not know to what extent in terms of percentages—a good number of those recommendations, the Minister will argue, will come in, in the form of regulations.

I have a bit of a problem with a blanket comment or remarks of that nature for a couple of reasons. I should say that I do not believe that I, or the Liberal Party, am alone when I make those remarks. I would go as far as to say many landlords and tenants, and possibly as far as to say, a good majority of tenants and landlords, feel that the assurance that has been given by the Minister of Housing is not adequate

enough, that in the legislation we know what is being done with the recommendations.

Once the legislation has passed, we all know the procedures that need to be followed to ensure that any changes have to go through some form of a public information or public input session, whether it is the Minister approaching different interest groups or the Opposition consulting with interest groups, or in fact a committee of the Chamber in reviewing what might be a potential change any time in the future; that at least they would have input to the change if it was in the legislation. That input would be guaranteed.

Not only do we not know if in fact that change will occur or the recommendations that are not inside Bill 13, or have not been taken into account into Bill 13, are going to be put in, in terms of regulations, there is no way we can tell.

It is up to us to decide in landlords and tenants and those of us who are not in Cabinet—I guess many would argue even within Cabinet—will not know the sincerity of the recommendations that have been left out. -(interjection)-

The Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says the advisory committee would advise him on it. I am not too sure if—first of all, we have to take a look at the advisory committee and the make-up of the advisory committee, and how does that reflect the tenants and the landlords? Who is going to be there to ensure that their interests are in fact being looked after?

Really, what I am trying to say to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) is that even though all of us in this Chamber like to take each other at face value, and what the Minister says, we like to expect that will materialize.

We need to have the assurances on many of the recommendations that have not been included in the legislation that the Minister says will be included in some form in the regulations.

That is something that in a roundabout way is very different from Bill 42, even though Bill 42 did not have all the recommendations. I believe it was upwards around 139 recommendations, but Bill 13 has been weakened in that respect because many of the recommendations that Bill 42 took into account were not taken into account with Bill 13. One has to ask the question why that is. I do not want to question the Minister, especially not being the critic myself, and I know the Member for Osborne

(Mr. Alcock), once we get into committee, will be looking into it. But we have to ask the question why the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) saw fit, this time around, to not have as many recommendations in Bill 13 as in Bill 42. I would have thought Bill 42 would have been a stepping block in terms of recommendations. We all know that Bill 42 had many faults to it, even though I stood up and I said, in general, we support Bill 42.

There were many different counts, Madam Deputy Speaker. We had a running total of amendments or potential amendments to Bill 42, and I believe the tenants' associations that I met with, including the Housing Concerns Group had a total of in-and-around 60 amendments combined to Bill 42. The landlords had—I would not want to be held to it, but it is approximately around 40 amendments. In conversations with the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), he himself had said, yes, there were going to be amendments, and it would be a large number of amendments, but did not specify say the number of amendments to Bill 42.

I believe that Bill 42, unlike many other pieces of legislation that have been brought before the Chamber—and I have only been here a relatively short while, especially if you compare me to the Member for Brandon or the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), but I believe that there was a genuine concern back in January, February, that the political parties should be put to the side and we come up with what would be in the best interests of the landlords and the tenants. Some Members might say, well, how would I—or if I could clarify a statement of that nature to say that politics being put to the side, we and myself and the Liberal Party, and I believe the New Democratic Party, had agreed at one point to only pass things through if there was a consensus in the committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at one point in time, we had agreed, even though we felt very strongly on the mandatory condition report, to allow that issue to go through on a consensus. So, if the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) felt that he and this Government could not accept what we introduced as Bill 2, he would have an opportunity to not allow it to become part of his legislative package. I do not believe, and I am sure that some of the more senior Members of the Chamber will tell me if I am wrong, that type of co-operation and facilitation is an everyday occurrence inside this Chamber. In fact, it

is fairly rare, especially if you take a look at the legislation itself and the length and what it is that the legislation was all about. The Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) asks a legitimate question, why did we withdraw it?

I did want to talk about history and where Bill 42 and Bill 13 actually came from. I started it off at the very beginning when I made reference to the hard work by many appointments. I believe it was the previous Member for Logan, Ms. Hemphill, who had put together a very hardworking committee. They reported to the Minister of Housing at the time, and that would have been back in February of 1987. In that report we had, as I have pointed out, 139 recommendations. From that point, I beg to differ with what many New Democrats will say. I will say, and the Liberal Party will argue, that the New Democratic Party did have a chance to bring forward this legislation.

I believe if we had the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) back at that time, or if he would have been a part of that Government, I believe that we probably would have seen the Bill. -(interjection)- The Member thanks me for the compliment. I am serious. I really do believe that had we had the Member for Burrows here back in 1987 and in Cabinet, that we would have seen the legislation, because again he was a member of the housing concerns group, and I do believe that a good portion of the time he was being very apolitical. I do believe that because I think he was thinking about what is in the best interests of the tenants.

* (1430)

Unfortunately, at that point in time, in the sense of landlords' and tenants' rights, the Member for Burrows was not there because we never saw the legislation brought forward. That has really frustrated me to some extent, because I have heard the previous Member for Churchill stand up after myself and actually even question me about was I aware of things that the New Democratic Party was doing in preparation for this Bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker, to this day, I have still seen nothing, no evidence whatsoever about anything that the New Democrats had or that the New Democrats were working on in order to see the Bill. I would still be very receptive, being the open-minded individual that I am, to seeing anything that would show that the New Democratic Party did have something.

Point of Order

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, on a point of order.

The Member for Inkster referred to a document which he said did not exist and, in fact, I showed it to him during my speech a week ago so he knows it does exist. I would like that to be on the record, thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Burrows does not have a point of order, clarification of facts.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, as you point out it is not a point of order. The Member for Burrows flashed a document. I do not know if it was an annual report. I have to take the Member at face value, and I would ask him to table that document. He is off I believe to actually go and get that document, and I look forward to seeing something. I have been asking for it for the last two and a half years. But not wanting to belabour on that particular point, I do want to continue going on—

An Honourable Member: Want to quickly get off, Kevin?

Mr. Lamoureux: The Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) says I want to quickly get off. Au contraire, I would be more than happy to point out many of the falses that the New Democrats have put on the record, but unfortunately I am only limited to 40 minutes.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do want to continue on because after the report was brought to the current Minister's attention back in 1987, nothing was done. We then went into a provincial election in March 1988, and we had a new administration come in. One of the first statements that came out shortly after being elected into office, they came out with a statement that the landlord and tenant legislation was going to be put on the back burner. We came out, when I say we, the Liberal Party came out and suggested that it should be taken off the back burner and put onto the front burner. During the Estimates that year, myself and the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) had several conversations regarding how we would be happy to co-operate on insuring that the legislation be brought forward.

In the spring of that year as we saw it did not look very good for the legislation to be brought forward in that Session, we introduced Bill 2, which looked

at one of the major recommendations put forward by the review committee, and that was of course the mandatory condition report. We did get to debate that however so briefly in the month of June, and then we went into September. I was very pleased and encouraged that the Minister of Housing brought forward what was, as I had put it on many occasions, generally good legislation. Good legislation that was badly needed.

I said at the time and I still stick to those comments that it did need some amendments, and when I was given the opportunity at the beginning of October to stand up on the Bill and put the Liberal Party's position on the record, I did just that. In addition to doing that, I had suggested on behalf of the Party that what is needed is speedy passage out of second reading, into the committee stage of that Bill.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs and responsible for Native Affairs): Kevin, sit down.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Northern Affairs says, sit down. I will be sitting down very, very shortly because the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) wants to comment on it, but what ended up happening is that after I spoke and talked to the former Member for Churchill on the importance of passing this Bill into the committee stage, what happens is the New Democratic Party stood up and started to filibuster the Bill again.

They stood that Bill until December 21. Once again, in December, the Liberal Party rose and asked, through leave, if the New Democratic Party would allow it to go into the committee stage, and the NDP agreed with us at that time. It is unfortunate that they did not agree with us back in October, because then we would have been into committee. We would have had the legislation by now. We would have had the legislation by now, but that unfortunately did not occur. Because that did not occur, we know—and both the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party have debated what occurred from that point.

To this day, I still believe that the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) was very serious and would have loved to have seen Bill 42 go through in the spring of this year. I do not question that, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). That is really where I would concur that in fact, had it not been for the Premier, the Minister of Housing (Mr.

Ducharme) and the two Opposition Critics would have had a chance to debate it in the committee stage. I do believe, through a consensus, and we would have been more than happy to go on a consensus, the Bill would have in fact been law at this point in time.

As I say, I do not believe that there was a need for us to wait this long for the legislation, that in fact we had an opportunity. Well, we had two opportunities. We had an opportunity in spring, and we had an opportunity last fall. We had an opportunity in 1988-1987 while the NDP were in fact in Government. Both Parties, in that sense, have been somewhat of a disappointment because the biggest losers, of course, have been the landlords and the tenants.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you have to say we need the legislation. We have been very consistent, the Liberal Party that is. We will continue to co-operate. We will do whatever we can. I know the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) has gone over this Bill and feels very strongly that this time we do not mess things up, that in fact, in general, we once again will support Bill 13. We still feel that there are some shortcomings in Bill 13, and before I comment on a couple of the shortcomings, I did want to comment on the need for the legislation. Last night, we passed through committee some consumer-oriented legislation to protect the interests of consumers from potential business or employers that might take advantage of the consumer—again, in general, good legislation. The Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) threatens once again to get me. Plurality in my riding increased, and the New Democratic vote went down.

* (1440)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis) has been volunteered to run against me in the next election from the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer). In my humble way, I would be more than happy to accept the challenge, and I look forward to the next election.

I do not want to get off of topic, Madam Deputy Speaker. I did want to say that the legislation, in general, we support, because we recognize the need to have good legislation, good safeguards in for our tenants. Not only our tenants, the landlords

and tenants go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other.

We can go back to the early 1900s. It was in around 1905, I believe, when we had legislation of some form. Many would argue, I would probably be one of them, that it was fairly one-sided, and that was towards the landlords, but into the '70s and the '80s, we have seen more progressive legislation introduced to ensure that there was parity. -(interjection)- No, unfortunately the NDP were not at the forefront on that either, but now we are going to what I think could be the next step, getting closer and closer to legislation that potentially could be some of the finest landlord and tenant legislation in North America.

I think this is really the direction that we should be setting our goals for. Our objectives need to be set high, because after all, the legislation is there for the landlords and the tenants to provide harmony between the two. When we come up with recommendations in which both sides, if you will, and all those concerned could agree to, it is our responsibility as legislators to work it in and somehow come up with what is in the best interest of all landlords and all tenants.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when we look at the legislation, I did want to comment on a couple of aspects of it, one is the legislation that will actually combine with the other legislation to try and streamline. We see that through the legislation. I think that is a very good point; addressing the slumlords is another good point. There are some negative points, things like the mandatory condition report, things like the non-profit housing or the hotels and motels not necessarily being included, the recommendations being taken out of the legislation and being proposed to be put into regulations, and things of that nature.

I know we had agreed to go into Interim Supply at three o'clock. I will likely get another opportunity to speak on it, but if not, I did want to take this opportunity to get a few remarks on the record. If I do get another chance, I will look forward to it. Other than that, I will let my colleague, the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), speak.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Madam Deputy Speaker, tempted as I am to join in on the debate about who did what, when, where to whom, how and potentially why, I think I will refrain from that at this point and talk a little bit about The Landlord and

Tenant Act, or The Residential Tenancies and Consequential Amendments Act. I am interested, frankly, in this legislation, because I have long believed that in a sense this piece of legislation belongs rightly in the body of social policy legislation that Governments over time have created to redress some of the inequities and rights that exist in our communities.

I think we have gone a long way in this province, and I think we have gone a long way in this Bill in attempting to change the nature of power that exists between people who rent accommodation and people who own that accommodation. I want to come back to that theme a little bit as we talk about this Bill and whether or not it meets some of the tests that we in this community might set for it.

The first thing I want to note is that we have had legislation of some sort relative to rental accommodations since, I believe, 1902 in this province, but until the early '70s, the only legislation that we had was completely on the side of those people who owned rental accommodation. It compelled renters to obey certain regulations and compelled renters to pay their rents. It gave landlords the power to evict tenants and to charge tenants without any sort of recourse, or any mention of the obligations of the landlord to the tenant.

So I think that when we made the move in the early '70s—and I should note that when we brought in rent control legislation in 1976 we were the last province in Canada to do so—we brought in legislation that was very cautious, very tentative and not terribly effective, although it was a major step forward for this province.

There was a great debate. I have read with some interest the debates that took place in 1976 as we moved to control the growth in rents at that time. At that time, we were looking at—and the Member for Fort Rouge at that time, the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, quoted some of the rent increases that had taken place in his constituency at that time, rent increases that were year over year, 20 percent, 18 percent, 26 percent, 32 percent, in one case a 41 percent rental increase in one year. That was the sort of circumstances that we were facing as we looked at bringing in rent review legislation.

One of the things the then Opposition, the Conservative Party—led actually in the interim by the Honourable Don Craik. One of the arguments it put forward was a standard economic argument. In

fact, there are not many economists in this country, and I suspect throughout the world, that will argue that rent controls produce efficiencies. Rent controls, by their very existence, are inefficient, and they do create all sorts of problems in the way in which markets act to provide rental accommodation.

