

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 5, 1978

Time: 2:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Before we proceed, I should like to draw the honourable members attention to the gallery where we have 50 students of Grade 6 standing from Tanners Crossing School in Minnedosa under the direction of Mrs. D. Shorrock. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

We have 31 students of Grade 8 standing from the Virden Junior High School. These students are under the direction of Lorraine Scott, Marie Gagnon and Gordon Jones. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Virden.

On behalf of all the honourable members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . . Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. GERALD W. J. MERCIER (Osborne) introduced Bill No. 52, An Act to amend The City of Winnipeg Act.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. EDWARD SCHREYER (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I rise to take note of the First Minister's return to express the hope that his convalescence is complete and to ask whether he can indicate in a general way if there is the intention to introduce substantive legislation beyond what is already before us.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. STERLING R. LYON, Premier (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his welcome after my three week absence, enforced absence from the House — I would not recommend it as a type of holiday retreat from the session to anyone — and to take the opportunity to thank him and members on all sides of the House for their messages of goodwill and the members of the Press Gallery as well for their rather larger message of goodwill which was duly appreciated, all of which I can assure you hastened the recuperative process which regrettably is still under way but has proceeded to the point where I am certainly fit to be back in the House and enjoying being back.

With respect to the substance of the Leader of the Opposition's question, insofar as substantive legislation is concerned, we would of course have to get into a definition of what is substantive. We will attempt — the House Leader will certainly follow up if I am not here at the question period from time to time to answer the questions specifically — we will attempt to advise the members opposite of legislation as it is going to be appearing before the House before the adjournment, as soon as is feasible. I'll leave it to my honourable friend to make the determination thereafter as to whether or not it is substantive.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps to the First Minister or the Government House Leader to make it a little easier to answer, I would ask then whether they can indicate the number of bills yet to be brought forward, whether substantive or not so substantive?

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSON (Morris): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition posed this question to me a few days ago, and I had intended to answer him prior to this time.

There are, as close as I can estimate, and my honourable friend, the Member for Inkster, will know how close that can be, about 20 bills yet to be introduced.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health. In light of what one could describe as a mounting consensus among those directly involved in senior administrative positions in the health care field, that the current budgetary allocations are simply not realistic, can the Minister indicate whether he has it in mind to introduce certain substantive changes, significant changes, with respect to health care financing?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. R. (BUD) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition that in the position that the government is taking quality of patient care comes first, and will be retained first. The government is not inflexible or intransigent on questions of this type, but up to this point, Sir, I'm still waiting for definitive responses from individual hospitals and health institutions as to how they are working within the budget limitations. I haven't received them yet, but I will be receiving them early this month' June.

Thus far, the only subject material that I have been exposed to has been the material in the media, not directly from the health facilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Labour. Can the Minister of Labour assure the House that she has not given the Winnipeg Builders' Exchange any reason to believe that she will come to the assistance of that employers' organization with regard to their collective bargaining position with the employees?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. NORMA L. PRICE (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, there hasn't been any intervention of any kind from the Department of Labour with regard to that.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Labour then assure the parties involved that her previous statement that she would take steps to end the strike is not used by the Builders' Exchange as a means of continuing to exercise an unreasonable bargaining position.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MRS. PRICE: Mr. Speaker, at no time did I say that there would be steps taken to end strikes in the construction industry.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A.R. (Pete) ADAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Northern Affairs. I would like to ask the Minister, the equipment that was owned by Minago Equipment, I believe it was, were there reserved bids placed on this machinery when it was sold by auction?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I believe I answered that question before to the Member for Selkirk. It was not a reserve bid situation; it was a guaranteed on the overall equipment which is, in effect, the same thing.

MR. ADAM: In speaking to a contractor over the weekend, I understand that the major equipment was sold for about a third of what it was actually worth. Could the Minister confirm or deny this?

MR. MacMASTER: I would think, Mr. Speaker, the contractor that the member was talking to wasn't

too familiar with the value of the equipment.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Selkirk.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY: A supplementary to the Minister. I believe the Minister indicated that he would table the guarantee document in the House, further to the question that I had posed some weeks ago. Is he prepared to do that?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, my answer to the Member for Selkirk was that I would table the appropriate documents, and I intend to do just that.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address a question to the Minister for Consumer Affairs, in his capacity as Minister for the Telephone System. Could the Minister table in this House, or file with the committee on Estimates before his salary is completed, a copy of the information received by the Manitoba Telephone System from Bell Canada, setting out the problems that would arise in connection with the recruiting proposals by MTS for personnel to be hired by Bell Canada to work in Saudi Arabia?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

HON. EDWARD MCGILL (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, the questions posed by the Member for St. Johns follow on from a series of questions on this subject on Friday. I would remind the member that we are now in Public Utilities Committee. I am receiving the report on the Manitoba Telephone System. The Chairman and General Manager of the Manitoba Telephone System will be in committee tomorrow morning at 10:00 o'clock. The questions which the member may have following on from the original questions placed might quite properly be put at that time and direct responses received.

MR. CHERNIACK: The Honourable Minister may not have realized that I was asking, not for information, but for the filing of documents. I am wondering if the Honourable Minister could undertake, possibly, to speak to the Chairman of the System, to obtain and to arrange for the filing or tabling of the documents to which I referred which deal with information as to customs regulations in Saudi Arabia, refusing to permit certain objects which may be defined as religious in nature or connected with the country of Israel and documents which contain immigration information for aliens which show that women cannot be employed in Saudi Arabia. That is the type of documentation I would ask the Minister to obtain for us. It's not information I'm asking for.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, I would foresee no difficulty in being able to obtain and table documents received from Bell Canada as a member of the Trans-Canada Telephone System group relating to the employment of people who may be interested in the member companies of Trans-Canada Telephone SYSTEM IN THE CONTRACT WHICH Bell Canada has in Saudi Arabia. Those documents which have now come from Bell Canada to MTS relating to this particular field, I would foresee no difficulty in tabling it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, may I thank the Honourable Minister for undertaking to obtain and table those documents and that is really the question I asked.

May I now direct a question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Education and inquire from him as to whether or not there is in existence a signed agreement between the University of Manitoba and the University of Brandon relating to the continuation of the Winnipeg Centre project?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. Keith A. COSENS (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, at this time there is not a signed agreement but I would expect that within a number of days, a few short days.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, I would ask the Minister if he could make an effort to notify the students of the program that there is no concern about the future of the program such as he informed us

some time ago, in view of the fact that they appear to have been told by the Dean at the University of Manitoba that there is no agreement signed yet and that he will not make any undertakings or description of the program to be carried on until there is such an agreement.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned negotiations are being carried on and I expect that agreement to be completed in fact in a very few short days.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Selkirk.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Attorney-General. Is the Attorney-General able to confirm that the legal counsel for the two policemen, subject to the present inquiry before the Manitoba Police Commission, have requested that prosecution be initiated against their clients rather than the inquiry proceeding through the auspices of the Manitoba Police Commission?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Selkirk.

MR. PAWLEY: A supplementary question. Can the Attorney-General confirm whether or not Crown Counsel, who had charge of the original case before Justice Hewak, has also recommended that criminal charges be proceeded with as against the two policemen?

MR. MERCIER: Exactly the opposite, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD S. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Labour responsible for workplace health and safety. Has the Honourable Minister obtained a report from her officials yet on the spill of 3.5 tons of anhydrous ammonia from a railway tank car in the Brandon east end in the Brandon Industrial Park?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MRS. PRICE: I have had a report; I don't regard it as an official report. Apparently the car was not secured, it wasn't blocked properly, and when it was inspected, the brakes hadn't been engaged in the manner that they should have been. At that particular point, there was an incline in the track and the tank car moved approximately 14 feet and severed the connection, the hose connection, and that's what caused it.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A supplementary to the Minister. I thank her for that information and I can appreciate that some of this may be under federal jurisdiction because it's railways but nevertheless, in view of the fact that it posed a very serious threat with a cloud of ammonia moving down the lower road to Shilo for several miles and involving emergency calls by police, EMO people, and so on, to warn everyone of this ammonia cloud, would she ensure that her staff look into the question of railway safety in the handling of such dangerous chemicals when she has her staff conduct a review, as she mentioned in the House the other day, when they review the situation, when they look at the Saskatchewan regulations, with the idea of improving the handling, the safer handling of this material?

MRS. PRICE: As I mentioned the other day, my staff is looking into it, but while I was looking into it I was informed that the Imperial Oil carries on an extensive training program which is available to the RCMP, to the local fire departments, to any of the other companies that are handling the fertilizer, and they are welcome to use any of the visual aids that Imperial Oil have, and they are also welcome to participate in any of their training programs. So I think that should answer the training program question that you asked me the other day.

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Speaker, a clarification question then. I understood the Honourable Minister to say last week that she was going to have her officials review the entire question of the handling of anhydrous ammonia with the objective, I thought, of improving the regulations for the safer handling of this material. Included in this was not only the review of the Dauphin experience and the Brandon experience, but also to look and see what is being done in the Province of Saskatchewan, where

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they have similar problems as I understand. And more specifically, I ask again, in view of this recent accident involving a railway car, would she undertake to include that in her review if indeed she is going to have a review conducted and hopefully, better and stricter safety regulations?

MRS. PRICE: With regard to adopting the regulations like Saskatchewan, I understand from my department that Saskatchewan's regulations are identical to the rest of Western Canada, that they have all adopted a national code. Saskatchewan has just written theirs into their regulations, where the others just adopted them per se across the western provinces, but I will certainly go further and look into the railway car safety for the Member for Brandon East.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. RONALD McBRYDE: Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister of Northern Affairs. I wonder if the Minister has yet disposed of the Pakawagan log milling operation at Wabowden.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

MR. MacMASTER: It's still under consideration, Mr. Speaker.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Minister when he anticipates a decision on this matter, as he indicated that we should have a decision last week; he had previously indicated that.