So why then, as a matter of public policy, do we act to intervene in those markets? I think the answer to that is quite clear that housing is something we see as something other than a marketable good. We see it as a right that people have. They have a right to a quality of housing that should be consistent and available to all Manitobans at a reasonable price. Because over time, the legislation that was in existence only supported one side of that argument, there were great inequities exacted and a great deal of pressure grew in the community.

When we look at the numbers of people who live in rental accommodation, and the current Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) has referenced some 150,000 rental units with up to 250,000 Manitobans who live in rental accommodations of some sort, this is a significant public policy issue. It has many facets to it, some of which are addressed in this Bill, and some of which I think remained to be confronted as we move into committee.

I think that this Bill is a substantial improvement over the Acts that exist to date, Acts that are currently in force. It meets a number of the tests that were included in the report that was done by the committee that was established by the former Government. It does combine all the legislation into one Act. It does set up a process that is clearer, and I think a little more accessible and a little more efficient than the current legislation, and it does something that is very important. It begins to delineate very clearly and very specifically the rights of landlords and tenants. I think that is important, and it does carry forward in that an imbalance between the rights of landlords and tenants.

* (1450)

If you look at the report that came out and you look at Bill 42, I think that imbalance was very clearly stated. I would like to say that I and Members of my Party support that imbalance because the reality is, the owners of the property, those people who are acquiring property have a series of rights that go beyond the controls that exist in this Act. When you look at somebody who has the financial resources to access the courts and force their will, that there

is a need for the Government to act to protect those people who cannot.

One of the most significant improvements in this legislation over the previous is the way in which it structures the relationship between tenants and landlords, tenants supported by the Government when they have to deal with what we have euphemistically begun to call slum landlords, that is, people who buy up properties, who take more out of the property in their revenues than they put back in to maintain basic quality of conditions that too often we have seen. The Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) referenced a number of examples, and the recent stories that were displayed in *The Sun* and the CBC about poverty in this city, highlighted others. That people are forced to, because of economic circumstances, live in very deplorable conditions with inadequate sewer and water, with inadequate safety, with inadequate public health conditions, paying excess rent as the Member for Burrows mentions. That is right.

People have been allowed to profit from that circumstance with very little control imposed by Government other than basically a structured review of the rental process. The rent control process we have had in place to date has not been a rent control process. It has been a process that allowed us to look at what people were charging rents, and to simply allow them to continue to do so even though the rental increase may be far above the guideline. One of the things that one learns very quickly in dealing with our current rent control system, is that a guideline is truly a guideline. It is not a control, it is not a limit, it is not something that prevents increases above a certain rate. That is something that I wish to debate with the Minister at some length, and something that I will want to look at carefully as we get into clause-by-clause review of this particular Bill.

The one thing this Bill does very well is that it does go further than any previous legislation in attacking the problem of slum landlords, of exacting some penalties and setting in place some administrative mechanisms that allow the Government to act. If the Government has the will to act, it now has the mechanism to act, and I look forward to seeing how these provisions will be enacted, and I look forward frankly in seeing how the Government will act upon them once they are indeed enacted.

There are still some weaknesses in this bill, and there are still some weaknesses in the system that

currently exists, and I want to reference a couple of them as we go through an examination of what this bill attempts to do. We talked, and there has been great debate at different times about some specific issues. The matter of security deposits, how they are held and how they are managed while they are held, is an issue that the Minister spoke of when he spoke on Bill 42. It is an issue that the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) spoke of last time, and the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) when he spoke on 42, and it is a serious concern.

I have a case before me right now of a young woman who gave a security deposit and then was unable to move into the unit. That security deposit has been withheld by the landlord. She eventually will recover that, but she will have to go through a very difficult and arduous and I think a very unfair process to try to recover what to her as a student is a significant amount of money. I think there were suggestions made in the Review Committee, and I think there have been other suggestions put forward that suggest another way of dealing with that. It is a way that the Minister has stepped back from despite the fact that he noted in his speech on Bill 42 that close to half of the cases that the Rentalsman dealt with involved disputes over security deposits. So I think that in and of itself would suggest that there is a need to look at that a little more carefully.

Now the question of condition reports has been before this Legislature in debate in a number of ways, and I think that there the Minister has gone a half step. He has said that a condition report will be mandatory if either party requests it, but the problem with that is that it treats this relationship between landlord and tenant as an equal relationship.

I think that historical precedent, any of the research that has been done, and I think the fact that we have moved the way we have relative to slum landlords indicates that there is not an equal relationship, that it is very difficult when you have somebody who may be living on Income Security or somebody who may be a single parent with very low income to add another pressure at this time when they are attempting to access housing. If they are finding it difficult to find housing, and it is not the Minister who finds it difficult to find rental accommodation, it is not myself, it is a young woman with dependants who may find it difficult, and she may not want to jeopardize the acquisition of a rental unit by further asking for a condition report.

So the Minister has attempted to do the right thing, but I think he has fallen short by not making that condition mandatory, because of this inequality in the power relationships that exists between landlords and tenants.

Now I have indicated to the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Manness) that I would not go on too long, because I know he wishes to get the Interim Supply Bill passed as expeditiously as possible through the House today, so I will just reference a few other things that we will talk about in more detail in committee.

We know, as anyone who has ever been involved with a downtown hotel as I had the limited pleasure of being involved back in the late '70s, that there are a significant number of people who live in those hotels. They do not rent month to month, they live in them. They are indeed their homes. Over time, there are a considerable number of them that exist, and yet that rental relationship has been left out of this legislation completely.

I think there is some need to rethink that, and there may be some way in which we can review that situation when we see tenancy moving beyond a week or ten days or a month or even two or three months. I think we can set a time frame that then brings some of these very progressive provisions of this act to bear on those circumstances.

A second thing that is interesting is the relationship between this legislation and the housing that the Government operates or that its agents operate, the not-for-profit housing that is operated. While they are not specifically excluded in total from the act, and the provisions of the act do apply, I think there are some boundary issues there about where it applies and where it does not and where they have been excluded from the provisions of the act, and the questionable conditions that exist within some of those housing units. I think frankly that we may get ourselves into a very interesting debate if we begin to apply some of the limits that are contained within this act to such public housing units.

Another matter, and it is a matter that comes up in a number of ways when you look at relatively unempowered groups, is the way in which they get informed about their rights. There was a great deal of discussion about how people receive information about their rights under this legislation, and I think we need to see that clarified a little bit. I would ask

the Minister, coming into the debating committee, to reference that item and to help us understand how specifically they intend to make people aware of the rights that they are acquiring as a result of this change in the legislation.

Now there is one other area that I want to reference, and it comes out of personal experience that I have, given that my riding now is about 50 percent renters, in fact perhaps a little bit better than 50 percent renters. I want to raise an issue that I suspect the Minister is aware of. A number of things in the current legislation exist in regulation, items which do not necessarily have to exist in regulation. Certainly some of the year-over-year provisions, provisions that are constantly changing, do not need to be in regulation, but other items such as the policy relative to the treatment of capital currently exist in regulation. I do not think they need to. I think that those provisions should be brought forward into public view and debated and a decision should be taken.

* (1500)

One of the examples of that, and you only have to go before the Rent Review Board a few times to determine how bogus the current rental guidelines are, in fact any landlord who wishes to increase his rental base simply needs to undertake a few capital improvements and he will be granted that ability.

Now at first blush that sounds like a good thing. If you put capital into your building, you should be able to recover the cost of improving it. In fact, is that not what we want the slum landlords to do, put capital into their buildings. So we do not want to penalize people for that. The problem is, the way in which the current act is structured, you may make a capital improvement that will last for 20 or 30 years, you will be allowed to recover the cost in four to six years, and that recovery will be built into the base in perpetuity. Anybody who buys a rental building can in a relatively short period of time jack their rental base up to the point where they are making very healthy profits.

We have been tracking the profits on some of the buildings that exist in my riding, and we are intending to track them all as they come up for review, as we have access to the underlying documentation, but for example, the department declares that it has about a 45 percent policy, that it will allow, as a guideline, about 45 percent of the total rents to be applied against gross profit. Now

that still is return on capital investment and return on operations, yet very quickly—and I would note that in a number of the buildings just south of the river here there have been rental increases, in the two years of this Government's term, in excess of 20 percent, 10 percent and 15 percent a year.

I was involved with a group of tenants in a small building, a small two-storey walkup, down in the south end -(interjection)- Well, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) makes the comment that it is the same argument his Party made when they argued against the imposition of rent controls, and that is, if you do not allow a person to make an acceptable level of profit, they will not produce rental accommodation. That is a good argument. It is a good argument, and it is an argument that has been proven in a number of markets.

This legislation, however, allows landlords to take out a profit. What we are arguing about is not the fact of a profit; we are arguing about the size of it. The department has a guideline of 45 percent which strikes me as not a bad return on anyone's investment.

Currently, in a number of the buildings, that guideline has risen to 55 percent, 56 percent, 58 percent and will soon exceed 60 percent on buildings that exist less than half a mile from here. I think that moves us into an usurious range, which is something that we designed this public policy to prevent.

So one of the issues that we are going to be speaking to the Minister about is a change in the way in which capital costs are dealt with. There are several proposals that will be brought forward at the committee.

I think having said that, I want to return to the review of the two Bills, and I am not going to do it clause by clause. I am simply going to close by saying, when you go through the two Bills, Bill 42 and Bill 13, and when you look at the language changes and the omissions, what you see is an attempt on the part of the department and the Minister to balance -(interjection)- Perhaps the Minister of Finance would like to join in the debate.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The devil made me do it.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Finance Minister says the devil made him do it. I think it was

the honourable speed bump. -(interjection)- No, I do not think so.

I would just like to close with one observation. The language change that has taken place has done what the Minister set out to do. It has returned what he defines as balance to the Act. I fear, however, in going through it, that he has gone too far because this was not a balanced relationship to begin with. It is a relationship that requires strong intervention on the part of the public interest, and I think we will be asking him, as we go through this, to return some of those clauses, not all of them. Some of the things I think he removed were legitimate overzealousness, if you like, on the part of the department, but I think there is a need to, again, return to that question of balance. We will do that in committee.

Anyway, in closing, I would like to say it is a good Bill. I understand that I am the last person to speak on this.

An Honourable Member: No, you are not.

Mr. Alcock: No, there is somebody?

An Honourable Member: The tenants.

Mr. Alcock: Okay. But we will not be having any more speakers and this Bill can move to committee as quickly as possible so that we can see it passed and proclaimed as soon as possible.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Madam Deputy Speaker, we too, on this side of the House in the New Democratic Party, are interested in allowing this Bill, Bill No. 13, The Residential Tenancies Act, to proceed to committee as quickly as possible so that as many community groups and interested individuals concerned about this Bill have an opportunity to have their say and their input. So I will keep my speech relatively short.

I do want to, though, Madam Deputy Speaker, put on record a little bit about the history of this Bill and about the process leading up to Bill 13, because in the last hour or so in this Legislature we have been subjected to a bit of revisionism, an attempt on the part of the Liberal Party to revise history, to perhaps conveniently ignore the facts as presented to them, to embellish the story behind this legislation, and to conveniently ignore, forget, leave out a very significant story behind this piece of legislation. I do not want to correct the record simply for making political points; I want to do so because it is absolutely important -(interjection)- Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) would either keep his comments to

himself or stand up and put on the record his further—

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Bleating.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Bleatings. Yes, that is a good word from my Leader, the Member for Concordia.

I want to make a very serious point. The history behind this Bill must be clarified and put on record in order to pay tribute where tribute belongs, in terms of this Bill before us today; and that, of course, has to do with the concerted, determined effort of community organizations and individuals over many years. It is to those individuals that we, in this Legislature, must pay tribute; it is to those individuals where the credit must go in terms of this Bill finally coming before the Legislature with the hope of becoming law before the end of this Session.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Member for Inkster in revising history did a disservice to those community groups. He did a disservice to those who have worked diligently over the years to make this legislation a reality, and those groups include the Winnipeg Housing Concerns Group, the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, the Social Assistance Coalition of Manitoba, the Social Planning Council, the Community Education Development Association, and many other individuals who contributed a great deal of time, energy and resources to ensure that a progressive piece of legislation was brought before this Assembly and had the opportunity of becoming law of the province.

I say that the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has chosen to either revise history or ignore the facts of the situation because he has said very clearly, and this has been backed up by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), that there was no legislation with the previous administration, the previous NDP administration.

An Honourable Member: Not true.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) knows that is not true, because the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) showed him that legislation. The Minister of Urban Affairs, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) knows that is not true, because he has seen the legislation. If they—

Point of Order

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Member for Burrows showed me nothing.

* (1510)

Madam Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Inkster does not have a point of order.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

May I ask the Honourable Members to carry on their conversations outside the Chamber, please, or in the loge area so that the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) may continue with her debate.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I would like to refresh the memories of people like the Member for Inkster, and the Minister of Housing, with respect to the origins of this Bill so that the record is clear, and so that the organizations and individuals who are responsible for seeing this legislation become a reality are recognized.

The Minister and all Members will know that the genesis of Bill 13, and its forerunner, Bill 42, was Bill 24. If that Bill flowed out of the work started by the previous New Democratic Party administration, when it struck a committee of representatives made up of landlords and their organizations, tenants and housing activists, and Government officials. It was set up to review the serious housing problems as identified by those same individuals over a period of time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that committee began its work in September of 1985, and a year and a half later, after a lot of hard work, harder discussions, irreconcilable differences and consensus-building, the committee presented to the Government of the Day, 139 recommendations and 16 issues where a consensus was nearly reached. That committee completed that work in 1987.