MR. MacMASTER: I think I said, Mr. Speaker, that I hoped to have it last week. With the possibility of being chastised by the Opposition, I hope to have it this week.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Northern Affairs. Can he assure the fishermen in northern Manitoba that in the fiscal year 1978-79, they will be eligible to receive at least \$250,000 in subsidy for their transportation of fish to the southern market?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some element of confusion in relationship to this. I am hard pressed to wonder why there is because I have been made very familiar with what took place at the meeting, the meeting of which I was unable to attend. But in 1976, there was \$250,000 that was allocated; in 1977 there was \$250,000 that was allocated; and we're allocating the same amount this year. Where the confusion seems to be is that part of the winter fishing subsidy is picked up after you've passed your Estimates and carries on through and, consequently, this particular year there is somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$205,000 or \$206,000 after the forty-some-odd will be given to the winter fishermen. That I think the Member for Rupertsland can appreciate because you just get your figures at the end of the year from the FFMC and it's a difficult procedure. We thought we had got that message through and we've back in communications with the people involved. Hopefully that's understood and appreciated that the amounts are equal.

MR. BOSTROM: A supplementary question to the same Minister Minister, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister give us any report on the present state of the management at the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation given that the general manager, a Mr. Parks, has tendered his resignation? Has there been a new manager appointed or has the Federal Minister in charge of this corporation consulted with the Minister in Manitoba regarding the future management at the corporation?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not trying to evade the question but just a comment that I think bears stating that the Federal Minister of Fisheries certainly has some pretty major problems facing him and he hasn't, as a matter of fact, been in touch with any of the provinces to my knowledge in relationship to the replacement of the president and chief executive officer of the FFMC. So I don't have any idea at this particular moment who he will choose to appoint. I would hope whoever it is that it is in consultation with the provinces. We were fairly insistent on this at, I believe it was a January meeting that we had here in Winnipeg.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary to the same Minister. Can the Minister report any new difficulties that have come to light in the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation

that may have led to the resignation of Mr. Parks or is this simply a routine resignation whereby the individual involved is going on to other duties?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Speaker, I don't know of any specific relevant problem recently that might have prompted the chief executive officer of the FFMC to resign. There certainly has been some problems and differences in the last few months, whether that had anything to do with his resignation or not, I don't know. I have attempted to contact him and haven't been able to and as far as him resigning at this particular time, he has claimed that it is for personal reasons and he has another job and I suppose we should respect that particular consideration by himself.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. Is the Information Services Branch expounding government policy when it indicates that the province plans to use \$30.4 million in capital carry-over that has been transferred from last year to this year, that the province intends to spend that \$30.4 million? They use the figure, "The money has already been included in previously announced \$30.4 million in capital carry-over that the province plans on using this fiscal year." Does the province indeed plan on using \$30.4 million in capital carry-over this year in addition to the spending Estimates?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. McGILL: Mr. Speaker, I don't have in front of me the particular Information Services bulletin that the member refers to. The question arises from the Member for Inkster's general critical position with respect to the statements and explanations that are given on government policy by the Information Services. I'm not prepared to comment in detail on this particular Information Services bulletin but I should be very surprised if the bulletin in any way deviates from the policy of the branch which has been in effect for some 20 years.

MR. GREEN: Well then, Mr. Speaker, would we then be correct in adding to the Estimate figures that are before us, which we are dealing with, the sum of \$30.4 million which the province intends to spend?

MR. McGILL: Mr. Speaker, the question in relation to the Estimates that the member puts to me is one, I think, that could be more adequately responded to by the Minister of Finance but I think there is nothing inconsistent with the statements that he has made and the statement that is contained in the Information Services.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture whether the Department is continuing with the policy of consolidating lands for the purpose of the community pasture at Libau, the few remaining parcels that have not yet been acquired?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, I'm not really that familiar with the particular parcel of land that the member brings to the attention of the House but I can take it as notice and inform him at a later date.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a separate question to the same Minister. Can the Minister indicate how much money has been collected to date by his department under the Beef Income Assurance Plan?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. May I suggest to the honourable member that that question may be better asked as an Order for Return.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would then ask the Minister, has he collected any under that plan?

MR. DOWNEY: Not to this date, Mr. Speaker.

MR. USKIW: Could the Minister then indicate to the House just when it is the intent to invoke

their option to collect monies under that . . .

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite is well aware of the parts of the program; it's a program that he implemented himself and I do not think the terms of the contract request payment at this I've said there will be very little change in the contract and when the amounts of money are due to the province, then I would see the option being carried out.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING (St. Vital): My question is directed to the Minister reporting for the Manitoba Development Corporation. Has the Minister received any report from the corporation concerning Manitoba (sic) Fine Foods since the close of bids for that asset?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce.

HON. ROBERT (Bob) BANMAN (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with that particular matter, and as soon as the decision has been arrived at, we will be making a public announcement.

MR. WALDING: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister then confirming that he has received a report from the corporation?

MR. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am in touch with the MDC on a day to day basis with regard to anything they want to talk to me about, and this is one of the things that is under discussion.

MR. WALDING: Further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister inform the House how many bids were received by the MDC for Morden Fine Foods?

MR. BANMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, I think that's the information that is held by the Manitoba Development Corporation, and I suggest that, come the Economic Development Committee Review during the other committee, that the member can ask those questions of the Chairman.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. PETER FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Labour. In view of today's Financial Times indicating that the Consumer Food Price Index has risen over 30 points since the beginning of last year, and since there has been no wage increase in the minimum wage, can the Minister indicate how soon she will indicate a wage increase in the minimum wage, since there is lead time necessary as well?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MRS. PRICE: There hasn't been any decision by the government at this time, Sir.

MR. FOX: Yes. Can the Minister indicate what it takes to make a decision? How high does the Food Index and the Consumer Price Index have to go, how long do these people have to suffer?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask this question for the Minister of Health, responsible for the Boxing and Wrestling Commission. Is the government going in for the wholesale importation of lady boxers? And is this —(Interjection)— Well, it could be for breeding purposes — to compensate for the watering down of Family Law, and bringing in equality for the women in our province?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: I think if we could get a world's champion out of it, and bring that recognition to Manitoba, I'd be all for it, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Honourable Minister for Consumer Affairs in relation to the news service operation, and dealing with two specifics. One is a report of the Marital Law bills introduced by the Attorney-General, dealing with Family Law. Can the Minister confirm that this document will have had to have received approval of the Minister or a person delegated by him so to do, before it was published, and also, a statement made by the Honourable Minister for Environmental Affairs dealing with Garrison, which does not indicate when, where, how or any other circumstance of making the statement but just the fact that a statement was made. Is that the procedure now used by the news service bulletin just to be available for statements to be published by Ministers, rather than reporting what has been said on occasions that are mentioned therein?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Member for St. Johns, we have been discussing these matters and other matters relating to the policy of Information Services as we review the Estimates of my department which are currently before the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing, I think, different about the policy of the department in relation to the issuance of such bulletins now than the policy which existed under the previous administration. The same policy is being pursued as it has been for many years; the normal policy is for any news bulletins to be cleared by the Minister or his designate prior to their publication in order that he would have an opportunity to review the statements made and to ensure that they are consistent with those which he has made either in the House or publicly.

MR. CHERNIACK: A supplementary then, Mr. Speaker, but not addressed to the Minister, who did not really answer it, but to the Honourable Attorney-General. Will he confirm that the News Service bulletin of June 2, 1978, reporting on the presentation on second reading of the two Family Law bills, were approved by him or someone delegated by him so to do?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I prefer to see a copy of that in front of me before I answer that question.

MR. CHERNIACK: I am sending that over to the Honourable Attorney-General to refresh his memory. May I ask the Minister for Environmental Affairs when, where, and under what circumstances he made a statement dealing with the Garrison Diversion as reported in the News Service bulletin of June 2, 1978?

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable Minister of Mines.

HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney): Mr. Speaker, I approved a release dealing with the Garrison question last Friday and showed it to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition prior to making it, and it was put out through the channels of the Information Services.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, for clarification, the question I asked the Honourable Minister is, when, where, and under what circumstances he had made the statement. He did not answer that question; does he say that this was a statement made to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, and therefore, is a statement which is published?

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, it's a statement which I made, and was released by Information Services.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Last Friday, the Minister provided us with statistics on vacancies at the Brandon Mental Health Centre, and in answer to a query of mine following the tabling of these statistics, I believe he indicated that the approximately 50 vacancies that now occur would be the limit, and that therefore any further vacancies that would occur in future would be filled, and I believe the media therefore interpreted this as a lifting of the freeze. And I would like to ask the Minister whether this is a correct interpretation, or is that an accurate interpretation of his policy position on hiring at the Brandon Mental Health Centre?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Speaker, there is no lifting of the ceiling. The vacancy rate has reached the agreed-upon ceiling, the government's and Management Committee's agreed-upon ceiling, and as a consequence any additional vacancies now can be filled immediately, but there is no lifting of that ceiling.

MR. EVANS: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister indicate when he will convey that information, or when his staff will convey that information to the Medical Director at the Brandon Mental Health Centre? According to news reports this morning, he had not been notified, although he obviously expressed pleasure on a CBC news report, expressed pleasure but he didn't appear to be aware of this situation, and my question therefore is, when will the Minister or staff convey that policy direction to the Brandon Mental Health Centre executive?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll certainly look into that, but I would expect that that information would be finding its way to him through the normal channels since we are filling five of the positions at Brandon at the present time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to pose a question to the Minister of Agriculture following on questions posed to him by the Member for Lac du Bonnet. Could the Minister confirm whether it's true that the government is waiting until the passage of Bill 25 before they exercise their option under the Income Assurance Plan?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: No, it is not correct, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. JAY COWAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Health and Social Development. Can the Minister confirm that the Child Welfare worker position in the community of Gillam is currently vacant and has been vacant for a number of months now?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: I can't confirm it off the top of my head, Mr. Speaker, but it's possible.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked the Minister because he assured us during Estimates that all was well with the Child Welfare Agencies in the north. Can the Minister indicate what progress —(Interjection)— Can the Minister undertake to find out what progress has been made towards filling that position if it is indeed vacant and when it is expected that the position will be filled?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. There are some field positions in the north and elsewhere that are vacant at the present time due to attrition. There are five positions in the north that I know of that are due to resignations. They're not due to the result of any policy with respect to staff reduction but due to resignations. We are trying to fill them. That Child Welfare worker position may be one of them, but we are trying to fill it.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister could advise the House if he has had any recent conversations this weekend with the residents of Gillam in regard to the June 15th mass resignation of the Fire Brigade in that community.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

MR. MERCIER: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In view of the Cabinet's indecision in respect to the minimum wage, I wonder if the Minister of Labour would consider convening the Minimum Wage Board to get some recommendations from it.