At that time, Madam Deputy Speaker, work immediately was begun on developing comprehensive legislation to address those problems that brought the committee into existence in the first instance, and to put effect to its recommendations. The internal drafting led to a major Act of over 100 pages, and 150 clauses, being

developed by the previous New Democratic Party for introduction in the 1988 session.

I hope, in that context, in light of the serious work that occurred around this Bill, with incredible contribution by community groups and activists, that the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will recognize the time and effort that has gone into this Bill.

I do not want to digress too much, but the chirpings from behind me by the Member for Inkster keep getting in the way of getting on with a discussion of the principles of this Bill. I remind myself, and all Members in this House, that the Member for Inkster tried the same tactic and came forward with the same line, when Bill 42, the forerunner to Bill 13, was being discussed in this Chamber.

An Honourable Member: What did he say about the Tuxedo project?

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: At that time our then Housing Critic, Jay Cowan, put quite succinctly an analysis of the Member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) revisionist history and misrepresentation of the issue at that time. He said then, and I quote: "I am going to digress for just one moment and address the criticism from the Liberal Housing Critic and Member for Inkster when he spoke to this Bill the other day. At that time he suggested that the NDP took too long to develop that legislation."

He goes on to say: "Now I can appreciate the fact that his legislative experience is short and the only legislation he has developed consists of a three-page amending Bill, and for that reason he is not very knowledgeable about how legislation is developed and how long it takes to put it together.

"His ignorance in that area is understandable and probably something we should not fault him for."

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, that was a couple of years ago. Surely over the last couple of years the Member for Inkster has acquired some experience and some understanding of the legislative process to realize, and try to understand how the process works and the time it takes to unfold, the time it takes to prepare, to consult, to come forward with top-quality legislation in a very difficult area.

I do not want to take any more time on the Member for Inkster's comments, but I want to make a point, once again, Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the legislation before us is a result of the pioneering efforts of many people in our society

and groups and individuals, including the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who was a very active member of the Winnipeg Housing Concerns Group. We are very proud to have him in our caucus giving us excellent advice and providing excellent leadership on housing issues. It was a result of—the fact that this legislation is before us today is also, in no small way, due to the efforts of the previous NDP administration in recognizing the need for modern, up-to-date, progressive legislation in this area.

Let me finally remind all Members, particularly the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that this legislation was developed by the previous NDP administration and it was ready for the 1988 Session.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are many things that can be said about this legislation. I want to just, in a few minutes, put on record the reasons why we believe this legislation is so important. We have some concerns. Let there be no mistake about that. The Member for Burrows has already, and the Minister as well, enunciated some of those concerns and indicated to this House, so that the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) and colleagues in the Government will not be surprised when we bring forward some amendments to this Bill.

For us, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say this is one of the most important pieces of legislation that has come before us in recent times. The importance of this legislation is best actually said, not by me or anyone on this side of the House, with the exception perhaps of the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), but best said by the Winnipeg Housing Concerns Group when they made a presentation last year to the Minister of Housing. I quote: "We believe that The Residential Tenancies Act is as important to Manitobans as decent drunk driving legislation and child protection legislation. Shelter is a fundamental right and a fundamental necessity. It hits us all, literally, where we live, and those of us who have lived in an inadequate shelter more than understand the human and social and economic cost of living in inadequate housing. We believe that Bill 42," now Bill 13, "represents a step toward an equitable and fair law which will alleviate some of the pressure on tenants, particularly low income tenants and stabilize landlord and tenant relations."

Madam Deputy Speaker, we echo those comments, we say to all Members in this House, let us move quickly and ensure that this legislation is passed so we have another mechanism in place for

all Manitobans to enjoy the right to safe, healthy, affordable and secure housing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on that brief note, I will conclude my comments and indicate again that we look forward to this Bill proceeding to committee as quickly as possible.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Madam Deputy Speaker, because of the time, I had some closing remarks, but also I would like to—I will take all consideration and comments by the other Members. It has been a long process. I will take their comments along the way and review them at committee stage.

I so move that this be moved on to committee, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, is that Bill 13 be read a second time. Is it the will of the House? Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, before I move the motion to move into Committee of the Whole, I would like to make a House announcement dealing with the location of the Standing Committee on Economic Development formerly scheduled to meet in Room 254 at 10 a.m. tomorrow. I would announce that committee will meet at the same time but instead in Room 255.

* (1520)

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for that information.

* * *

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of the Bill referred, that being Bill 19.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of the Bill referred, Bill 19, with the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

BILL 19—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1990

Madam Chairman (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. The Committee of the Whole will come to order, please, to continue to consider Bill 19, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1990.

We shall proceed to consider Bill 19 clause by clause. Shall Clause 1 be passed?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme). The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has made reference to a piece of legislation that was drafted from the Minister of Housing. I would ask the Minister of Housing, if that legislation was drafted regarding landlord and tenant legislation, if he could table that document?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): I am not aware of any legislation being drafted into a Bill for presentation. There has been no Bill drafted by the previous administration in regard to housing.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) made reference to Bill 24, I believe. Did Bill 24 exist?

Mr. Ducharme: Madam Chairperson, let us get it quite straight right now. I guess some other people have got up and tried to brag about whose Bill it was, et cetera. This Government did not get up and brag about whose Bill it was. The idea is it is good legislation. It is well-prepared legislation, and it is here. I have to say that I am not aware, I have never been aware, I have not been aware of any previous Bill put forward in this House. Let us get it straight. We are here; we have passed the Bill. Let us get on with it. It is good legislation.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, we just wanted to get that particular aspect clarified.

I did have one other question regarding housing, then I will be more than happy to yield the floor to the New Democratic Party, and that is in regard to the infill housing. Can the Minister comment in terms of the current status of the infill housing program?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, I know, to the Member, that he did inquire several times during the last Session and before the election in regard to infill. In his particular area, Weston was the last process of infill housing. I believe there were 13 lots. We did put it up for

tender, for those 13 lots and to build on those. Unfortunately, the price of lots in the particular areas is affecting the infill program.

He has to remember that in the original infill program we were picking up lots very, very reasonably, but right now the subsidy amount per infill house is up where it is in the vicinity of \$45,000.00. That is just the subsidy amount, not the amount for the house and the land. So right now it is probably more beneficial to try to have the monies go to other types of projects.

I must mention to the Member though, I have been now approached by some private people, who are now maybe looking at infill themselves, to provide in the core area. I am a believer in the infill. I believe that the whole idea of it was to make sure that you had people who owned the houses and not rented, and not have vacant landlords that cause the problem in the core area.

So if we could find some way, and my staff is looking at it, to bring down the amount that it takes to provide an infill in grants, et cetera, we will do that. However, we are hoping that maybe, through a new tendering, the ones in Weston will come down and make it worthwhile to get involved in that program. Those 13 lots, we are now cleaning up those lots and we hope that we will proceed with those 13.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): A similar related question, also to the Minister of Housing. Is it not true, Mr. Minister, that if some of those infill lots were made available to groups like the Logan Housing Corporation that they would be able to use monies from the Manitoba-Winnipeg Neighbourhood Revitalization Program and therefore considerably reduce their costs per lot? My understanding is that there is \$160,000 available in the north revitalization and \$160,000 available in the south revitalization area, and if infill lots were made available by the Minister that their cost per unit could be reduced considerably. Is that correct or not?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I believe that the Member for -(interjection)- across the way, okay that is easier, is talking about a different type of infill. He is talking about an infill where they will be owner-occupied. I think what you are talking about is where they are built on lots and then rented out under subsidized rents. There is no problem with that. That is not where the problem lies. What the Member is talking about was the program where people were given grants to build houses and then

live in them and own them, and then pay back a mortgage. We found that under the price of the lots, and the grant that is necessary was beyond the means of those people buying those homes. The other program you are talking about, we are not discouraging that one at all. We are still in favour of that one, and that is under the subsidized allowance.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Madam Chairperson, I want to ask the Minister of Northern Affairs a question. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is quite familiar with the situation at Rock Ridge, the community in my constituency, and I have raised this issue with him in Question Period previously. As well, I would have raised it during the Estimates process but Agriculture was on at the same time, and I did not have an opportunity to raise it with the Minister during the short period that he was in Estimates.

He has indicated to me that when my constituent has contacted him on this issue that he has advised him to contact his MLA for action, which is appropriate. His MLA is now raising it with the Minister for immediate action on a priority basis by this Minister. I ask the Minister pursuant to a letter that was sent to him November 5, 1990 by the contact person for Rock Ridge Community, Mr. Robert Lavallee. Could the Minister indicate whether he has responded to that letter concerning his application of the Community Places Program and precisely what role the Minister's department plays in the evaluation of those applications and recommendations to Community Places? Who is making the decisions on those projects? If the Minister's department and staff are involved in that decision, could he indicate why this one was rejected with regard to the community hall?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs and responsible for Native Affairs): Madam Chair, I will try not to be too long with my answer, but give the information the Member is requesting.

Number one, Rock Ridge is a community which was developed following the Member's tenure as a Member of Government that we did develop Rock Ridge. There were certain works carried out within that community which were done in consultation with the contact person. In addition, there were some additional requests that had come forward like the community hall.

* (1530)

I advised the contact person, the mayor of the community, that there were no funds available to proceed with a hall at this particular time, that there were other matters of need, other areas of need, prior to a building of a hall in that community, and that some time down the road there may be funds available for a hall. The first priority, as I said to the Member the other day—several days ago—was a development of a playground for the young people and equipment for it. That is now in place.

The Member makes reference to wanting money for the clearing of a subdivision in that community. I do not think there is clear evidence at this point as to the number of people that may want to move into that community to expand the community.

At this point, there are no funds available for the community hall, and I do not have the information required that would cause need for clearing of any additional area for a subdivision at this time. If the contact person or the mayor is prepared to provide more information that would be helpful in that decision, then I invite the Member to get that information.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, has the Minister advised the contact person, Mr. Robert Lavalée, that information is required before approval can be given for a clearing for this subdivision?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chair, that information may not have gone out yet, but I can check as to what stage it is at.

Mr. Plohman: I would ask the Minister to move on that quickly, because obviously if the community does not know what is holding up the request, and it is your lack of information, they would certainly be willing to provide that if they are just told what information is required. The Minister, I believe, has a responsibility to advise the community on that matter.

I am also concerned—and I raised this with the Minister regarding the application of Community Places. I asked the Minister who makes the decisions and whether in fact Northern Affairs makes recommendations to the Community Places Program on approval or rejection of applications, and the Minister did not talk about that.

I will just raise it in the context of the letter that was sent to the Minister, dated November 5, in which they indicate that Mr. Blackburn, the director of the Community Places Program, had advised Rock Ridge that since they have received community

status from Northern Affairs no other programs would be approved under the Community Places Program for Rock Ridge. Is that in fact a decision, and what is the connection?

Mr. Downey: The Member should know that Community Places grants are approved under the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) as it relates to that program.

The criteria generally is that the community or the applicant body has to put up 50 percent, I believe it is, of the funds. That is when the Department of Northern Affairs would become involved, because the only source of funding that would make them applicable would come from the Northern Affairs Department.

It is my understanding, from what the Member is indicating in the letter, that the Department of Community Places is the department that has not advanced any further the Community Places grant on their behalf.

As I have indicated, we do have the opportunity to recommend as to what we feel should advance or should not advance. As I have indicated, there are other areas of which at this point—and I made no commitment to Mr. Robert Lavalée that there would be money available for a hall this year. I said that there would have to be the opportunity to develop some of the areas that were more established, I would say.

I do not know what the number of the people in the community is right at this particular time, but I do not believe at this point that there can be enough evidence shown to substantiate the development of a community hall at this time. However, as the development of the community takes place, then it has to be considered.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Madam Chair, the community has 74 people, I am advised by the contact person, which is much larger than a number of other more established communities that the Minister may be referring to.

They have a desire to expand, but they are not being given the opportunity to expand. The Minister says that he does not know of enough specific names of people that want to locate in Rock Ridge to warrant beginning on the subdivision that he has committed to. He has promised to this community the subdivision that the contact person is asking to begin the work on with a clearing operation this winter so his people will not have to continue on

social assistance, will have a job for a short period of time and perhaps can even qualify for unemployment insurance.

So I ask the Minister whether he will reconsider the application for dollars to begin a winter works project of clearings for that subdivision, because then the community may indeed qualify for a community hall status much sooner if they can get on with building their community as they have desired. The Minister has not given any specifics on other projects that have come forward that are a higher priority in that community than the ones that have been put forward by the community, and that is a community hall and a new subdivision.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chair, I do not want to leave any false expectations or false hopes and put anything on the record that might not be delivered. I cannot, at this time, say that there are any funds for either the clearing of a subdivision and/or a community hall.

If there was additional information that would come forward that would substantiate a waiting list of people wanting to develop in that subdivision, then that may in fact put a different picture to it. If there was substantive information, substantive evidence of people lined up ready to build houses on that subdivision, actual documentation of that, then it may be able to be considered, but at this time, it is not.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, I find it regrettable that the Minister is not moving on these areas. I will certainly be urging my constituent to bring forward the specific information. I hope that the Minister in the future, when he has particular reasons why he cannot proceed, that he would advise the individuals concerned, the mayor of Rock Ridge, so that he could in fact provide that information, because I am sure he has it.