MRS. PRICE: If we have something to work on with regard to it, after the Cabinet has discussed it, we'll get in touch with the Board.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister of Public Works if he has any announcements to make in regard to the construction of the new correctional facilities at The Pas?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, not at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister could tell us whether the contractor's bid is still valid or whether they'll have to recall tenders again for that particular project and whether he intends to travel with his colleague, the Minister of Health and Social Development, to The Pas to meet with Town Council on this particular subject?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Public Works.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, answering the last question first, I'm always concerned to be a fellow traveller with anybody, but with respect to the contract I have no information from the contractor that he is not prepared to proceed with the project as originally tendered. There would, of course, be a different set of circumstances prevail if substantial changes or indefinite postponement of the project is considered.

MR. McBRYDE: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Attorney-General if he's willing and able now to answer the question that my colleague for St. Johns asked in regard to his approval of the Information Services news release in regard to the Family Law Legislation?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I didn't keep a copy of the news release that was initialled by myself, but this would appear to be a true copy.

MR. CHERNIACK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns. One supplementary question.

MR. CHERNIACK: Since I didn't keep a copy of the document I sent to the Minister, would he mind returning it to me?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. JORGENSON: I beg to move, seconded by the Minister of Highways, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Radisson in the Chair for Health and Social Development, and the Honourable Member for Crescentwood in the Chair for Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Meer for Rock Lake.

MR. HENRY EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to, by leave of the House, make a replacement on the Public Utilities Committee, the Honourable Minister of Finance to be replaced by the Member for Roblin.\$

CONCURRENT COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY — CONSUMER, CORPORATE AND INTERNAL SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Warren Steen: Gentlemen, we have a quorum. Thursday evening when we left off, we were on Page 19, Resolution 31, which is 2.(b) Research and Planning under the Consumers Bureau. On my list, I had one person that was indicating they wished to speak and that was the Member for Brandon East and I don't see him at this particular time so I will substitute the Member for St. Johns for the Member for Brandon East.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well thank you, Mr. Chairman, although by substitute seems to imply that he loses his right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Oh, if he comes back . . . The other day I gave you your right, remember?

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, I remember you denied me my right, Mr. Chairman, when . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did I once? Well then we're even. One on one.

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes, you did. At least once. Mr. Chairman, I want to firstly comment on the report of the Consumer Department dealing with the consumer protection work and, unfortunately, I don't have it with me but, as I recall it, there is a considerable amount of activity revealed in the report of a positive nature. I would like the Minister to break down this item to give us a fuller description of the manner in which it is to be used and I am more particularly concerned with the budget that is allocated for information to the public on firstly, the availability of the branch to assist the public and secondly, the reporting to the public of the successes of the department so that they can acquire more and more respect for the work of the department and therefore be confident that they can come to the department for assistance in problems that arise in day-to-day operations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, I believe we're on Item (b)(1) under . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Research and Planning.

MR. MCGILL: Research and Planning.

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes, isn't that a good spot for that question?

MR. MCGILL: I understood the member's questions to be more in relation to public information services but perhaps I'm wrong.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I thought I made it clear. I am concerned about the work that is being done by the Consumers Bureau and I would not like to think that the Minister would be relying only on Information Services to do that kind of work. The Consumers Bureau administers the Consumer Protection Act and the report which I did read — and as I say, I don't have it before me but I see Mr. Mason has it before him now — sets out a great deal of activity in the past year by the Consumer Bureau and I would like a breakdown on Research and Planning to see whether there is any money set aside for information to the public as to the availability of the program, as to the willingness and almost, I would like to think, desire of the department and the Consumers Bureau to assist people in their day-to-day problem and, therefore, I am looking for some kind of a budget dealing with that kind of information.

MR. MCGILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is a budget of \$32,000 for public education, public advertising in respect to the services provided by the Consumer Bureau. I think that probably is

the specific breakdown that the member requests and there are two staff man years involved as well in this particular area of the Consumer Bureau activity.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, that then means that the salary item of \$63,000, surely that's more than two staff man years, so I would like further elaboration on the entire breakdown of the \$72,000 as compared with last year's \$74,000 and then we might be able to talk about the informational aspect of the work.

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, the \$63,000 in that for salaries includes the salary of the senior officer I, economic research analyst III, and a research assistant, so there are actually three people involved there.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm just waiting for the balance of the breakdown of the budget in comparison with last year. I mean, it's a total of \$72,000 this year; \$74,000 last year, and all I know now is that there are three staff man years involved.

MR. MCGILL: The difference between last year's expenditure and this under (b)(2) is related to reduction of professional fees involved and a reduction based on actual experience from previous years.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, I still don't know how that \$8,200 is being spent or how the previous year's amount was expected to be spent.

MR. MCGILL: Oh, I'm sorry. It's for professional fees, furniture and furnishings rentals, printing and stationery supplies, postage, telephone and telegraphs, machinery and equipment, publications, travelling expenses and other.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, now we're really getting to my first question which was: How does the department plan, or how does it inform the public as to firstly, the availability of its services in order — I think it should be — to ensure that people do come with their problems and secondly, to give information as to the success or failure of the program, again so as to enable the public to know that they have the opportunity to turn to the Consumer Bureau for help?

MR. MCGILL: We did have some discussion in this area under Consumer Communications Programs under the item (a) that we passed at the previous sitting under Salaries of Administration and the general program of the Consumer Communications area was discussed at that time.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, the fact that it was discussed does not mean that I'm in error in bringing it up at this point and the fact that it was discussed and I wasn't here is not a reason not to answer the question which I think is a specific one and doesn't really require an awful lot of development.

MR. MCGILL: ONLY EXCEPT, Mr. Chairman, that we have already passed that particular item. It can be discussed under the salaries item, or we can go over that again; we can back up to Item (a) Administration.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I'm not asking to back up anywhere. I'm just asking, what does Research and Planning do in the development of the program of the Consumer Bureau and the information relating to its work. If it does nothing, then if the Minister says it is done elsewhere, then I would like to hear where it's done and what is the expense of it.

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, this was pretty well set out in the Annual Report and I can just remind the member of the explanation that was given there. "The function of the Research and Planning group is to maintain an awareness of and to investigate changing market conditions which are likely to affect the consumers. It carries out its functions in a variety of ways by maintaining liaison with interdepartmental and intergovernmental officials and representatives of business and industry and with consumer oriented groups by conducting research into price and availability fluctuations of products and by inquiring into specific trade practices and by reviewing existing and proposed legislation which have a consumer interest. Because of its function, the group has been involved in a wide variety of issues over the past year. Housing continues to be of particular interest and the group has been involved in varying degrees with issues pertaining to rent control, mobile homes and the Builders' New Home Certification Program."

"Research staff has been involved in the analysis and the assessment of several federal initiatives

which have consumer impact, in particular issues pertaining to competition policy, food policy, consumer credit law and warranties and product liability have been discussed with counterparts in other departments and other provinces and with federal representatives. Food prices, in particular, as well as prices of other products continue to be a source of interest. As a result, monitoring of commodity exchange and other sources of price movements is being maintained for several items. This information will be valuable in consideration of departmental activity in respect of a national food strategy."

Mr. Chairman, the research and planning group have been active in obtaining information and being up to date in changes to the Bank Act and to proposed electronic payment system legislation and in respect to research on a Borrowers and Depositors Protection Act. As mentioned, they've worked on rent control and on the debate and discussions which led up to the current program for Phase IV in our Manitoba Control Program. They've worked on problems relating to condominium conversions. Another area was some research that was done on a problem of corrosion of gas-fired furnaces. I mentioned the food price monitoring that's been done and keeping sort of a watch for other activities in other areas of the country with respect to food prices. We maintain close contact with federal food policy, with the Manitoba Livestock and Meat Commission and with matters relating to a universal products code.

Other areas that the Research and Planning Division have been active in over the past year is with respect to gasoline marketing in Manitoba, gasoline prices, the use of salt on Manitoba roads; they've been asked to do some research in connection with metric conversion and with federal competition policy and an analysis of services and media programs as they relate to the Consumers Bureau and the office of the Rentalsman. Those are just some of the headings under which the Bureau has been active.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, the Minister reads very well and I appreciate his reading to us in part of what he said the comments of the last year's report. I guess I was misled but when I was reading about consumer communications which immediately precedes the section on Research and Planning, I had the impression that that's where it would have been done but now I gather, from what the Minister said earlier, that this activity of consumer communications comes under Administration. Clearly, I did not expect it would be under Administration because I thought it was a program.

Well, what I wanted to suggest to the Minister is that in my opinion the public is not sufficiently aware of the work being done by the Consumer Bureau. There is activity as outlined through educational institutions which is very useful but I think there is not general public information. I think also that when there are prosecutions or even settlements, that they are not sufficiently reported to the public in order, again, to invite the public to take advantage of the facilities available or the program available through this department. I wanted to ask the Minister whether he agrees with me or not. Maybe he thinks there is adequate information but when you look at the fact that there are publications such as Wheels and Deals, information as to what to look for when you're shopping for a car, I'm not aware that the public generally knows that there's that kind of information available to assist one. The same with others of the publications. Is the Minister satisfied that there is sufficient distribution of the information so that the public can take full advantage of the Consumers Bureau.

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, the point that the member is making, and makes very well as he usually does in debate, is that if we had much more ability then we could expand the services greatly. The argument can be made in almost any department of government: If we spend more money, provide more people, provide more services, that surely eventually the interests of the public will be served to a greater degree than they are now. The question that has to be faced though is, what is the best relationship between the service provided and the funds that can reasonably be made available for this purpose? We think that the degree of service we are now providing is a reasonable saw-off between costs and service to the public. I don't deny that if we were to double the budget of the department in respect to consumer services that the public would have more and perhaps be in possession of a greater number of advertising pieces and a greater variety of areas in which they may at one time or another in their activities in Manitoba be able to apply to the Bureau more quickly than if such additional services were not supplied.

Mr. Chairman, I think it's really a question of achieving the best balance between what we have to spend and what we can provide to the public.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Minister says he is satisfied with the development that has been made possible with the moneys available. I really asked the Minister whether he thought

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that the public was getting sufficient information to know enough to make use of the services and he then gave me a sort of a hypothetical answer. If we spent more, we would tell them more. I'm asking him whether the program is sufficiently utilized in view of the fact that, in my opinion, the public is not really aware of the services. I don't know his opinion on that.

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, the member is asking me for a more precise answer to a very general question that he puts in a question that really doesn't lend itself to very accurate measurement. It becomes a judgment and in his judgment we're not informing the public sufficiently well. I believe that the activity and the programs in that respect do not vary greatly from those which his own government was apparently satisfied with. Again I say to him, certainly they could be expanded; that costs money and I'm not convinced that there would be a straight return on additional moneys spent here. I think the benefits might be decreasing rather rapidly even with a great increase in the expenditure of funds so that per dollar expended, the return might not be nearly as great if the budget, for instance, were double for public information with respect to consumer services that are now provided.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister and some of his colleagues are going to reach a stage where they will no longer refer to what the previous government did in order to justify what they are doing. I know it takes a little while and I think we should give the Minister some time to assume that he has his own program and his own budget and his own decisions to make rather than relying on what was done by the previous government. He must realize that governments make decisions but individual MLAs can have their own opinions. I'm sure he had his own opinions in the past and will continue to have them, which means really that I have a right to ask a Minister what he thinks about his program and whether it's being sufficiently developed for the public. It's his program now; it's not the previous government's last year's program we're talking about, it's the future that we're talking about.

In the light of that and in the light of the fact that I'm now under the impression that there are pamphlets published, that there is distribution to the schools, that the officials involved look for opportunities to make speeches, I don't see any budgetary item for advertising. I see in the release that there is a release prepared for what is called Caution Corner, a news column service aimed to rural daily and weekly newspapers. I'm not aware that I've ever seen one in Winnipeg and, of course, it's not a rural newspaper but it seems to me that the work of the Consumer Protection Bureau is very great to the limited number of people who know of it. The information I acquired is that people generally are not aware of this program and I think it is the responsibility of the department to make people aware. There's a lot of free advertising, which I think is being used to some extent. I still don't think that as a reader of the newspapers or a listener to radio and T.V., that I'm aware of the various successes of the department and I think if I were more aware of it, I would be more inclined to reach out to get the information. I just assume now that the Minister is quite satisfied with the program which he inherited from the previous government and is not proposing any changes to it. That is what I read into what he said. If, on the other hand, he said that he would like to have had more, or had asked for more, or wanted to develop the program more but was refused that opportunity, then I would at least hope that next year we will have some report as to progress. So far, I have the impression that the Minister is quite satisfied with the program which he inherited from the previous government and is not planning any development or expansion of it. I leave it at that depending on what he wants to tell us.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, the member began by saying he believed he had the right to criticize the program and certainly there is no question about that. He is here precisely for that purpose. I merely pointed out that the program which he now criticizes is essentially the one which was in place last year and which, as he also points out, we have been responsible for for a relatively short period of time. In fact, the budget preparations were in sort of mid-stream activity in late October when this administration assumed these responsibilities. Certainly we're going to look at these programs. You suggest that perhaps next year we will have a better opportunity to evaluate how effectively we are getting out to the consumers the programs which we have now to offer and, as he points out, we're doing it through the schools and by making speeches to interested groups and to sending people out who have this information. No doubt that can be improved. How much money it will take, we will have to examine. Again, I'll be interested in the cost-benefit ratio that somebody can show us as to what additional service to the community we could offer if we were to budget increased funds next year for this purpose, but I haven't a firm or fixed position that this for all time is the extent to which government should be involved in services through the Consumer Bureau. Certainly we'll be looking at this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I do appreciate that answer. It indicates to me several things. One is, I may be unkind in my inferring from what was said, that the Minister has not really had the opportunity or possibly time to look into this particular aspect of this particular part of his department and that he has yet to do so. That's fine with me. I don't expect that even in six or seven months that he could learn all the facets of all the work he has undertaken to evaluate for the future. So I'm hopeful that he will approach this with an open mind for the coming year and look for opportunities, and when I say look for opportunities I would suggest that one of the best ways would be for this Minister to look for an opportunity to make a speech somewhere, anywhere, so that he gets his Information Services to start distributing information about this particular branch of the work.

Mr. Chairman, I say it with all seriousness because years back this kind of program was very important to me and other members of the Legislature and it took quite awhile for us to get the then government, the then Conservative Government, to develop this Act and to work on it and I think there was a great deal of pride — I know that Maitland Steinkopf, who was responsible for developing it, shared with others of whom I was one. I say that, therefore, to make the Minister understand that I mean very seriously that this is I think one of the great things that a government can do, and that I was not just nit-picking when I was asking these more detailed questions because I'm hoping that there will be greater development.

I feel that this aspect of government is one that people normally don't know about and often they will turn to an MLA when they have a problem and very often they don't because they can't find that MLA. The kind of work that is done here is so close to day-to-day problems of many people who are not sophisticated enough to know where to turn, to call their MLA, to go to a lawyer or to go to an accountant, or to worry about how to deal with problems that I know are well handled by the bureau. I'm saying all this in the hope that the Minister will take the time within the next half year in the preparation of the next year's budget to look for greater activity.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say this, that a small part of a small department is not likely to get the full attention of any administrator or Minister responsible for the overall, and in eight years of NDP Government I don't remember an opportunity of having this kind of discussion with the Minister then responsible for this, and therefore one could appreciate the value of being in opposition to have the opportunity to reflect on what has been done and what can be done. And I say it in as warm a way as I can that I hope the Minister will spend more time in the future looking at this aspect of his work and hopefully make it more available to the public.\$

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question or two of the Minister on this particular section. Could the Minister outline to the Committee the manner and extent that Research and Planning carries out its research and monitoring activities in the interests of consumers in the narrowest sense of the word and that is purchases of food?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, the Bureau has a staff of three staff man years. Food is just one of the areas in which they are doing research and attempting to compare the changes of prices which occur in our own jurisdiction with those elsewhere to relate this to what federal activities and responsibilities there are in the area of food pricing across the country. But that is just one of the variety of services that this group, this department, this branch handles. I mentioned others — the work that they do for us in respect to research on rent accommodation problems, vacancy rates, of conducting polls throughout the province to determine what the market conditions are with relation to rental accommodation in order to form a basis for policy making in that area.

They have been active in the housing field generally aside from rent control programs, in new home certification programs, and condominium conversions of blocks, the programs that relate to tenants in those blocks as the owners seek their concurrence with condominium conversions. They've been active in maintaining a watch of insulation prices for the construction of homes or for the improvement of residential accommodation in the province. Those are some of the general areas. We mentioned gasoline pricing which has been a fairly active area in the past year or so.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I realize that there's a whole wide range of activities and the Minister says only three people to do the research and monitor these particular areas. I'm particularly interested in just the food aspect of it. Could the Minister go into a little more detail for me as to how these price fluctuations are monitored and how the figures are gathered together and how the statistics are prepared?

MR. MCGILL: I'm advised that Manitoba has an agreement with the other provinces in relation to the exchange of information on food prices, and they are presently setting up their own monitoring system on approximately 80 different food products so that they'll be able to report and compare with the information that's obtainable from other provinces, from Ontario west in this connection.

MR. WALDING: When the Minister says that they are setting up a list of 80 odd items is he referring to the Research and Planning Branch?

MR. MCGILL: Yes.

MR. WALDING: Can the Minister tell us . . .

MR. MCGILL: I'm sorry, excuse me, that is done in cooperation with the other provinces on the 80 products that are being monitored.

MR. WALDING: Can the Minister tell the Committee what other work is being done in the area of food prices in Manitoba?

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that there is commodity market monitoring so that in the commodity markets they note and recognize increases in coffee, sugar, other prices, which occur on the commodity exchanges and as a forewarning of the changes in the retail prices of those commodities in our area so this is one of the areas of interest and of activity for our local group.

MR. WALDING: Can the Minister tell us what monitoring or research is done of retail food prices in Manitoba?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, in addition to the monitoring of the commodity exchanges and those 80 products, the research group have been working with the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics in maintaining some watching their brief on other products in the field generally but the Bureau of Statistics has been utilized as an additional source of information that the department would find difficult to go out and obtain the kind of information that they already have available.

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister, and I realize that the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics is not his responsibility, but can he tell the committee whether the Bureau has its own independent means of gathering retail food statistics or whether they rely mostly on the federal Statistics Canada statistics?

MR. MCGILL: Well, as the member mentions, this is not directly under our department so here I may be subject to correction but I understand that the Bureau has representatives or people to whom they regularly consult in communities in the province who report to them changes that occur locally in retail food prices so they make use of that kind of a part-time service provided by local residents to keep them informed on changes in that field.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister tell us whether the Research and Planning section co-ordinates federal statistics on food prices both nationally and in Manitoba?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, the Research and Planning group do not co-ordinate the federal activity in this field but certainly rely on the Federal Government for information which they can obtain through their much larger organization and ability to obtain this information, so we're making use of the Federal Government's activities and their research but we're not really involved in any way to co-ordinate with them.