Mr. Downey: Well, Madam Chair, I will make sure the contact person, the mayor, will get the information of which I have said, but he does not need to make a lot about the unfortunateness of what is in fact taking place in Rock Ridge. If it had not have been for our Government and the receptiveness of our Government and our department, then there would not have been a community of Rock Ridge. He had the opportunity for six years as a Member for that area, as a Minister for that area, and did not even give them that status, so he does not need to give us a hard time about

the urgency now of development in that community when he as a Member would not even give it them.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, I said I was going to close, but the Minister has misrepresented the history on this issue. It is clear that that information should be not left on the record unchallenged.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Chairman, in the Chair)

The motivation and the position taken was taken in 1988 after the election occurred when Mr. Robert Lavalée and the community of Rock Ridge, which was soon formed, aggressively pursued the options for community status, not before. The Minister is aware of that. They put forward and I as MLA worked with the community and with the Minister to obtain many of the improvements that have taken place so far. I acknowledge to the Minister there have been some improvements, and I am pleased that some of that work has been done.

I say that he cannot rest on his laurels. There is a lot of work to be done. There is a very needy community there. They have put forward their concerns with their MLA and directly to the Minister, and the Minister now has to respond and act on those concerns, not sit back on what he has done over the last couple of years.

Mr. Downey: They would have received their community of Rock Ridge a lot sooner if their Member had been more supportive of it.

* (1540)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): The Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Connery) announced last year that he was looking into a ghost car program for Manitoba. I am wondering whether he can tell us now at what stage his study of the ghost car program is, how many cars he is planning and what has he done so far?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Nothing has been done on the ghost car program at this point.

Mr. Maloway: Could the Minister also tell us what has happened regarding the investigation that he was conducting into Opportunity Handicap and the Alberta Beef situation?

Mr. Connery: Opportunity Handicap was investigated. It went to the human rights court for review. They said that there was nothing in the human rights legislation that could prohibit them

from doing it. They did in fact have some handicapped people working for them.

While I have personal reservations about this particular company and the selling of light bulbs under that particular name, they were doing nothing illegal. While it bordered, I would say, on the way it was done, there was nothing illegal, nothing that the department could do for it. It was well investigated. The Human Rights Commission took a look at it and said there was nothing contrary to the human rights legislation.

Mr. Maloway: Could the Minister also give us the update on the Alberta Beef centre?

Mr. Connery: I drove by where the Alberta Beef centre was, and I do not see any sign or anything. I do not know if they are still in operation in Manitoba.

Mr. Maloway: The Government, when they were in Opposition, on several occasions indicated a desire to bring in a lemon law. The current Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), when he was the Consumer Affairs Critic, certainly talked about it each and every time he made a speech in this House. The Minister has said very little about the possible lemon law in the last while. In fact it is not even mentioned in his research and planning report of this year. Could he tell us what, if anything, has been done in the last few months on the lemon law?

Mr. Connery: I guess the biggest lemon that we can talk about was the previous Government, who did nothing in consumer legislation. Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Member acknowledges that his Government did nothing in consumer legislation, and there was no interest on behalf of their Cabinet to deal with such legislation.

As the Member well knows, we have brought in many pieces of legislation last Session. We now have passed in committee and passed on to third reading The Business Practices Act, which is a major piece of legislation to protect the consumer, a piece of legislation that was well researched, with consultations with all groups involved. The legislation, I think, is a very, very well-crafted and very good piece of legislation.

The Member talks about various pieces of legislation. -(interjection)- One Member says, squeeze a lemon and what do you get? You get a bitter taste in your mouth.

I think the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) is very happy that we are in Government bringing forward legislation. As he knows, we have a small

department to work on it. They are working harder than they ever have, because I am encouraging them to review legislation and to review consumer concerns.

We meet regularly with the Consumers' Association of Canada, and for the first time ever in the history of this Government—and not done by the previous NDP Government or the Schreyer administration—we have brought the Society of Seniors in to ensure that legislation also covers seniors, because they sometimes have particular concerns.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am very proud of the record of this Government and our department and the staff that we have, who have done an excellent job in protecting the rights of consumers and bringing in legislation as fast as we can have it properly researched, drafted and consult with the various interest groups.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Minister has tried to skate around that one. I asked the Minister specifically what he planned to do or what work he had done regarding the lemon law.

It was not our Government that talked about a lemon law in this province. It was their current Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme), the then Critic of the Day, who was admonishing our Government of the Day as to why it did not have a lemon law in this province.

Now that they are in Government, have been in Government now for over two and a half years, we have heard not a word from this Minister as to what he is going to do about a lemon law in this province, after having made such a fuss about it in Opposition.

That was the question, not about the state of The Business Practices Act. We are quite familiar where that is at this moment.

Mr. Connery: The Member for Elmwood, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the last two and half years to me has been a disappointment in his counselling of consumers. He at one point counselled people who had bought from the Brick Warehouse, saying that they would not have to pay their accounts because they were intraprovincial, and this was absolutely erroneous counselling, which could have gotten a lot of consumers into real serious difficulty.

The Member said that in Ontario they had to exhibit the MSRP on the windshield of vehicles—absolutely, totally, 100 percent wrong. That only has to be indicated on the sales slip. He

says that banks can act as trust accounts. Banks cannot do that also.

I asked the Member once why he made these ludicrous comments and statements and he said, well, I cannot be sued, we are covered by Government legislation. I think that is unfortunate, because then the consumers and the people of Manitoba have to do that. I would hope that the Member for Elmwood would be just a little bit more responsible in his comments.

Mr. Maloway: I hope that the Minister is through making silly statements for the afternoon. I mean, they are totally erroneous. They are absolutely silly. I asked him a serious question about lemon law in this province, as to how he and this Government were going to protect new car buyers in this province and he ignores the question. He is obviously not interested in the situation. He is either not interested or he does not understand the situation. There is no point in trying to flog a dead horse here.

I would like to ask the Minister what changes to the competition Act his department is planning? I refer him, so that he can get apprised of the tenor of these questions by looking at his own Annual Report for this year. In his Annual Report for this year under Research and Planning, page 32, they make reference to all of these particular areas that his department is supposedly working on.

So far, in response to every question he either does not know what is going on in his department or else he has announced that they are not doing anything. If they are not doing anything, then why are they reporting in the Annual Report that they are doing something? Could he answer that question? I would like to know about the changes to the competition Act that they are looking at.

Mr. Connery: The Member knows full well that the department is working on many aspects of legislation. We research it. We listen to the complaints. We talk with our client groups. When the Government is prepared to bring legislation forward, he will be the first to know about it.

Mr. Maloway: Once again I ask the Minister if he could tell me whether he was aware of any specific changes to the competition Act that his department was looking at because they make reference to it in the Annual Report. Does he know or does he not know?

Mr. Connery: I told the Member very clearly. You know, they seem to have the ability to read lips at

convenient times, and I am asking him to read my lips that we are looking at legislation. When this Government is bringing forward legislation, we will let him know. It will be listed in the Order Paper, and then it will be discussed here in the House.

Mr. Maloway: Could he at this point inform us as to how many people are involved in the Research and Planning Department of his department?

Mr. Connery: The Member full well knows. In the Estimates process he asked that particular question. There are two and a half staff years dedicated to research.

Mr. Maloway: Are these the same two and a half staffpersons who are involved in the monitoring of the gas prices in this province?

* (1550)

Mr. Connery: Yes.

Mr. Maloway: I am now getting a better appreciation of what these two and a half persons are supposedly doing there. On the one hand they are monitoring gas prices—mind you, there was only one and a half of them when I first asked the Minister and then overnight he had come up with two and a half. The Minister does not even know how many people he has working in this Department of Research and Planning.

One night he told me there was one and a half people, then he tells me there are two and a half the next day. At least he has been consistent for the last week. They have been hovering at about two and a half now for the last couple of weeks.

They are monitoring gas prices, and supposedly they are involved in all of these various research projects that the Minister claims to be researching, but when you ask him any specific questions about any of these items, he either knows nothing about them or he skirts the whole area.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to ask him what this Research Department and his department have been doing then in the area of the franchising legislation?

Mr. Connery: The Member knows full well—first of all, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let me set for the record very clearly that the two and a half staff years that are in research are the very same two and a half staff years that were in place when they were in Government. I think it is the very same people who were in that Research Department when they were in Government, so to say that there are too many or

too few then, obviously, he has to be very critical of their own operation.

We are looking at all kinds of legislation. We are meeting again with the automobile dealers, who are concerned about franchise legislation. We meet with many groups. Legislation gets developed. One does not have to say we do nothing. I think there were eight pieces of legislation that came forward last year. This year is a lower number of pieces of legislation coming forward, so that it would be a shorter Session, but other pieces of legislation will come forward in the future.

We have, unlike the previous Government, delivered on legislation. I think those two and a half staff years have been very, very productive years. The Member knows that the only thing they did in their seven and a half years was tinker with the trade practices Act. That is all they did, and at that point it was strictly for political reasons.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, earlier on I asked the Finance Minister if he could make certain that the Attorney General was here, because it was my understanding that the Minister could not answer any questions regarding negative-option offers because of his conflict being the 20 percent shareholder of Portage Community Cablevision. So my assumption is that the Minister has sold his shares and is no longer in a conflict situation, as I do not see the Attorney General here.

Could the Minister please give us an update on his situation?

Mr. Connery: I thought the Attorney General would be here. I have had one of our Members go to call him so that he could answer any questions on Cablevision.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so then nothing has changed in that area regarding the Minister, so we will wait until the Attorney General shows up then and ask him those questions on the negative-option offer.

I believe my colleague is prepared to ask some questions of other Ministers. We will just check and make sure that they are there.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). The question I would like is with regard to the headwater storage on the North Duck River. The Minister is quite aware of this situation. The North Duck River flows through the community of Cowan and that area has experienced a tremendous

amount of flooding over the years. The river, though a small river, has a tendency to flood one in every five years.

The community has put together an organization called the Cowan Soil and Water Co-op—that group has been active since 1985—and put together a proposal on how we could deal with the headwater problems, with the flooding. Through that organization, the members of the community have changed their agricultural practices to protect the land, but we also need assistance to build a headwater storage. That plan was put in place, but the province has not come through with funding, and I would like to ask the Minister his position on funding for the North Duck headwater storage.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I first of all appreciate, one does always learn something when new faces and new ideas come into the House, and I will acknowledge that I will accept that knowledge that the Member for Swan River just provided me. You see, we have sometimes made the mistake on this side of the House of referring to such structures that store water as being dams, and that is not environmentally friendly these days, so we will change our glossary of terms and we will refer to them as a headwater storage structure that will do the same thing, will provide for some storage of water, will provide a reservoir.

An Honourable Member: Hey, there is nothing wrong with storage.

Mr. Enns: No, and I am very happy to hear that. I am serious. -(interjection)-

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Enns: . . . both answer her question simply because it is a legitimate concern that she expresses on behalf of a number of residents, constituents, in that area. It is one that I must say her former—

An Honourable Member: Her predecessor.

Mr. Enns: No, not her predecessor exactly, but the former Member for The Pas, who has, I believe, some relationship to the current Member for Swan River, often brought to my attention, particularly in the last year. The status of the project that she refers to has been identified as one that is meeting the different criteria that agriculturalists, the people in my department meet the different conditions in

terms of cost benefits and the desirability of proceeding with that project.

We have been to date singularly unsuccessful in getting PFRA, the federal agency, committing some support to that project. The kinds of dollars that we have in my department for these kinds of undertakings pretty well restrict our programming into those areas where we can get some form of federal sharing. We did some work, for instance, on the Jackson dam. We did some work a year and a half ago. It may even have been instituted by my former colleague, at the Morden, at the Stephenfield dam, but in all of these instances there were some Agri-Food dollars, some agricultural dollars supplied by PFRA involved that enabled us to do these works.

I have directed—this would have been in the summer of last year—the Director of Water Resources, Mr. Larry Whitney, of my department to make it a specific matter of his business to contact federal PFRA officials whether or not they would not reconsider their position and include the Duck Mountain project as one that would qualify for that assistance. I did that particularly last year, and I say this very seriously to the Honourable Member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), when it appeared that the Pelican Lake project may or may not proceed. It was at that point in the throes of considerable concern. Environmental concerns, environmental hearings had not been concluded, and I was concerned that if that project could not proceed, then perhaps we could look at the project that the Honourable Member is speaking for.

However, since that time two things have happened: No. 1, a continuing refusal on the part of PFRA to assist us in that project and secondly, of course, the Pelican project is now proceeding, having cleared all the environmental hurdles.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would just like to clear up that I do not think that I am going against Party philosophy on dams. This is not a dam. This is a headwater storage. What it will do is hold back the water during peaks of flooding and the water will be gone. We will not be holding—

An Honourable Member: That is what dams are supposed to be doing.

Ms. Wowchuk: Then the water is gone. The project has met all the environmental requirements. Since it has met the requirements of the environment there should not be any problems with it, and that is all we

want with Rafferty as well. If it meets the environmental requirements, we will not be opposed to that.

* (1600)

The Minister mentioned PFRA funding. When we went through setting up the project from the council and water co-op and the Agri-Food Agreement, we were given the understanding that there was PFRA money that would be put aside for this headwater storage at that time. Somehow along the way that money has been lost. I would urge the Minister to try to -(interjection)- never lost a dollar, just transferred it out of an area that might be of more importance.

I would also like to make the Minister aware that over the years the people of that area have given up a tremendous amount of money. In 1984, I believe was the year, when there was flooding, the province was prepared to make them a compensation payment. The people said rather than take that compensation payment they would rather the money go into the headwater storage. That was a promise that was made.

I wonder whether the Minister would consider looking at that since they have forgiven, not taken the provincial funds that were supposed to be allocated to the area, if he would now reconsider looking for some provincial money.

I would also like to say to the Minister that the last flood cost—in that particular area, I think it was about \$150,000 that was spent in repairs. With the frequency that that river floods, should we have another flood that could be all wasted money if we are not prepared to address that problem very seriously.

Mr. Enns: I do appreciate those comments from the Honourable Member. It will not come as any news to Honourable Members on this side of the House that I seek support from wherever I can get it, including from the Opposition, with respect to the need for completion of some of these projects.

We have not completed the flood protection of communities throughout the provinces. We have done a great deal, both past Governments, the Government of Premier Schreyer, the Governments of Mr. Pawley in doing these things.

For instance, most of the Red River communities are well protected from flooding. We have concluded the works in the community of Ste. Rose just in the last little while, but there are still some

eight or nine communities in the province that require flood protection to be provided for them.

I can only encourage her to assist me from time to time in encouraging some of my colleagues that the Department of Natural Resources receives the consideration from time to time to carry on this work, because it is important.

It may be it is a case that does not always have the glamour or the political appeal attached to it particularly in our growing urban populations when we talk about moving earth and building headwater reservoirs. I will accept your phrase, Honourable Member, although I am reminded of that old story—no, I should not say it because it is liable to get me in trouble with her Leader or her colleague from there, but a story about if it walks like a duck, and it sounds like a duck and it quacks like a duck, it most likely is a goose.

So I am having that difficulty in this little game that we are playing with what is headwater storage, structure, and what is a dam, but I will not get into that because it is an important matter that she raises.

To answer specifically, and she has certainly a recourse herself to contact and to lobby on. I invite her assistance along with her colleagues in the federal Government to help us convince PFRA, the federal agency, to provide funding. I will make a commitment to the Honourable Member, if we cannot successfully be successful in getting commitment from the PFRA, the federal agency, to help with a sharing arrangement, and I am speaking about a sharing arrangement that is consistent with the kind of sharing arrangement that other communities have had on similar structures, not any more, then I certainly would be prepared to move the project up in the priority that quite frankly it deserves.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to thank the Minister for that commitment, and I will do my best to hold him to it. I want to clarify that the term headwater storage is not my term, it was the term that was put into the study in 1985, so I have not changed the terminology. The only matter that you are ignoring is the fact that we have met the environmental requirements on this project. I look forward to the Minister's support on this project, because I think it is very important, although it is a very small part of the province, and a tremendous amount of work has been done in the southern part of the province to

deal with water problems, I remind the Minister that there are water problems in the northern and central part of the province.

If I may, I have another question for the same Minister. The question is to deal with Lake Winnipegosis, we have talked about this matter several times and again I would like to raise the fact that the fishermen on Lake Winnipegosis are suffering tremendously. They are back out on the lakes this fall again, and I have spoken to a few of them, and their catch is very poor. Along with the poor catch, they are also having low prices for their fish. I would ask the Minister if he would consider calling for a complete review of Lake Winnipegosis to see what can be done to deal with the problems there, and if he would call that review and consult with the fishermen on the lake as to what can be done with the fish stocks, what they consider to be the problems and if there is no way to restoring the fish stock in that lake that we would look at diversification so those people can continue to live in that area?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Member continues to raise legitimate concerns. There is a belief among biologists within the Fisheries Department that fisheries of Lake Winnipegosis will improve. The prognosis, the forecast, made at the time that the fisheries season was opened after a three-year closure of the lake, was that it would take some time. In fact, and I do not present myself as a biologist, the age of the fish involved in the coming two and three years, hopefully, will considerably improve the harvest opportunities of that lake.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, the plight of primary producers, be they grain farmers, be they other primary producers, along with the commercial fishermen such as she speaks of, is in one of these low cycles that continue to plague too many primary producers. I do not have any further hard information that I can provide her with. The Department of Fisheries is always prepared to continue to review a situation in any fisheries. I suspect that some of the data that will be made available from this summer's fishing season is currently in process, and I will undertake to have the fisheries people, and I am sure they are doing this of their own volition, take a harder look at what management procedures might be changed to enhance the opportunities for next year. The question of better pricing is one that we cross our fingers and hope for.

* (1610)

I certainly want to invite the Honourable Member to take the opportunity, when the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources are presented to the House, to further pursue these questions, this one as well as the other one. I would have with me on that occasion, the updated dollar figures, for instance, for the structure that she was talking about in her other questions. As well, I would be more than prepared to go through the dollars that have been spent, both by the Government that I have the privilege of representing, and by the Government that preceded us. During that three year lake closure, the then New Democratic Party Government spent a considerable amount of money, some \$400,000 or \$500,000 I believe, to replace the lost economic opportunities for those fishermen in various projects, in terms of enhancing their co-op facilities, and boat repairs, and so forth. We continued along that path by providing an additional some \$200,000, \$225,000 in buying back quota to reduce the pressure on the lake. The Member and I have discussed that matter.

I do invite the Member to take the opportunity, when we have a less formal way we can ask a number of questions in a series, and I will have the benefit of having officials at the table to provide further information for her.

Ms. Wowchuk: I would just like to ask the Minister—this is a very low economic base along the lake—are there any plans that are being made to diversify the economy right now since the fishing industry is so poor?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I suspect that if I were to ask my colleague, the Minister for Rural Development (Mr. Penner), that is a concern throughout rural Manitoba. It is not, however, the function of my department as such. We try to manage as best we can the resources that we have the mandate for under legislation and the responsibility.

It would be my colleague maybe from the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), who along with—and I am not aware, is there a Parkland Development Corporation that is covering that area—but those would be the agencies of Government, both federal and provincial, that would be on whom the first call would be made to assist in the diversification there.

I tend to agree with her. I think that one ought to be able to and hopefully perhaps within a year or two be pretty straightforward with the fishermen and say: You know, we have done as much as we can with respect to the fishing resource base in Lake Winnipegosis. We have closed the lake for three years and in doing so caused the expenditure of a substantial amount of money for those who had been involved in the fishing activity, upward to a half a million dollars. We believe we have, by so doing, managed the harvesting, that we have given the lake every chance to restore itself.

We have reduced the overall quota on the lake as a further management tool to move towards a sustainable yield that the lake can carry. If however, we still find that we have—I do not know. I do not want to use numbers, but if there is not an economic opportunity of future for some of those who have traditionally relied on that lake for that future, then Governments will have to seriously address retraining opportunities, diversification to other areas. My department would need the assistance of numerous other governmental organizations to carry that out.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Lels (St. Johns): I would like to ask a series of questions to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on the full question of health care financing. Perhaps in this environment outside the heated environment of Question Period we can have a bit more calm and more direct straightforward approach and perhaps get some answers to a very difficult area.

(Madam Chairman in the Chair)

I would like to begin by referencing some of the comments that the Minister has made to the media and now to a number of sources and how those relate to the upcoming Ministers of Finance meeting next week.

Could I begin by asking the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) if health care financing, specifically the provincial control and takeover of medicare, is on next week's agenda and who initiated it?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I am so delighted that the Member has asked that question, Madam Chairman. I can hardly wait to answer. The short answer to the question is no. It is not specifically on the agenda. It is never was, in spite of the reports that Members would indicate.

The question specifically was this, and I say this to Mr. Doer: Are the provincial Governments taking

over health care funding, is that an agenda item? That is not on the agenda, Madam Chairman.

Is the whole question of national and provincial debt and the threat that represents to the national health care system on the agenda? The answer is yes, Madam Chairman, because anybody who has two cents and wants to put them together can realize the greatest threat that the health care system has today is national and provincial debt.

That most certainly is on the agenda to the extent that provincial Governments can somehow come to a consensus as to convincing Ottawa, if nothing else, that in spite of their tremendous debt situation, the No. 1, No. 2 and the No. 3 priorities associated with their very limited ability to increase spending should all be directed toward health care. That will be the approach that I will try and take the meeting to, and that indeed is ultimately, hopefully, the message we will be able to deliver to the federal Government.

Madam Chairman, I have been chastised for not having a position to lay out. This is a meeting unlike that ever held before in this country, this is a meeting because the times that we are in right now are unlike any other time we have been in this country over the last 30 years.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Madam Chairperson, the Minister has, at least if not directly, certainly indirectly, told us that the issue of health care financing is a topic for discussion. In all the questioning this week the fact that this item, the future of our health care system, national standards, national legislation, national funding, has been referenced by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in terms of it being on the agenda. In article after article the Minister of Finance has indicated that this item, and specifically the question of provincial takeover of the funding of medicare is on the agenda.

Madam Chairperson, let me start by asking, since the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is quoted in the Free Press of this Monday, November 26, as saying, Ministers will discuss taking over control and funding of medicare, replacing the national system with province by province health care, and also is directly quoted as saying: Right now, the way we are going, we cannot attain the standards; we are short of the standards, I will fully admit it.

All of which leaves an ominous message for the people of Manitoba in terms of this Government's

intentions with respect to funding of health care, and its strategy vis-a-vis the federal Government.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) what he is going into that meeting with? Is he going in with a position, is he going in with a paper, is he going in with a speech, what are the points he is making, what is the position that he is taking on behalf of the people of Manitoba?

* (1620)

Mr. Manness: I will gladly answer that, but again I hope the Member has enough decency to stand in her place and apologize for saying I was quoted as saying that the provincial Government's taking over the financing of medicare will be an agenda item. I hope she will have the decency to stand in her place and withdraw those remarks. -(interjection)- No, oh no, that does not—Madam Chairman, I have made errors in my life but, believe me, I do not make errors when it comes to my words around health care. I can tell you that never was an item; I am not quoted as saying it ever was on the agenda, and believe me, it is not.

The Member wants to know what position we are taking. I think I have tried to lay that out in Question Period on Monday, to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer). I think the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the last two days has also tried to lay that out in saying very clearly and concisely what I just said in my first answer to the Member here a few minutes ago. The reality is, and I will say it again, as the Minister of Finance I would give anything if the shared responsibilities that have existed for 20 years in this country were to continue ad infinitum, would continue forever.

Madam Chairman, in spite of the representations made by the former NDP Government, by ourselves, by many provinces outside of Manitoba over the years, the federal Government is unilaterally attacking EPF funding. I am not here to justify why they are doing that, but they are doing it. The Members opposite believe if you yell loudly enough or if you build enough coalitions, that in itself will cause the federal Government to give, even yet, a higher priority.

I would like to think that might work, other experience tells me it will not work. Yet we continue to march along, and to use again the analysis brought forward into this House by the Deputy Leader of the New Democratic Party (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), done by—was it Tim Sale? Did Tim

Sale do the analysis? I think it was locally, with the poverty coalition. I do not know who did the analysis. The basis of the research was, of course, the budget papers. I am talking about the research itself. -(interjection)- It is not important. I accept the fact that if we continue on the trend line over the next ten years that we have been on over the last few, theoretically at least, there will be no cash support coming from the federal Government.

Madam Chairman, I have two choices as the Minister of Finance. I can sit back and try to make the strongest representation I can, and scream and holler and hope that will improve the situation, or I can try, as I have, to make personal representation to Mr. Wilson or the federal Government that we should embark on a different path, and that indeed, within their whole spending portfolios, more money should be brought out of the other envelopes and directed towards health care. To this point I have been unsuccessful, as one province, to convince the federal Government to do that.

All the time, every time, I am forced to help the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and indeed the whole Treasury Bench, come up with a budget, realizing that it is more and more focusing in on health. The other departments have all undergone some pressures and stress—or I can look at various options and try to see whether or not there is some solution to this problem.

The fact that some provinces—and I might surprise the Members—not just the so-called rich provinces of Alberta and British Columbia but indeed others, are saying, you know, this whole question of shared services, is it providing the best guarantee to the standards that we all want? Some will be prepared to make an argument that it may not be. I deem it my responsibility to look at their argument. Not our argument, their argument, and consequently we all are coming from the same place. We are all wanting to see the health care system maintained in this country.

I noticed the editorial writer today suggested that Ministers of Health and Finance should come together and that they should appeal to the federal Government. Madam Chairman, we followed that approach almost two years ago. We came out of Moncton, all provincial Parties across the country, and we asked the federal Government to take the lead. We asked the federal Government to try and maintain the standards, still find ways to remove duplication, greater efficiency in the delivery of

health care. Quite frankly, one of the great tragedies to me, seeing that there was a federal Conservative Government in place at the time, they did not take the request seriously.

So, Madam Chairman, that is where we find ourselves today. That is why it is that we are coming together to, once again, try and find a solution that will guarantee what it is we want. Let me say very clearly that Manitoba wants yet to maintain the health care system that we have, and we want the national standards we have in place today to be attainable, reachable and, over time, even raised higher.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Madam Chairman, we on this side of the House will be the first to recognize that we are all in this together, that we have a major problem before us. We have been trying to draw the Government's attention to this serious issue, this crisis looming on the horizon for some time now. We are pleased to see that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and others in the Government of the Day are finally taking note of the statistics and the data that show very clearly declining federal support for direct spending in health care, that show the end of federal direct support for health care sometime around the turn of the century.

Just to clarify for the Minister of Finance, the documentation that we are referring to is first documentation provided by the federal Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, in the House of Commons on June 26, 1990. I remind the Minister of Finance that was tabled in our discussions, and it is that kind of data and documentation that provided a further analysis done by the Canadian Health Coalition, which is made up of dozens of national organizations from across the country. The author of that report happens to be a Manitoban, Tim Sale, a name that the Minister of Finance referenced. The data, the analysis, is recognized and supported by just about every major social service and health organization in the country right across the country.