MR. WALDING: Another question, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell us what the Consumers Bureau or the department as a whole does with these statistics and figures, food prices and food price movements, particularly in the area of advising the public on changes in food prices?

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know of any particular program of advising the public on food prices. Our role is really that of monitoring to determine whether there is anything unusual in the fluctuations which occur under our own jurisdiction as compared with what might normally be expected to occur as a result of national changes as a result of commodity exchange market

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trading and in futures contracts on basic food products but I think essentially that is the role and to protect the consumers from what might be discovered as some local anomaly based upon some anomaly that shows up on our monitoring of 80-some food products in Manitoba as compared with across the country. So I think really it is a way of perhaps zeroing in on any perhaps local difficulty that might be given some special treatment by our department and some special investigation be done.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, then perhaps the Minister could explain to me and to the committee why it is that a department of Consumer Affairs which is presumably set up to serve the public and consumers especially takes the time and trouble to gather facts and information about food prices and yet does not tell the public about them?

MR. MCGILL: Well, they rely, I think, to a large extent on the monitoring function that is performed and related to changes nationally. I think that if there was a sudden or noticeable difference which occurred in Manitoba in relation to food prices generally, that we couldn't account for on the basis of some very temporary interruption of supply or demand, then it would be a function of our department to investigate that and to attempt to correct the situation; but simply to perhaps duplicate what is being done by other departments, I think the Department of Agriculture on a weekly basis publishes changes in food pricing that is available to the public. We don't want to become simply one of perhaps several agencies that are fulfilling roughly the same function. I think that would be perhaps an unnecessary duplication. I'm advised that something of that nature is now provided by the Department of Agriculture to the people of Manitoba.

MR. WALDING: Well, it's unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that we have completed the Department of Agriculture Estimates, otherwise I would be able to ask that particular Minister as to what this weekly food price indication is. I don't know, I've never seen one; I don't know where it's published or where it's publicized but it would seem to be a very desirable public service for some branch of government to do. Since this department is a consumers department, it would seem logical that something as basic as food prices, retail food prices, should be made available to the public and I would like to ask the Minister whether he thinks it is, or would be, a desirable thing for changes in food prices — monthly, annually or quarterly, whatever the case may be — should be publicized so that people can understand?

MR. MCGILL: I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that this is made available by the Department of Agriculture and is published by the newspapers. Whether it's carried every week in a prominent way, I cannot affirm but I gather that this information is now being made available through the press and that it is provided by the Department of Agriculture.

MR. WALDING: Can I come down to a couple of specifics, Mr. Chairman, and ask the Minister if he can confirm through Research and Planning or from any other means that the consumer food index rose by something like 15.2 percent for April of this year over April of last year, whether the department wouldn't consider this a pretty significant rise in food prices?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, I was a little surprised by the 15 percent increase in the month in food prices. I'm just having somebody confirm that. Is that percentage or points that you're talking about?

MR. WALDING: No, I'm speaking of a year, a year's time, April of this year over April of last year, that in that 12-month period that there was a 15.2 percent increase in the consumer price index for food. I've seen other figures, if I might just continue for a moment, Mr. Chairman, that over the four weeks in May, for example, that the consumer price index for food rose something like 1.7 percent which on an annual basis is about 20 percent which is an even more horrendous rise than the previous year. I've seen other figures that indicate over that same four week period that the price of beef in retail stores has gone up by something like — Oh, I can't remember the figure, I think it was something like 14 percent in a four week period alone. Now these are pretty horrifying figures to the housewife and the senior citizen who is trying to get by on a very restrained income. Does the Minister have any comment on these and whether he feels that his department should be doing more in making these figures more readily available to the public?

MR. MCGILL: Well, Mr. Chairman, as I've mentioned there is now some regular public information by the Department of Agriculture on food prices. I might also remind the member that while we are all very much concerned about rising prices, not only in food but in every other kind of goods and services that we require in our daily life, these changes are happening. I think it's unlikely that

the Consumers Bureau could effectively stop that trend, that these are trends resulting from national and international factors that certainly require some programs that go beyond the confines of our province.

But in the manner of informing the public on the price as it changes from week to week, perhaps the very best job that is being done is being done by the retail food suppliers themselves in their large advertisements that run mid-week every week in some usually two or three pages outlining the prices and their specials and so forth. I think that's the most immediate and probably the most effective way of making the public aware of food prices and it's being done not at government expense but at the expense, and properly so, of those people who want to sell those products.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I have to agree with the first part of the Minister's remarks. I've never suggested nor has the previous government ever suggested that Manitoba, as one province, could control the food prices of the whole nation. We realize that national and international developments have their effects on food prices. Really, the reason that I brought this up was a matter of public attention and public interest. The Minister has mentioned supermarkets and grocery stores and I would remind the Minister that the publicization of their prices is done in their interest and not in the public interest, whereas it is this department that presumably serves the consumer most directly. It would surely seem that if there were monthly or annually, or six month or quarterly reports that were made public, this would be probably the best method of making these facts known to the public.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Transcona, then Wolseley.

MR. PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I slipped out for a minute and I wonder if the Minister has already answered the question of what are the functions of the Research and Planning Branch. If you have already answered that, I can look in Hansard for the answer then on that.

Does this branch then . . . it provides support services, I would think, for many of the other branches in the department because it's the only spot where I can see research and planning for the entire department. Is that correct in that sense that it does provide a staff research function for other branches of the department?

MR. MCGILL: Well this is essentially for Consumer Affairs Division of the department. There are other divisions of the department in which the Research and Planning would not be involved such as the Securities Commission and the Public Utilities Board, the Queen's Printer. They have been involved in some research in respect to the rent stabilization and the formulation of policy by simply accumulating statistics and doing surveys for these.

MR. PARASIUK: Are they still going to be involved in doing research for the Rent Stabilization Program?

MR. MCGILL: Yes, they will do that in co-operation with the Rent Stabilization and the Rent Review Agency.

MR. PARASIUK: So the direction for the research of the Rent Stabilization Program will be provided by whom, by the person responsible for the Rent Stabilization Program or by the Director of Research and Planning for the Consumers Bureau? That's fairly important. Or will it be provided by, as it was in the past, by the former vice-chairman — I don't know if he still is the vice-chairman — of the Rent Stabilization Board?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, to the Member for Transcona, the secretary to the Rent Stabilization Board is an economist and is able to provide that service in conjunction with the economist who heads up the Research and Planning division so they will be able to combine on matters that relate particularly to rental accommodations in the marketplace.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: This branch then would provide the research, I assume, to determine whether there have been any identical bids on concrete tenders. Is that correct? I remember I asked you that question some time ago and you undertook to provide an answer on it.

MR. MCGILL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the member refers to a question that was put to me in the House. The matter is being researched and the assistance of this group, the research group, is being used.

When that investigation is completed we'll be able to report back to the Member for Transcona on whether or not there have been any instances of duplication or identical bids being received on tender for cement.

MR. PARASIUUK: Mr. Chairman, has this branch done any work on food prices. I know my colleague, the Member for St. Vital, raised this question just a few minutes ago and the Minister indicated great faith in the private sector providing sufficient competition in this respect, especially through their advertising. But has the department done any analysis of the effect of standard brands in eastern Canada, and is the Minister in a position to tell us anything about the application of standard brands in Manitoba, whether in fact it's been done, where it's been done, and whether it's had any impact on providing a lower priced option for many standard packaged material, either canned or packaged groceries?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that these generic or standard brands products— he's referring to the products that don't carry a particular company label and are just labelled as to the nature of the product — are becoming, I understand, quite popular in certain retail areas in eastern Canada. This is just becoming a part of the scene I gather in Manitoba, and this group is now working and looking at and monitoring this development in our own markets.

MR. PARASIUUK: This branch is in fact monitoring that development, because I have made a couple of phone calls myself and I note that a couple of chains are talking about it — I think they've actually introduced it in a couple of places here, but the largest chain, namely, Safeway, hasn't as far as I can tell. And seeing as how Dominion and Loblaws do most of their competing in eastern Canada and that there doesn't seem to be a great competitor to Safeway, in Manitoba, I'm suggesting that maybe the department should be watching these developments very carefully to determine whether we may need some type of prodding or some goading in order to get that competition and in order to get prices as close to cost as possible.

And when I raise these points with the Minister I'd like to remind him that he does have an Act — I believe it's called The Inquiries Investigation Act — which does empower the Minister to set up an investigatory commission to deal with any matter relating to consumer pricing where he feels it is warranted, and the past administration set up a commission under this Act which existed for a very short period of time to investigate a very substantial proposed increase in the price of bread a number of years ago. And it was after the commission of inquiry was established that the companies decided that they could reduce the proposed price increase of bread from something in the order of eight cents to three cents a loaf, so I think that it's important for the department to have a strong presence in the marketplace because I think that the marketplace with respect to very large companies does not work well. I think the television program marketplace points that out but I think there are a number of areas in which a very large concern that dominates a great share of the market isn't, in fact, regulated by natural market forces and it's in those instances — and I would suggest that grocery retailing is one of them — that the department should play a very strong monitoring role.