Madam Chairman, I will clarify the record and correct the record in terms of the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) comments because I do not, at any point, want to leave false information or false impressions on the record. I will indicate, quite clearly, that the Minister of Finance has been reported to have said that the question of provinces taking over control and funding of medicare, replacing the national system with

province-by-province health care, is on the agenda of the Ministers of Finance meeting next week. Now that is not one isolated example.

There are other examples where the Minister is reported to have made similar statements, and I want to refer to an article that I touched on today in Question Period that appeared in the Brandon Sun. An article done by Canadian Press, a different source than the one in the Winnipeg Free Press on the same day, where the Minister of Finance again suggests that this item is on the agenda and goes further and is reported to have said, eliminating the overlapping jurisdiction could weed out duplication, waste inefficiency, and give financially strapped provincial Governments a better chance of meeting health care needs.

In another article in the Globe and Mail, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is reported to have said that this item is on the agenda of next week's Ministers of Finance meeting and in fact is reported to have said British Columbia and Alberta, in particular, favour disentanglement from joint federal-provincial responsibilities for health and education financing.

I want to ask a question flowing out of that last quote. It is clear that this is a major issue for Alberta and British Columbia, not only based on what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is reported to have said but based on other news reports, and particularly based on the data that we tabled in the House yesterday showing that there is a chance that Alberta and British Columbia have a possibility of going it on their own, of getting out of national health care and doing it on their own, but that it would have disastrous consequences for Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson, I want to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), as I said this earlier today, he is not naive. He knows Ministers go to federal-provincial meetings and interprovincial meetings with positions, often with very hard positions, with clearly well-thought-out policies on the issues of the day or the issues on the agenda of that particular meeting.

* (1630)

Is the Minister of Finance telling us that he is not going into this meeting—which is clearly going to focus on the question of national involvement in health care and the related question of the ability of provinces to take over in this field—without any kind

of well-thought-out position and strategy to be able to clearly put on record Manitoba's position?

If he is not, Madam Chairperson, he is clearly basically abdicating his responsibility for putting on record Manitoba's commitment to a national health care system. If he is not going in with the position, he is basically saying that he is taking his direction from Alberta and British Columbia's vision.

Unless we know and have the position tabled in this House and hear from the Minister of Finance what the provincial intentions are with respect to this very difficult issue, we can only conclude that it will be the vision of Alberta and British Columbia that will prevail. So we are asking him in all sincerity to tell us what he is going into that meeting with and to once again ask him for a position to be tabled here so all Manitobans can hear what he is saying and so we can have some input.

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairman, whatever I tell the Member she will not believe anyway. I mean because it does not serve her political ends, other than to be able to try and leave—if I leave any degree of uncertainty, naturally she will try and paint the picture that the provincial Government is out to dismantle medicare, as we know it, and after that probably going to invoke lots of other horrors. So I understand where the Member is coming from and that is why I am saying she is contributing a lot more to the problem than she is to the solution.

Again I reiterate, this is not a national meeting. There is no presence of the federal Government there. We have absolutely no power on a national program of this magnitude, other than to report to our Premiers, who ultimately, if we reach some consensus on anything, will then determine whether or not it is a consensual position which can be presented to the federal Government on a national basis. Let not the Member try and say that this meeting somehow is going to put words in my mouth and lead people to believe that this is going to be the undoing, and represent the end of the health care system as we know it.

Again I will reiterate. The health care system, as we know it, cannot sustain the reduced cash-sharing portion by the federal Government that has occurred over the last two or three years. That is point 1. Point 2: The federal Government, with its massive debt problem, will continue to look for ways of improving it, most likely, looking at transfers to provincial Governments. The two most important

transfer areas to us are within equalization, and within established programs financing. Point 3: If the provincial Governments do not make strong representation to the federal Government, firstly, realizing the debt of the national Government plus the provinces—we have a debt which is almost as serious—if we do not make a representation of the federal Government, understanding the nature of their debt, at the same time that we are going to implore that they give the No. 1 priority to health care, I fear that the following will happen: As the federal Government brings in additional revenues under goods and services tax, more of that revenue will go into other social areas which the federal Government will deem to be more important than health. Consequently, the health care system, as we know it, will continue to be under even a greater threat to the point where it cannot be sustained.

The motives of Manitoba are pure in this. They are wanting to sustain and preserve the health care system we have. The reality is just like the Member opposite knows, and knows fully well. If she would just stop playing politics just for a few days, if she could just do it momentarily, just for a period, I am saying to her, if she would understand that the greatest threat that we have to health care system today is the debt that we carry, and I would say she might buy it. As far as the position, Manitoba wants the same system in place for the next 20 years that has been in place the last 20 years, and further than that. But wanting that and being able to deliver that are two different issues.

The Member has a choice—she can encourage us to fight hard for the system we have, realizing that fighting for it is no guarantee as long as you have this massive debt around all of our shoulders or, too, she can say, take account of the debt, realize that there is debt there and push the federal Government to put the highest priority possible in their spending envelopes towards health.

Now she has a choice, she can be with us or against us, or she can play cheap politics on it and try and make it appear like we are out to destroy medicare. There is one side or the other, Madam Chairman, and I ask the Member to join us and to help us.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Well, I hope the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will apologize for the remarks he has put on the record and for imputing motive about my intentions as a Member of this Legislative Assembly and suggesting that by raising

such a fundamental issue as medicare and national health care standards that we are playing politics.

I have a very genuine concern about this issue. It is a concern that is growing every day when I hear the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say over and over again that our hands are tied. We are in a difficult situation because of the national debt and because of a wealth problem in this country, because wealth is not growing.

Well, I want to point out to the Minister of Finance that federal spending for health care has not been increasing over the last number of years as wealth has increased. Perhaps, the Minister of Finance has not done his homework and does not realize that the proportion of health care spending, the proportion of the GNP for health care spending, has remained flat at about 6 percent over the last number of years.

Perhaps, he should recognize that this issue is not a question about wealth, because in fact it is his own counterpart in Ottawa, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Wilson, who has put out propaganda saying our economy's growth rate during that time has been second only to Japan's. He goes on and boasts about wealth and GNP and growth in Canada, while all we are asking for is that health care receive its proportion of that growth in our economy.

So for the Minister of Finance to suggest that we must pay for our national debt on the backs of quality universal health care in this country, he is wrong, he is mistaken. It is totally diametrically opposed to the wishes and interests of the people of Manitoba and all of Canada.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Chairman: Order, please; order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Will the Minister of Finance recognize that the real issue here is not wealth, declining wealth and national debt, but a question of priority and a question of a federal agenda to get out of health care as quickly as possible?

Will he not commit himself to fighting that Mulroney agenda, because it must be stopped for the benefit of the people and health care institutions—

* (1640)

Point of Order

Madam Chairman: The Honourable Member for Crescentwood, on a point of order.

Mr. James Carr (Crescentwood): Madam Chairman, this is an important debate, I wish I could hear it.

Madam Chairman: Thank you. The Honourable Member for Crescentwood does not have a point of order, but he is correct. It is difficult to hear the debate. I would appreciate the Honourable Members adhering to the rules. If you wish to carry on a conversation, would you please move to the loge or outside the Chamber.

* * *

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairman, the Member is right, right, right, but then wrong. She says the national economy is growing, right. She says the revenues to Ottawa are growing, right. She says that the share of those revenues that are being directed toward health care are flat. Right, again.

Then she does not ask the next question: Why? Because the reason why is there is something called national debt. It is taking all of the growth in those revenues to pay for her Canada Savings Bonds and my Canada Savings Bonds, the money she has in double RRSPs and the money I have in double RRSPs, and the growing amounts that she has in her pension fund and that I have in mine. That is where the revenues, as a result of a growing economy, are going. That is why there is lesser—the amount that is going into health is flat.

Until she recognizes that, we cannot debate. She can talk about priorities, but the first priority—as I have said in this House, before we pass one of those resolutions we deal with nightly in debate, before you pass a dollar of it, the first \$600 million in this province goes to the people that have lent this province money. Before Ottawa has a dollar to put into health care and to post-secondary education, \$30 billion-plus goes into interest and it is growing, and growing significantly.

For the Member to say that it is priorities, I say to her, tell us then where it should come from, because the economy has done well. Taxation revenues have increased tremendously. I am almost embarrassed to say how much they have increased to the federal Government and how little we have garnered as our share. The reality is when you look at the books you see where the money has gone.

When I say to the Member and to the people of this province that what we are trying to do as Ministers of Finance, including Liberal Ministers of

Finance, the NDP Minister of Finance out of Ontario and Conservative Ministers of Finance, anybody that understands the legacy of debt and how it steals the revenues, Madam Chairperson, and why it is so important we recognize the biggest problem we have right today is national and provincial debt, I ask her to help us. Not to say that we have misguided priorities and that we are out to destroy the health care system, because I tell you I reject her statements. I say to her she has more common sense than that, and if she does not then I feel sorry for us all.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Madam Chairperson, we will let the people judge in terms of who is right and wrong. I can tell you what the people of Canada are thinking and believing right now when they see millions and millions of dollars being cut back out of health care, other important social programs and education programs throughout the Government of Canada to go towards boosting up the mistaken policy of the GST and to boost troop resources to the Persian Gulf.

I would ask the Minister to perhaps consider the question of priorities by looking at that old expression, because it does drive home the point, and that is what if all of our hospitals had all the money they needed and the army had to hold a bake sale to meet their requirements.

Madam Chairperson, I think this is a question about priorities. The people of Canada know this is a question about priorities. The people of Canada are simply asking that a fair share of growth in our economy is directed toward health care so that we can deal with the crisis at our doorsteps.

Madam Chairman, I want to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), since on so many occasions he is reported to have said, we are going to be able to deal with the situation, we are going to be able to maintain a quality health care system by eliminating overlapping jurisdictions, by weeding out duplication.

I want to ask the Minister of Finance, how he figures Manitoba will be able to sustain a quality, universally accessible health care system without the financial support of the federal Government and without the benefit of national standards, as set out in the Canada Health Care Act?

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairman, the only guarantor of health care services, and indeed standards, the only guarantor, is our ability to work

and create wealth in this nation and to have some of that taxed away so that there will be resources in place to provide it. All the legislation in the world, all of the yelling and screaming by the Member opposite, is not going to do anything for health care services at all if the ability to create wealth, to tax it, and have the result of that taxation go into the health care system instead of paying interest to support and service the debt. There is no guarantee. Legislation guarantees nothing, it is only the ability of those who create wealth to have it taxed away in support of all of the services that we want. That is the only guarantee of the health care system, not legislation.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Madam Chairman, unfortunately the Minister did not answer my question, and that is: How can Manitoba sustain a quality health care system on its own without federal support? In previous questioning, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has suggested we can do this all through equalization. I want to ask the Minister of Finance: Does he really believe that high standards can be enforced in health care right across this country through equalization payments?

Mr. Manness: I believe that when the federal Government has billions of dollars to divide between recipient provinces that they have the final hammer, always the final hammer. They could pretty well impose on provincial Governments any standard they want whether it is in health care or not. I honestly believe that the federal Government ultimately has the control to impose standards in health care that are similar and that are high across this country.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I point out to the Minister of Finance that under the Constitution, there are no requirements for standards to be applied in the area of equalization payments. There is nothing specifically to address this area. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance if he has a legal opinion from his colleague, the Justice Minister (Mr. McCrae) that equalization can somehow be guaranteed to ensure high national standards right across the country?

Mr. Manness: No, I do not have that legal opinion. I just believe that common sense, being what it is—and the Member is right there is nothing in the Constitution that forces it. That is why there is a Canada Health Act that was passed in part to guarantee similarity across the provinces. I imagine the federal Government, as long as it is within the Constitution, the old BNA Act, now the new Canada

Act, Constitution Act, I believe the powers are still the same, the federal Government, under the division of powers, if any reference is made to an area, I believe, the federal Government still ultimately has the supreme right to move whatever Bill it wants in parliament to effect those standards, those standards, or any other standards.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Madam Chairperson, the Minister has done a lot of talking about national standards and about the fact that we may not be able to afford them given the economic realities and the federal Conservative agenda.

I want to ask him which national standards he thinks we cannot afford under present circumstances? I refer him to specifically the principles and standards outlined on page 5 of the Canada Health Care Act. Can we not afford non-profit public administration? Is it beyond our reach to ensure comprehensiveness? Are we not able to afford universality, or is it affordability, or is it accessibility? Which of those standards and principles can we not afford given current arrangements and given the trends that the Minister has finally recognized as realistic assessments of the future in federal health care financing?

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairman, I refuse to be drawn into that debate. I have come from the point of view—as the Minister of Finance who has to find \$1.7 billion in the '91-92 budget or an amount greater than that, I am saying to the Member, I have to look at it from a global generic point of view, and if she wants to take me into that debate, we will have to do so another time.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: The Minister's public musings over this issue which has caused us to be concerned, and the people of Manitoba to be concerned about the future of health care—I want to ask the Minister one more question before I pass it over to my colleague from the Liberal Party. Yesterday in the House he made a couple of statements that to me need some clarification.

* (1650)

He has said, and I quote from Hansard, the dilemma is across the country that the federal cash sharing with respect to health care costs is no longer at the 50-50 level. A little later on in Question Period he said, Manitoba stands as wanting to see maintained the system that is in place today, wants to see the federal Government continue to

contribute 50 percent cash toward all health care expenditures.

Madam Chairman, I want to know where has the Minister of Finance been? We are not at 50 percent. We have not been at 50 percent since 1977. We are now at under 20 percent, and I want to ask the Minister of Finance where he has been all this time? If he is now giving credibility and credence to the statistics and the data provided by other organizations and by his colleague the Minister of Finance in Ottawa, does he have a strategy, knowing these statistics for the last three years?

Mr. Manness: I will try to make the answer very brief. I have been in this House for almost 10 years. The Member, I think, joined the Legislature in the election of 1986. I am well aware of the trends that she talks about. I only ask whether or not she is well aware of the trends with respect to the cost of servicing the debt? Why does she not admit that more and more of the national wealth in the country and in the province is being directed toward the payment of interest, and consequently it leaves less for all of the fine things that we would love to be able to spend it on?

I have been here for 10 years. She has been here for all of maybe five years, and although I look at it from two different ways, she tends to focus in on one trend only.

Mr. Carr: I know that time is running out. I will not take up much of the committee's time now.

I too want to address an issue of federal-provincial relations and a meeting that is coming up. Not a meeting of Ministers of Finance expected next week, but a meeting of Mr. Epp, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), and the mayor of the City of Winnipeg that is about to occur on Friday to talk about the renewal of the Core Area Initiative and also the future of the North Portage Development Corporation and The Forks Renewal Corporation.

I do not want to make a long speech. I just want to know what the Minister expects to take out of that meeting, what positions will he take in, what are his objectives, and what would be, according to him and, therefore, his Government, the most positive result?

Mr. Ducharme: Madam Chair, maybe I can respond by maybe quoting parts of a letter that I sent to the shareholders quite some time ago expressing our position. I made it very, very clear—I first of all wrote them in a letter of October 12, but I will also maybe

mention my latest letter on November 5, in regard to this meeting.

I referred to, as I stated in my letter of October 12, 1990, I believe that a one-year extension of the agreement is required to ensure that tri-level funds are fully utilized for activities that further the objectives of the initiatives. As we know, the agreement was effective as of April 1, 1986, but in fact it was not signed until November of that year. Consequently, the agreement is not truly operative in its initial year, and extending it by one year will provide the five-year time span that was originally intended.

The reason why I address this matter is I also, in my letter, addressed that we do a commitment that this Government made, an initiative by this Minister, that we extend the Core agreement for one further year, and go into public hearings during that process. I have laid my concerns with the two other Members and until the media today, I had not received any comments from either the mayor or from the federal shareholders.

I must say though that the city does have monies in their five-year capital for another agreement. Other than that, there has been no correspondence from the city, but from the federal Government there has been no, until today, opinion from that Minister.

Mr. Carr: Madam Chairman, why is it that the Minister did not take the opportunity to evaluate and review the Core Area Initiative program when there was time to react? We are now really only a few months away from the deadline. The Minister is now wanting to negotiate a one-year extension without having evaluated the success of the past five.

Why did the Minister not instead start the evaluation process earlier with the eye to renewing the Core Area Agreement for another five years, an agreement which is widely regarded, even internationally, to be one of the finest of its kind and as a model? Why has the Minister boxed himself into this corner, so now he has no room to maneuver?

Mr. Ducharme: When you are negotiating, you have to have three parties that come forward. I initiated the concern that we felt we should initiate a one-year extension. If the Member would look back under the second agreement, there is a budget allot in the second agreement to make such an evaluation. That evaluation is being done by the management board at this time.

We will have that in our hands very, very shortly when we receive that evaluation, an evaluation which is an ongoing or which is an evaluation done by many, many departments, from people who sit on that management committee, and that was addressed at the second renewal when the second renewal was done.

He has to remember that he did make some comments for monies back in '89. Back in '89, you had only spent about 40 percent of the money. You do have two prime type of Core Area Agreements. I say to the Member that a lot of us feel that there are parts—and probably the majority of the parts in the Core, have been very successful.

He has to realize that you have now put \$200 million in the two agreements, that a proper evaluation, a proper meeting with the public to get their expression of evaluations, because they are a very important part of whether the Core Area Agreement is necessary. That is the process that this Minister has asked for.

Madam Chairman: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

An Honourable Member: Pass.

Madam Chairman: Clause 1—(pass); Clause 2—(pass); Subclause 1 of Clause 3—(pass); Subclause 2 of Clause 3—(pass); Clause 4—(pass); Clause 5—(pass); Clause 6—(pass); Clause 7—(pass); Subclause 1 of Clause 8—(pass); Subclause 2 of Clause 8—(pass); Clause 9—(pass); Clause 10—(pass); Clause 11—(pass); Clause 12—(pass); Clause 13—(pass); Clause 14—(pass); Preamble—(pass); Title—(pass). Is it the will of the Committee that I report the Bill? Agreed? (Agreed).

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 19, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1990; (Loi de 1990 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), and has directed me to report the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh), that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I require about three or four more minutes to go through the formal motions around Bill 19. I am wondering if leave could be extended by Members of this House to do that.

Mr. Speaker: Will there be leave of the House to extend for an extra five minutes? There is leave? There is leave.

REPORT STAGE

BILL 19—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1990

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), that Bill 19, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1990; (Loi de 1990 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), reported from the Committee of the Whole be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

THIRD READINGS

BILL 19—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1990

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), that Bill 19, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1990; (Loi de 1990 portant affectation anticipée de crédits) be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being after 5 p.m., it is time for private Members' hour.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. 6—ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE PACKAGING

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux):

WHEREAS disposable food and beverage packaging constitutes a significant proportion of Manitoba's waste stream; and

WHEREAS non-returnable, non-biodegradable, non-recyclable and non-compostable plastic packaging products are replacing paper packaging; and

WHEREAS discarded packaging comprises a visual offense when it litters the environment; and

WHEREAS human health and the environment are adversely affected when plastic food packaging products are:

(a) dumped in landfill sites where hazardous chemicals can leach into the ground water;

(b) incinerated thereby releasing toxic by-products, and contributing to problems of disposing of ash residue; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba should take a lead role in assuring the promotion of environmentally sound policies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Environment to consider bringing forth legislation which would ban the use of non-returnable, non-biodegradable, non-recyclable, non-compostable food packaging materials, and promote the use of paper based products wherever reasonable; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such legislation would exclude disposable plastic utensils and drinking straws.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to add comments on this resolution to deal with environmentally acceptable packaging. It is a subject that is on the minds of all the general public, their concerns about the environment.

One decision that I am pleased to say I have seen that has happened in the Chamber is that we have the use of glass glasses. I think it is probably, Mr. Speaker, your decision, a good decision, and I think this comes from a meeting here in the Chamber a couple of weeks ago when we had a seminar on the Canadian Parliamentary Association where one of the Members from the Alberta Legislature mentioned that they were surprised that they saw Styrofoam cups. Your decision to have these glasses here pleases me greatly, but I see some of the Government have not yet decided to dispose of

them. I saw a couple here on the desk a few minutes ago. Shame -(interjection)- no, that is not Styrofoam, no. -(interjection)- Yes, it is a glass. -(interjection)- No, you probably left it there.

This resolution deals with two types of packaging. When we go shopping on Saturdays, any stores, they still use a lot of Styrofoam packaging and plastic.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Shame.

Mr. Gaudry: The Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) says shame. I hope he will support the resolution, and I am sure he will. We buy as a consumer in a store, fast food meals, but we have seen also lately where in the fast food outlets they are using cardboard packaging. It is very important because the concern I think is shown by these people and by the consumer going to these fast food outlets and asking for cardboard packaging rather than the Styrofoams. I think it is the consumer, by asking, who will convince that we should be environmentally concerned by these containers that are on the market.

We are moving in the right direction, like the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says. We have very serious problems of what to do with these packages, problems of the fill going to garbage dumps. We read about it week after week, that these are problems. Our city people do not know what to do with them, and it has got to be addressed. I think we as legislators and our Minister, our Government—we have to take a serious decision. If we let the packaging material slowly biodegrade into the ground and leak out chemicals, it could have an effect, and it has an effect, on the ground waters, or do we burn it? No, because by burning those we create other toxic matters in other forms that affect our environment.

Mr. Speaker, we need reasonable resolutions, solutions to these problems. We as consumers all buy products that are of this nature, and we should be looking at saying, enough is enough to the plastic products with all their problems. We should be looking at biodegradable products, to reuse as much as possible many types of paper products. Paper-based and cardboard-based products can be reused. They can be broken down and the fibre can be reused for different products.

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, the legislation must be toward re-use. It should be legislation that would have teeth, in which rules and regulations would be very clear for the seller and for the consumer. We would look to this sort of leadership from this Government.

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): And you will get it.

Mr. Gaudry: I am not so sure. The Member from -(interjection)- the Minister of Seniors—that is right—says we will get it, but they have been there for three years and they have not done anything yet with this kind of legislation.

Prior to that, we had the NDP Government for 17 years. -(interjection)- Well, I would not put it on the record, but I know they have not done anything either with that kind of legislation. We will look to leadership from this Government.

I believe we are all aware of the serious problems with garbage disposal, not only in the City of Winnipeg, but in the rural areas, -(interjection)- the North is the same thing. As Minister of Northern Affairs, I would hope that the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) will address these problems also. I am sure that he will try to address them but, of course, being a Conservative, a Tory is a Tory, it will take time for him to make a decision to do something about the North.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister and his Government to take the initiative and consider developing legislation for the protection of the environment because I believe this legislation is long awaited to protect our environment. Decisions will have to be taken and will have to be supported by all three Parties. Manitobans read every day about the environment.

Our Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) I am sure is concerned, as we are, and we look forward to having decisions made.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the Government look at legislation and that it will be supported by all two Parties, thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this looks like a recycled resolution, if I am not -(interjection)- I understand that, but reducing is more important because you should reduce, first of all, and then you reuse and then you recycle, so the three Rs would have been more appropriate for a resolution of this nature.

Mr. Speaker, we have passed The Waste Reduction Bill in this Chamber; however, we have no teeth in the Bill, as I recall it, and the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said so, and we would want to see those regulations to know what they are, but certainly our Party has no problem in supporting the wording in this resolution: "urge the Minister of Environment to consider bringing forth legislation." I am sure the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) will not have any problems with it either, and probably we could pass this in five minutes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak briefly on the Bill. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) said it was a recycled resolution. Well, when the Leader of the Opposition talks about environment, of course, theirs was a Government that did absolutely nothing. They talked a lot about environment.

I can remember when I first went into office and we looked at some of the problems of environment, including the problems with the material that the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) speaks of. There were absolutely no decisions made, and I questioned our department why we had not dealt with some of these resolutions. He said, well the previous Government just could not make a decision, they wanted to study it and study it. We went through all of that. They did nothing, as was mentioned, for the North. As far as cleaning up the North, they did absolutely nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we know very well that, going into our landfills, packaging is probably 30 percent of the waste, and the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), I think, is right in addressing the issue, that it is a concern. The Member for St. Boniface is a very well-respected Member. At least I respect his integrity. His goals and ambitions are very good, although he has little pointed questions once in a while, but that is fine.

He talks about litter and litter on the highways. Of course, it is illegal, for one thing, to litter. -(interjection)- Am I in trouble? That is okay. I am used to that. Litter is a problem on the highways. Of course, just the fact that we go to paper rather than plastic is not going to make a awful lot of difference; the litter is still there.

The Member also speaks a little bit about burning in the landfills. I do not know if the Member realizes

or knows that it is illegal to burn this sort of material in any landfill. There are class 1 dumps, where there is absolutely no burning; class 2 and class 3, where they are allowed to burn wood and some non-toxic material. So they do not burn.

An Honourable Member: What about Portage? Do they not do that?

Mr. Connery: The Member says, what about Portage? No, Portage does not burn in their landfill sites.

Mention was made of Styrofoam cups and we see some of the material around that is Styrofoam or non-Styrofoam. Even the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) has a drink container at her desk that is not of glass and has to be recycled. It reminds me of when the Liberals were in the official Opposition and the Member for Wolseley, on Provincial Affairs, was very critical of the CFCs in Styrofoam cups; of course, there are no CFCs anymore in Styrofoam cups.

There are no CFCs in the material that McDonald's uses in their hamburger containers, and so forth. The CFCs have been eliminated in those things. Unfortunately, either the previous Member for Wolseley did not know or was wanting to mislead the public, but there are no CFCs in them.

I am told now that McDonald's is moving to a paper carton, but does the Member or the House think that for one minute that all of this material is now going to be recycled? It is still going to end up in the landfills, and paper that is buried in landfills does not break down. You can find paper that has been buried in landfills for decades that is still there. It does not break down once it is buried. So just the fact that you are going to change the wrappers does not necessarily mean we are going to change the landfill.

The Member should know that there is a national packaging protocol and there are some goals established in that protocol. The goals are: That of 50 percent of 1988 amount sent for disposal shall be eliminated by the year 2000; 65 percent by the year 1986 sent for disposal; and 80 percent by the year 1992. Oh, I think that is in reverse. This material is wrong.

When we talk about paper, yes, paper maybe is more recyclable, but at the same time is the product going to be recyclable? The Member is right about some of the plastics that are being thrown out. We look at tin cans in the clusters of six, and the plastic

that holds them together. We have seen too often, animals, fish—fishermen go out and they throw them in the water, and fish have them caught around their throat, or birds that eventually die from these sorts of things. That is very serious, that this sort of thing should happen. This Government has shown leadership in its efforts to reduce the amount of material going into the landfill sites. -(interjection)-

The Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) wants examples of—what?

The WRAP Act, as was mentioned previously, was proclaimed in August of 1990, and the regulations are being put together now to bring this into effect. A very meaningful piece of legislation to look at—wrapping. Packaging is a very complex item, and not everything can go to paper. There is the argument over biodegradable plastic versus the non-biodegradable. Some say that if you throw it out the window, that it will biodegrade. Then it breaks down into toxins in that way, so that also is not an answer.