So you are saying to me that the department is playing a monitoring role with respect to standard brands, and is it generally surveying the whole retail grocery industry as this is the area where the consumer feels price increases greatest?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, yes the department is monitoring this development as it follows on from a similar initial development in the east. The leader so far in the Manitoba area seems to be Safeway with something they call, I'm told, no frills products; that is the section of their merchandising that would encompass this so-called generic or no-name products, food products. I understand that there's been a competitive development and because of the great interest in this, and enthusiasm for these lower priced products in the east, that other major retail food merchandisers are entering the field — Dominion and Loblaws, I believe, and we're anticipating that this will happen in the Manitoba market, that we will have competition by other major food retailers, but at the moment the major activity seems to be occurring in one food retailer and under the no frills heading. '

MR. PARASIUUK: Well then, I was mistaken in the information that I received when I phoned some of these companies myself. I didn't realize that Safeway's no frills brand in a sense was really trying to get into the standard — well, what I thought was called in eastern Canada standard brands. Then that means that Safeway actually has these no frills products on the line right now and is selling them in Winnipeg?

MR. MCGILL: That's correct.

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MR. PARASIUK: I think this is of importance to the consumers of Manitoba and if the department is aware of what's taking place here I think it's also important to the producers in Manitoba, and I would suggest that maybe the departmental staff who are aware of the developments in the retail grocery business should contact the management of Morden Fine Foods. Morden Fine Foods has always had difficulty getting adequate shelf space in large concerns, and it has always had difficulty in getting their product put within easy reach of the consumer coming into grocery stores. You usually could find the very popular, highly priced brands right at eye level, and then if you look at the bottom row or in the row that sort of dovetails in with another product or another line of vegetables entirely, you might then pick out Morden Fine Foods but you had to look very, very carefully to find it. Since Morden Fine Foods has had come difficulty breaking into the very strong position held in the grocery stores by the established brand names, the no frills products or standard brands products possibly could provide some opportunity for Morden Fine Foods to produce the standard brands right here in Manitoba for distribution in Manitoba because since our transportation costs are less in Manitoba for goods distributed in Manitoba, it strikes me that this may in fact open up the market for products of Morden Fine Foods and that would be of impact, not only to the consumers of Manitoba but the farmers in and around the Morden area who produce the vegetables for Morden Fine Foods and for the workers in the plant at Morden and also for the community of Morden itself.

So I think this is a very important area for the staff to check into and liaise with the Department of Industry and Commerce on, and also liaise with the Manitoba Development Corporation because it may turn out that this development of standard brands, or generic brands, could in fact provide a big opportunity for Morden Fine Foods which in the past has been held back largely because it couldn't break the very dominant position of the large suppliers of brand names to grocery stores.

In line with this, Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister has been able to have his staff check into the developments in the Ontario Legislative Committee looking into the retail grocery business in Ontario. That committee has been very heavily involved in this whole matter and has been looking at ways and means in which action could be taken either by the retail concerns themselves, by the suppliers themselves, or possibly by government regulation to ensure more competition in the grocery business. I raised this question in the House about three or four days ago. I subsequently telephoned some members of the Legislature in Ontario. They told me that this matter is the subject of review by an all party legislative committee in the Ontario Legislature. I am awaiting transcripts of the committee hearings to date. I note that the legislative procedure in Ontario seems a bit more advanced than ours and that these legislative committees do have counsel advising them, and I gather that there have been instances in the past where certain people have been somewhat wary of coming forward to testify before this legislative committee for fear that there may be some type of reprisals against them, either with respect to supplying or with respect to retailing, so that the provision has been made in the legislative committee now for counsel to meet with these people in private to take their testimony and to report in confidence to the members of the committee.

So this seems to be a very serious matter in Ontario and I'm hoping that the Minister is pursuing this matter as quickly as possible because I do think it is of grave importance to the consumers of Manitoba. Does he have anything to report on this particular matter?

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Chairman, again the member is referring to some questions that he put to me in the House and which he described as a policy of kickbacks allegedly required by certain major food retailers for shelf space, and I can tell the member that we are watching very closely what comes out of the investigations in Ontario that are now under way as he has mentioned. We feel that the determination, I think, that needs to be made is whether or not this comes under the area of federal responsibility in competition in food processing and so I can tell him yes, we are watching this development, that we are waiting some decisions as to the area of responsibility and, based upon that we will determine our role, the role which we would properly play in thoroughly investigating the charges that have been laid.

MR. PARASIUK: I would hope that the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Can I interrupt the Member for Transcona and mention that it is 4:30 and that we are going back for Private Members' Bill. I understand that Bill 12, the Brandon Bill, will be discussed and perhaps voted on.

MR. PARASIUK: Do I have the floor when we return?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will be returning at 8:00 o'clock.\$

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats: I would like to draw the honourable members' attention to Page 41, Department of Health and Social Development, Resolution 62, Clause 6, Fitness and Amateur Sport. (a)(1) Salaries—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I think that we had a good discussion last week on that. I only have one question. There was an inter-departmental committee being formed between especially the Department of Health and Education as well as different divisions of the Departments, such as Home Ecs., and Fitness and Amateur Sports, to help work on the fitness of the people of Manitoba and to try to work with industry on this and, of course, with the intention to work very closely with the Kinsmen's Reh-fit Centre. I noticed over the weekend, I had a chance to read, like no doubt the Minister, where the fitness of our children is not something to brag about. I think that they compare it to a 35-year-old man in Sweden — I'm talking about the supplement of the Trib, I think it's the Trib, or Free Press — so I wonder if at least the Minister is continuing in that direction to try to enlist and work very closely with the Department of Education, the Minister of Education, to bring in fitness to all the segment of our population, be it school kids, well senior citizens.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes I am, Mr. Chairman. I think it has to be emphasized very heavily at the school age level. I think that the psychology of the fitness and the attitude of physical fitness has to preferably be established in a person at an early age, so that it becomes a pattern and a habit and a regular part of a person's life. So I would like to see much more emphasis on fitness at the school age level, and I am working and consulting with my colleague, the Minister of Education, on this. That is not to say that it isn't important in older age groups or even among the elderly, I would agree, but I think that just as you have to establish a cycle having to do with inflation to break the cycle, just as you have to establish a psychology to break the pattern of exorbitant demands by all of us on our economy, you have to establish a pattern and a psychology to encourage people to think in terms of good eating and living habits; you have to establish that psychology to develop in them the habit of physical fitness, and the earlier it can be started the better. The place to start it is at the school age level, if not in the schools, certainly partly in the schools and in other activities related to school age. I am working with my colleague on that.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased that the Minister is still interested in this fitness. May I say, is there anyone on his staff that has the main responsibility of preparing fitness programs for the public, or is that one of the staff that was never replaced, and is the Minister discussing this with his colleague, the Minister of Education? Are they looking at the possibility of excluding junk food from the schools? I think that's something that we started talking about last year and nothing was done, and I wonder if there is any way we can go in that direction?

MR. SHERMAN: There is one person specifically in the branch, he's on contract, Mr. Floyd Johnson, a contract employee with the branch who works specifically on the development of fitness programs and concepts. The Director of the Branch, Mr. Don Fletcher, also guides the development of concepts in that field, and the committee that was set up under Jim Daly has been charged with specifically bringing in some recommendations related to fitness.

As far as junk foods in the schools, I —(Interjection)—

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

MR. DESJARDINS: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman, if I may . . . don't forget to include also your Advisory Committee in Fitness and Amateur Sports, because they've done a lot of work on that.

MR. SHERMAN: Good point, Mr. Chairman. Certainly they're involved in the same input.

As far as junk foods in the schools, once again it's a subject that has to be discussed and a solution has to be sought in concert with other Ministers, as the honourable member appreciates. Once again I've had discussions with the Minister of Education, my colleague. I know he's concerned about the proliferation and the prevalence of junk foods in the schools. I can't tell the honourable member that there is a specific campaign ready to be initiated to eliminate or to cut down on them, but I think it's something that we should certainly strive for and work towards, and I intend to remind my colleague, if he needs any reminding, of the desirability of making some healthy changes in that

area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (3)—pass; (a)—pass; (b)(1) Salaries—pass; (2)—pass; (3)—pass; (b)—pass; (c)(1)—pass; (2) . . .

MR. DESJARDINS: What are we passing? There's not a damn cent in there, so I don't know what we're passing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I think the answer is nothing, but it has to be passed.

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, that's what we usually do in this House.

MR. SHERMAN: It's not necessarily nothing, Mr. Chairman. What the committee is passing is my interest in Fitness Development, that's what —(Interjection)— Well, we discussed on Friday the amount of money that is earmarked out of lottery funds for specific projects and those that are under consideration. Certainly our intention to move ahead with some and perhaps all of the Fitness Development projects on that list, with which the Honourable Member for St. Boniface is intimately familiar, I just haven't got them processed through the machinery of administration yet.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, that's exactly my point. I'm not debating now that the Minister is not interested in fitness. I accept his suggestion of last Friday that much money will be spent but all from the lottery, but it remains that under this we're passing nothing because it is transferred; that's the same point and I don't want to belabour on this, the Minister wants to start debating it at this time. I feel that there's a certain amount of money that should come from the Estimates or General Revenue, because this is something we need, it's a very important component of his department, and we don't know how long the lottery will continue. And this is my concern, not the concern that nothing will be done in fitness, I accept the Minister's words, but this was my final shot of making the point I tried to make on Friday, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (c)—pass. Resolution No. 62: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$462,300 for Health and Social Development. Fitness and Amateur Sport, \$462,300 — pass.

Resolution No. 64, Page 43, Health and Social Development Clause 8. Manitoba Health Services Commission — pass — the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: May I suggest that, Mr. Chairman, we follow the procedure we've had the last few years, we number the lines and call the lines, Administration being 1, and then we go on line by line, or we'll be jumping all over the place. —(Interjection)— Well, not as much, if we talk about Administration we won't . . . Is that acceptable to the Minister?

MR. SHERMAN: Let's accept it.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, then if we're on line 1, Administration, I would remind the Minister that he was supposed to have ready for me the list of the staff man years for 1977-78, 1978-79, that is, permanent, contract, and part time, as well as the vacancies as of March 31, 1977, the vacancies of November 1, 1977, and March 31, 1978.

Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister then could go down the breakdown of the cost, the expenses, the disbursement of the Commission and compare it to 1977-78, voted 1977-78, and what he is asking for this year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: And this is under Administration then? Yes, Mr. Chairman. Also I trust that the information that the honourable member asked is contained in the two pages that I just sent over to him. He can have a look and let me know. If there is additional information or material that we missed there, I will certainly get it for him.

Under Administration, Mr. Chairman, we're looking at Building Renovations — these are the gross program costs under Administration — Building Renovations voted in 1977-78 were \$8,000 and we're asking the Legislature this year for \$5,000.00. Employer Contributions, \$225,000 last year; \$250,000 this year. Furniture and Equipment, \$20,000 last year; \$20,000 this year. Heat, Light, Power and Water, \$80,000 last year; \$90,000 this year. Maintenance of Premises and Equipment, \$108,000 last year; \$120,000 this year. Medical Review Committee, \$25,000 last year; \$25,000 this year. Miscellaneous, \$30,000 last year; \$30,000 this year. Postage and Express, \$208,000 last year;

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this year. Professional Consultants, \$463,000 last year; \$139,000 this year. Publicity, \$10,000 last year; \$38,000 this year. Grants in lieu of taxes, \$116,000 last year; \$115,000 this year. Rental of Office Equipment, \$650,000 last year; \$450,000 this year. Standards Approval Program, \$13,000 last year; \$14,000 this year. Stationery and Office Supplies, \$400,000 last year; \$408,000 this year. Telephone and Telegraph, \$80,000 last year; \$81,000 this year. Travel, \$90,000 last year; \$85,000 this year. Staff Education Seminars, \$15,000 last year; \$14,000 this year. Total Expenses other than salaries, that's the total, in other words of what I've given you, last year \$2,541,000; this year \$2,084,000.00. Salaries, last year \$6,214,700; this year \$6,353,000.00. Net Program Costs, these are the totals, last year \$8,755,700; this year \$8,437,000.00.

Decreases were related to quantity surveyors expenses related to the Commission's Capital Program, and there was also a substantial decrease in rental of office equipment. That first one was Professional Consultants, that's what was related to the freeze on the Capital Program. The second one was the conversion to Manitoba Data Services, resulting in reduced rental fees.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: The Minister explained that last year what was requested for the Salaries was \$5,907,000, and the Minister gave me \$6,214,000; I wonder why? Is that because of the increase after the contract of the employees, is that what it is?

MR. SHERMAN: The rate increase for this year is added in here, is added on.

MR. DESJARDINS: The \$6,353,000 requested for this year; does that include the adjustment for the increase in contracts or that should be comparable to 5.9 last year, right?

MR. SHERMAN: That's right. It doesn't include it, therefore it should be comparable to the 5.9 of last year.

MR. DESJARDINS: It's very difficult to try to hold the floor and look at that list of staff and so on, but my colleague will look at; he'll have to deal with it.

What I was going to ask at this time, has the Minister made a decision as to what he's going to do and how he is going to treat the Health Services Commission? There has been certain recommendations of the Task Force, and I think many people are probably anxious to see what's going to happen on this, that is, the future of the Commission, or will it remain as some kind of independent commission?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I can't really answer that question, and I'm sure that the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, in his interest, belongs to a fairly substantial fraternity of persons interested in the final determination as to whether the Commission should continue to function and operate in the view of this government, in the manner in which it now is functioning and operating, or whether it should be absorbed or subsumed, whatever the term is, actually within the department. I can only tell my honourable friend that this is a subject on which I have asked for perspectives from people who view the Commission and its role and its function from different points of the spectrum; those who are connected with the Commission here, including the Chairman, Mr. Reg Edwards, and other executive personnel; personnel in my department who have been exposed to the function for some time; some members of Management Committee; some people at the Ministerial and Deputy Ministerial level in other provinces who have gone through a similar exercise; and discussions with my leader and my own colleagues.

I recognize that a decision has to be made, and has to be made soon, and it was certainly my intention and the government's intention to resolve these questions, remove these question marks as early as possible this summer, after the session is ended, Mr. Chairman, but it hasn't been possible to do it during the winter, in the preparatory period for the session, and in the session itself. Further to that, I didn't want to make any precipitous decisions or be persuaded into decisions that were hurried from my point of view, until I knew more about the role and the function and value of the Commission and how it could best operate vis-a-vis the Minister, and I didn't have that experience; I didn't know how I felt about it; so we maintained the status quo. But, I know that it's put a lot of people, to a certain extent, into limbo in terms of knowing how they're finally going to be operating, so I don't want to prolong that decision. But, I did need this winter and spring of experience, and we'll be making a final determination on that as early as possible after the session is over.

My honourable friend mentioned the staff position, the list that I gave him. Certainly, he can take his time on looking it over; he doesn't have to rush it; he can hold the floor anyway. But I just wanted to say to him that there is only one staff man year difference in 1978-79 over 1977-78 for the Commission, the approved staff complement for the Commission. We are at 710 staff man

years for 1978-79 as compared to 709 for the previous year, and as of March of this year, we had 18 vacancies in that total. As of March of this year, we had 9 nine persons employed on contract; March a year earlier there were 10 employed on contract. The March before that, there were 7 employed on contract. So the complement hasn't changed that much, Mr. Chairman. What's happened is that salaries have gone up through the usual necessary salary increase.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think I am satisfied. What I was trying to establish was if there had been a different pattern. It seems that it's the usual minor changes that happen every year. Is there the same thing as we have had in other areas, a ceiling, or a freeze I should say, that they'll have to have so many vacancies before they start filling them. Now, is that the case in this area also? And I thank the Minister for saying that we could take our time and come back to that; I don't think there is need for it. But that reminds me, we will be dealing in Community Clinics also, and that, I think, is included under Personal Care Homes, some of the finances, personal care and hospital Medicare, so I would hope that that we could leave and maybe come back to before we pass the final. But if we try to deal with it only in hospitals, or one of the areas, it's going to complicate things. —(Interjection)— Well, it's in everything; it's in the three; there's finance. So, yes, my only question then is, is there a maximum or a minimum of vacancies that have to happen before they are replaced?

MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Chairman, but the approved staff complement is 710 SMYs. There are 18 vacancies, or there were on March 11, and those vacancies can be filled at the desire of the Chairman and the Divisional Directors up to the approved complement of 710.

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I asked the Minister if he was contemplating any changes, and I know that this is something that he'll have to wrestle with, and something that, as he stated, something that was reviewed in many provinces. There are some changes now; at one time when this was first created, there is no doubt that the Manitoba Health Services Commission was an independent corporation the same as the Telephones, and so on, because it had its own revenue, that's what changed it, because now all the cost is paid from a consolidated fund and there is very little revenue, some revenue, but there's no premium, no revenue, and they can't come back to the Cabinet to change.

Now, I felt, and for the Minister's information, I felt that it was working well, because there are still certain areas — and that's certainly up to the Minister. As I say, when I started in this House, there was a line that wasn't debatable at all; we passed it. There was one line, the Manitoba Health Services Commission, so many millions of dollars, and that was it. There was no discussion, no information, nothing at all. You had to guess, and sometimes there were a few questions asked, but not too many. Now, I think that, especially the way it is going now, if the Chairman, being also the Chief Executive Officer of the Committee reporting to the Minister as such, not necessarily as Chairman of the Board — I think it is a way to realize the Minister can't hide; he has responsibilities, because they are the ones that decide on the revenue, but there is still a lot of the way to let the Commission act on its own, to bring certain recommendations, because then you're going to have this political partisan — I should say there's a very good temptation that you're going to have partisan decisions as to where the hospitals and personal care homes should go. This, I can assure my honourable friend, this was never done in the days that I was there, and I'm sure in the days before that, because that is something that we relied on the Commission and the staff of the Commission. And then we had to decide, mind you, how much money if we were going to go that much, but if we said, all right, the maximum we can put in for a five-year construction plan is that, what are your priorities? And I'm not saying that — (Interjection)— Yes, the Commission members decided.

Now, I asked my honourable friend about the Task Force recommendation, and he gave me the same answers as he had when we discussed the department. I accepted that when we were dealing with the department but I can't accept them today, because it seems quite obvious to the general public and to me, Mr. Chairman, that there is already a decision made. Either the Commission is going to disappear very fast, or it's going to become a rubber stamp, a joke, because my information is that there has been just very few, if any, meetings since October 11th, and how can the Minister then stand up and say, "Well, I'm keeping the status quo"? That is not the case at all. The Minister chose, for instance, to go to Snow Lake and make a decision on his own, also with his Cabinet member. And I'm not talking about staff now, when I say the Commission. I'm talking about the Board, the people that are supposed to run that; they haven't done a thing since there has been a change of government.

And the Minister, when we deal — I expect to ask him that question — with hospital budget

and personal care homes, I'm sure they didn't recommend 2.9 percent; I'm sure they didn't. I'm not talking about the staff, I'm talking about the Commission proper; that is something that I can't understand, and I certainly intend to chastise the Minister on that. I can't see why — is it this same thing, that the government changes, and everything has to stop, everything has to start over again; this is not the way it was done before, and this is not the way . . . this is going to be real dangerous in any democratic country, whenever you have an election, if you have to start from scratch again. That seems to be the line here, that nothing can be done and everybody that's on every Board, if he was nominated by the former administration, there is something wrong. You've had people that have devoted themselves, devoted a lot of time, and have taken these questions very seriously, and all of a sudden they are completely ignored, such as the Advisory Committee on Fitness and Amateur Sports that my friend the Minister inherited from us. And I say that this is unfortunate. The more this is done, the more it will be done, because people being human beings, when there is a change of government, they'll say, "Well gosh, we've been waiting for four years;" and I even hear some of our supporters talking like this and saying, "Don't forget, eh, they were smart, that's what we've been telling you to do." Well, I don't think that's smart, and I don't regret the way I handled my department; the people that I selected to do certain jobs, if they weren't supporters of a party, because it's have the job done, that's the main thing.