We are looking for solutions to very, very complex issues, recycling, and collection of recycling. We see the problems they are having in Wolseley with the cost of the recycling process. Then taking out of the waste stream products that cannot be recycled or there is no market for them. We see large mounds of recyclable product possibly, but taken out of the waste stream and stored in areas, not in a dump, just stored helter skelter around. I see this in many, many places. I see it even in my home town of Portage la Prairie, where they have a recycling depot. They have a shed full of paper, they are trying to look for a market.

* (1720)

As the Member knows, the recycling of paper is not easily accommodated. It has to be de-inked, the cost of de-inking and the amount of paper that we have, hopefully this will take place. I know the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) is very conscious of all of these things. It is fortunate that you have in place a Government that is concerned, a Government that is not only talking about it, but is doing things about it, which the previous Government, after seven and a half years, did absolutely nothing. The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) chirps from his seat about being environmentally conscious. He was the Minister that allowed chipboards to come in from the United States, and go into Flin Flon. It was because of them

allowing it to happen, that workers got sick up in Flin Flon. They had to develop a protocol, at the mine at Flin Flon -(interjection)-

An Honourable Member: It was not the Member's fault.

Mr. Connery: It was the Member for Flin Flon, who was a Cabinet Minister, at that particular time. We, in fact, stopped the handling of it, until it was safe. Do you remember the bottom ash that came out of California? Those first loads of bottom ash came into Manitoba when the Member for Flin Flon was a Member of the provincial Cabinet. We developed a protocol with the company to ensure that the workers were informed, that they agreed that it would be safe to handle. As a matter of fact, I do not know if that material has yet been handled, because I do not think they have developed a way to handle it.

It is very ironic that we see a provincial Party, the NDP provincial Party, trying to seize the environment as one of their issues, when in the facts, they did absolutely nothing. They did not prosecute companies in the north that were flagrantly violating the emissions. They did not look at the size of their tailing areas to hold the effluent out of mines, they did not do that properly. All kinds of concerns were raised in the north, because they did absolutely nothing. The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) likes to talk about these sorts of things, but then does absolutely nothing about it.

I am reading the resolution here and trying to see some of the things that—

An Honourable Member: Pollution, I see the smoke, he is thinking.

Mr. Connery: As the Member says in his resolution: "discarded packaging comprises a visual offense," but I think the Member knows very well that there is a penalty for littering on highways. So when we talk about the visual and I agree with the Member, in fact, I think littering has decreased significantly over the years. At one point in time you used to see a lot of material thrown out the windows. You still see some beer bottles being collected in the ditches and beer cans, which I totally disagree with and I think every Member of this Legislature disagrees with. Obviously if they are throwing them out the window, they have been drinking and driving. Even if they are only a passenger in the car, it is not something that anybody in this Legislature would agree as being a good thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, while he says that it is a visual offence, there are penalties attached and maybe we should even have higher penalties attached to deal with some of those things. While I have some sympathies with the resolution put forward by the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), I do think that we need to go a lot further. The food packaging is only a very small part of the problem, while it is 30 percent, there are still other significant parts that have to be dealt with. I know nobody likes to talk about it, but what about disposable diapers? What is the volume that goes into the landfills on disposable diapers? Maybe that is an issue that we should take a look at. We know that a lot of bacteria in disposable diapers go into the landfills and are potentially hazardous.

Also the Member makes some concerns, and rightfully so, about what goes into the dumps, but the Member should know that to create a landfill site now comes under very strict regulation. You have to have the proper soil, you have to have the proper barrier of clay, a certain depth of clay so that materials cannot leach into the waterways. They have to have testing sites, or holes dug around the landfill sites to see if there is anything in fact leaching and if remedial action is required at some point in time.

We went through this in Portage la Prairie with the development of a Class 1 dump in the Poplar Point area and the people were concerned. I think it was a first that we ever did, because the previous Government did not consult with the people when they went into it. I can remember the Member for Wolseley being very critical that there were changes to the regulations of the Poplar Point dump. What he tried to insinuate was the changes took place while we were in power and that I had made some special relief for the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie when, in fact, the changes to that dump regulations took place under the previous Government. I am not critical of those changes to the regulation, they were ones that I think were proper and accommodating and were done in the right vein but, nevertheless, the previous Member for Wolseley tried to tie it in, which I thought was bad.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, if you do a landfill site properly, with the proper clay below so the material cannot leach into the water, and if you cap it properly with proper drainage, landfills can be safe.

So, Mr. Speaker, while I have some sympathies for the resolution put forward by the Member for St.

Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and put forth in all of the right reasons and ways, it is only part of the problem. We have to do a lot more work on landfills, on recycling, not only in food but in all sorts of things.

I want to congratulate the Member for bringing forth his concerns and raising them in a proper way, but I think further discussion and review need to be done on it to ensure that our environment is protected in a much safer way.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see that the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) thinks so highly of the Act that the Government has passed on August 1.

The WRAP Act really does cover a lot of areas that are very pertinent in my constituency. My constituency consists of the largest landfilled area within the Province of Manitoba, 1,985 acres, which is one of the reasons I have some grave concerns in this area.

They stated that the landfill had a life expectancy of 35 to 40 years. The bureaucracy that established that guideline was dreaming back in the '50s. I think we have to move ahead into the future and see that we expand, that we get a better use of our land base within our communities, and that we are not contaminating the ground waters.

One fact that we have within our community is that we have moved ahead and are beginning to protect the ground waters through a leachate system in the landfill, which happens not to be required at this time, but we are moving ahead to protect the ground waters in establishing new criteria.

I think that it is very possible that if we do not start looking ahead into the future we will have major problems that our children will have to live with for many years to come. It is time that we start moving towards the reduction of waste prior to thinking of recycling first.

Reduction is the No. 1 aspect of waste management that we have to look at. They keep saying there are four Rs and that is: reduce, reuse, recycle, and then reclaim. I think we have to remember that we have to put that fifth one on there and that is responsibility, Mr. Speaker. Responsibility of who is creating the wastes that are going to our landfills and who is generating the products.

I think one large area that we can cover most of this through is in the education system, how we educate our children, and how we educate the public on how to treat and how to deal with the wastes that are out there.

* (1730)

If we created the legislation and things within the Act that are coming forth, I think we have really come along way from where we were two years ago. No Governments in Manitoba have really moved ahead, except for this Government. This Government has taken progressive actions to correct the steps that the past Governments have forgotten about.

They have forgotten about where our children are going to live and that is within these communities, Mr. Speaker. They have forgotten that we cannot leave our trash and our garbage for our children in the future, and they have forgotten that we have to live here within the communities. They have forgotten that not only do the people have to care for the product that is here, they have to see that we can breathe the air, drink the water and be entertaining in a fashion that we are used to.

Mr. Speaker, within the WRAP Act, which covers the resolution that the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) has put forward, I think you will find that we are saying that we should go after the producers of these plastics and other contaminants that we are putting into our system. I think you will find the process that will be followed is a process that will be working toward an orderly process for the reduction and prevention of waste in Manitoba. It gives the provincial Government specific powers to work with the producers and the products of materials that are causing the contaminants to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I understand where the Honourable Member for St. Boniface is coming from, I have to give him credit for thinking ahead. The Honourable Member is thinking a lot further ahead than any other Party Members on the other side of this House have ever come from before, and it is about time that the legislators of this province and in this country start thinking of these positive aspects.

The responsibility for reduction in preventing waste lies within all levels of society, with both citizens and business. Each contributes about 50 percent of the total waste that is manufactured so we have to go after both aspects.

I understand where he is coming from when he is saying these products are laying on the streets and we are seeing the wrappers and the bottles and plastics. If you look at some of the industries, they have taken a direct impact and they are moving away from it. It is through public pressure that they have done it. So they have been educated by the public that the public no longer wanted to have these containers within the industry, and they have removed them. I mean, McDonald's have moved to go away from the containers, and it was not because they felt they were not environmentally safe. It was because of public reaction through an education process.

The visual offences that the Member speaks of, the Member for St. Boniface, "WHEREAS discarded packaging compromises a visual offense . . .," it reminds me of when I was driving through Texas where it said, "We are a clean state and we shoot those who litter." Well, maybe we should be moving ahead to be Manitoba, the cleanest air and water and streets and all the rest of it within North America.

If one remembers—I went back to the Magna Carta in 1215 for some of the Clean Air Acts that they had back in it. We really do have to move ahead and I have to give the Member credit, as I did, for coming up with this, but seeing as it is more or less a portion of the Act, I would like to move an amendment to the resolution, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to move, seconded by the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson), to strike all the words after "THEREFORE" and replace them by "BE IT RESOLVED that the citizens and businesses, together with manufacturers and distributors of products that have the potential to become waste, join with the Government of Manitoba in encouraging the minimization and safe disposal of waste."

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: I am satisfied that the amendment falls within the normal practices of this House, respecting the relevancy of amendments in private Members' hour and complies with the commonly referred to Beauchesne's citation respecting the amendments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I notice one difference between this particular amendment and amendments that have been brought before this House on other resolutions. For the first time I am glad to hear that the Member for

St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) is not congratulating the Government and making light of the issue, because I would say that the Government does not necessarily warrant to be congratulated.

The Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) has raised a very valid resolution, a concern that is shared by many members of the public.

Mr. Speaker, some might recall that I had a group of children that came up and talked about the environment to me, which I thought was—I was personally touched to see interest at that level.

I believe that if I brought the resolution to this knowledgeable group of Grade 7 students, they would think it is once again a positive thing, a resolution that the Government should be supporting.

I have not seen a copy of the amendment, but I would imagine if the Government wanted just to add on what it is they were saying at the bottom, then we would probably be much more receptive to supporting something of that nature.

What they are doing is they are taking away THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Member for St. Boniface has put forward. Mr. Speaker, that is really not what the Member for St. Boniface, I believe, is trying to get across.

* (1740)

The Member for St. Boniface talked about the importance of the resolution. You can read from the resolution and the WHEREASes where it talks about the food and beverage packaging.

Mr. Speaker, we could walk in any grocery store, and we would see as you walk through the aisles, packaging is becoming a fine art where you can take off a package and you will see three more items that are packaged within that package. These are the type of things that are very consumer oriented in terms of trying to be very eye appealing, but when it comes to the environment, it is maybe not necessarily what is in the best interests of our environment.

I believe consumers will be sending strong messages. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery) made mention of McDonald's possibly changing over. Well, I think that is a message that they would have received from the consumers of the products. As the public becomes more and more interested in protecting our environment, we seem to want to do whatever we

can to ensure—part of that, many corporations and small businesses and individual citizens are making positive steps. We see that through a wide variety, whether it is people talking to their MLAs, whether it is corporations taking the step or business taking the step, whatever it might be.

What does worry me to some degree, Mr. Speaker, is that in some instances we are seeing paper being replaced by plastic in terms of packaging our products. We have to really question the biodegradable packaging. Are there things that we can do to at least try to get paper used more than your plastics and so forth when it comes to packaging, because it is more environmentally sound to use paper, even though the Minister made reference to the fact that it is still litter, and it does take time to decompose. There are some products that do not take as long to decompose and that do not damage the environment as much.

Those are the things, Mr. Speaker, that we have to look at. The Minister refers to trees. When we talk about the environment and paper and trees and so forth, it is important that the trees are replaced. This is something that is very important. It is important that we have an interest in there and that is why when we had the Repap deal we had some concern about the amount of forest that was given up by the Government. I believe it is in and around 20 percent of our forestry that was given up.

Mr. Speaker, we need to look at the whole question of the litter component. The Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) made reference to landfill sites. If we are using products that are recyclable or reusable, our landfill sites will not be as full as if we were using products to do the packaging that are more harmful to the environment and that are not recyclable.

We should be moving toward, whether it is legislation or regulation or promotion, whatever we can do, because we do have an active role as legislators to ensure that what is in the best interest of Manitobans is in fact what is done.

To that degree, Mr. Speaker, the Government should be very receptive to an amendment or to, I should say, a resolution of this nature because it puts forward a positive solution to a problem. It is not being so specific that it is limiting what the Government can and cannot do.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns)—and I have referred to it in the past and no

doubt will refer to it in the future—made comments to the effect that where there is a good idea coming from the Opposition benches he would be up on his feet and would support such a good idea. Mr. Speaker, knowing the Minister is listening to what I am saying, I am suggesting that when we get another opportunity to debate this resolution that he stand up and he talk about the comments that he had made. My hat is off to him for making that comment where, if the Opposition has a good idea and they bring it forward, that he would be more than supportive of good ideas.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest today to the Minister, that not only is this a good idea, but if you look at a number of the resolutions, and before the Government continues to—

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

As previously agreed, private Members' hour is done at 5:45. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have six minutes remaining.

ROYAL ASSENT

Mr. Speaker: His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is about to enter to grant Royal Assent. All rise.

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Roy MacGillivray): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Honour George Johnson, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the Throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in the following words:

* (1750)

Mr. Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and faithful subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in Session assembled, approach Your Honour with sentiments of unfeigned devotion and loyalty to Her Majesty's person and Government, and beg of Your Honour the acceptance of this Bill:

Bill 19—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1990, Loi de 1990 portant affectation anticipée de crédits.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth thank Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, accepts their benevolence, and assents to this Bill in Her Majesty's name.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): I believe there is a desire to call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Agreed.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, November 28, 1990

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