The decision of course, comes from the politicians, and they're the ones that were elected. I think that has to be reflected. I don't say that you're not going to have somebody in Planning — for instance, I'm sure that if Dr. Tulchinsky had been with us, that the Minister wouldn't have had him and I don't blame him in a case like this. When somebody is openly and going along on a certain principle, when they're pushing too much, I can understand. I want to be realistic. Well that doesn't mean that it's *carte blanche* that everybody that has worked — some of them have been there before, were named by a former administration — is useless. I think that's very dangerous, and I remember reading interviews that the Minister had, where he said, "We will not only represent our supporters, we represent the Liberals and the Conservatives that voted for us and all the people of Manitoba," and that's true. —(Interjection)— I beg your pardon? Well, I forgot about Jake, but I haven't seen him for a long time .

So, Mr. Chairman, there is one thing I can't understand; it seems that a decision must be made because the Commission is non-existent for all intents and purposes, not meeting, and the Minister is dealing directly with staff. I can assure the Minister before he goes on a witch hunt again, that I haven't talked to anybody on the staff, not a single one; I am staying away from them completely. But I don't think it's a secret that the Commission hasn't been meeting and I don't think it's a secret that the Minister, I think, might have met once with them. But did he discuss — that's their job — did he discuss this 2.9 percent, this 4.4 percent, with that Commission? Did he? Mr. Chairman, that's what the Commission is all about. You know, you can have a new government that's going to make a big thing out of it, "This is what we're going to do," without experience at all, knowing nothing about the field of health. Sure they have a mandate, but where do these figures come from? And that might be a time, either now — I can assure the Minister that I am going to ask this question, where's the rationale for an increase of 2.9 for the hospitals? Was that something that the Commissioner told him, that the staff, that the MMA that he was going to deal with, that the nurses, the boards of hospitals, the administrators of hospitals — where did we get that 2.9? Nobody seems to know. There is nobody that claims any credit for it, so I don't know. Sure the Minister is going to, I would imagine, have some kind of reason why the Commission didn't meet. I am not saying that the Minister did not meet with them, that is something else. They could make recommendations; the Chairman is on his staff. I'm not suggesting that he had to meet with them; it would have been nice, but I am asking why they have been discouraged in having their regular monthly meetings, because I understand that this has been the case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, essentially the statements of the Honourable Member for St. Boniface stand. I haven't had all that many meetings with the Board since I assumed office, and the Board itself has not met perhaps as frequently as it did in the past. I have had two meetings, or partial meetings, with members of the Board, and the Commissioners themselves have met as a Board three times since the new government was sworn in; once in December, once in April, and once in May, and they have a meeting scheduled for this month of June. Over and against that, I can tell the Honourable Member for St. Boniface, that I couldn't even begin to estimate, not even begin to estimate, the number of meetings that I have had with the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Edwards; with the Director of the Planning Division, Mr. Getz; with other officials of the Commission. Those meetings would run into the, well, without exaggerating, Mr. Chairman, they would run into the dozens; they might even come to a hundred. And when the honourable member asked me through what process did we hammer out the 2.9 percent, 4.4 percent budget

positions, it was through that process plus through the Estimates process within the Executive Council itself.

Some specific issues of far reaching import, have been left with the Commissioners, have been left with the Board; they have not been made as decisions between the Chairman and myself and my colleagues in Executive Council. They are still in the hands of the Board, and I'm waiting guidance from them. One has to do with the prioritization and price tagging of the component parts of the Renovation Program for the Health Sciences Centre, and there are two or three other issues of that kind that are in the Commissioners' hands. But the budgetary process was worked largely through the sources to which I have referred, and I think that in a government changeover year, particularly in a year when the government was coming into office saying that its essential initial thrust was going to be restraint, that there probably was no other way of doing it. I don't think it could have been otherwise, because I don't think that the Commissioners would address themselves to the same parameters, and the same imperatives that a newly elected government would in an area such as that. And I don't say that in a critical manner. I think that the perspectives from which the Commissioners would approach fiscal problems in 1978-79, and the perspectives from which a newly elected restraint oriented government would approach those questions for 1978-79, would necessarily be different. So I think we followed the course of action that circumstances dictated we had to follow, but the Board is still there and I'm still looking for some direction from the Board on a number of current questions.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I don't buy that at all. That's just an excuse, that's running around and talking without any reason to offer at all. I'm not talking about the Minister in meeting with the staff of the Manitoba Health Services Commission. I don't doubt his words at all; that is not the point. I'm talking about referring certain things to the Commission. Now the Minister said, "Yes, they are prioritizing this thing at the Health Sciences Centre." They were doing that already; that has been done; there is a committee doing that. And the Minister is saying, "Well, this is a new year; we're the government that says we have to cut, and therefore we're not taking advantage of the Commission." I think that's ridiculous. I think that's more reason why you should, especially when you come in new. You don't do a thing about Health; you've got to have somebody to try to help you, somebody that is working — as a mandate you do exactly that. That doesn't prevent the government from saying, "This is how much money we're going to put in." The Commission will argue certain things, will make recommendations, debate and try to make their point, but the minute that the Minister speaks for the government of the day, tells them there's no new programs in the hospital, that's it, that's final, that's not debatable. That is not up to the Commission because they must draw their money from the government, and if the government says we're going to have a freeze on personal care homes, that's it.

You know, you can't help if somebody feels that this is wrong in a free country. They might resign, or they might go and see the Minister and say, "You're making a mistake, but we'll go along; it is not up to them to decide." But certainly, Sir, it is up to them. If there's only a certain amount of money, it's not up to the government as long as you have a Commission, especially here, to say — you know, to try to play games, call the press and say, "I'm going to Snow Lake; come with me," and then make a big announcement after it, saying that there was a complete freeze, and after saying that, no amount of pressure would change anything for the government to select one. I am not doubting that this was an emergency but I'm saying there are many others as far as the recommendations of the Commission that were given the former government.

And I'm saying that these are the kinds of games that will be played now if there's not a Commission. If the Minister said, "All right, we want to handle that ourselves as other governments have done," I would hope that it wouldn't be necessary but I'm saying that in effect this has been done now. I'm talking about meetings with a Commission. There is the Commission in which it would be exactly the same as if the Minister responsible for the telephone would come in and say, "Well no, we discourage meetings because it's a new government and we're going to have restraint, so therefore we're going to talk to the Chairman directly and we don't need a Board." You know, this is certainly not acceptable because there has been a change of government, that the Commission should meet. It's exactly the opposite, because the new Minister, any Minister, the most intelligent person in the world, especially one whose background has not been in the Health field, needs a certain time to learn and he must get advice from whoever he can get it, especially with people that are dedicated to study these things, who are familiar with the budgets of the different hospitals, because any appeal came to the Commission before it went to the government. You know, the Minister has chosen to forget the Commission, and right now, I don't think he can deny that; this is his right, but let's not play games, let's call a spade a spade. In effect, the Commission doesn't exist. You've got a Chairman that is now a Deputy-Minister, the equivalent of a Deputy-Minister, and I'm not saying that's bad. I'd prefer the other way; I think it was working well; it might be something that could change in any year and I'm not going to be that critical of the government

if they change that.

I think there are certain safeguards, although the main thing is, Mr. Chairman, is that the Commission is so dependent on the government, because all the funds come from the government. It's not like in the old days where all the funds of hospitals and health care, Medicare, were covered in the fees for the premiums, and then the government would have the Chairman of the Commission come to see the Minister and say, "Okay, this is what we see for this year; this is for the construction, this is what we have to do, it will cost so much, we'll have to increase the premium, that's exactly what the Telephone Company is doing. And then the government could authorize that increase or say no, and you've got to cut down, and then we're out of it, and it worked well. It worked well, there has been some change and I might say that it was very independent under the former Conservative Government, no criticism at all. You know, this would change gradually because the day that we said, there's no premiums, and it all comes from the Consolidated Fund, — well then there is no way is the hypocrisy to say to the Commission that they have the last word to decide when they are going to deal with the medical profession, and when they will deal with the budgets of the hospitals.

So there was closed contact, but always discussion with the Commission, and the Commission certainly didn't waste their time. They had special meetings and they certainly had a meeting at least once a month except maybe during the summer months. And you know, it's done, we aren't going to cry over that forever, but I think that that was a bad mistake and I certainly do not accept the reason. I think the Minister just didn't want to discuss with the Commission, and that was it, it's certainly not because they couldn't advise the Minister.

The Minister says that he worked with staff. Well, you know, you can't do that. When you work with staff you accept full responsibility, you don't say that staff told me that 2.9 — I don't believe that staff said that. I don't believe a damn bit of that, I'll never believe that because I've worked with staff too. They come in, but they are civil servants, and they should not get the credit or the blame for anything. They should get the credit if they're good workers and no doubt they are, the Minister I'm sure would agree to that, and I certainly do. I have nothing but respect for the people that work at the Commission. So it's not criticism of them.

But it's not going to wash if the Minister is going to come in when we're going to talk about the hospitals and say 2.9. Of course I had many meetings with the Commission. The Commission if they are told you've got to cut down, that's what they are going to do, and the full responsibility should come to the government and the Minister.

When you are talking about a Commission, it is something else. The Commission might say that the Commission would deal somewhat like the hospitals, I would imagine, if the Minister said, "Well, all right, there is only going to be 2.9, that's all you get," they might question him and ask him if they have any backbone at all, they'd say, "Well, where did you get that?" And if they feel that it can't be done, they'll tell him, but they probably will end up in saying, "Well, you were elected, you have the mandate, we will try." And they will try, the same as the hospitals tried, and I don't think anybody can accuse any hospitals of not trying to live with the 2.9 percent, but now I would imagine that the first month, the month of April is up and I would like to see the deficit that they have. And I said to the Minister, "I will say it now, and I'll repeat it, that there is no way that they will live with 2.9, it's just impossible."

I think that they've tried, and all credit to the hospitals, that they've tried to keep the standards, but no doubt that the standards have suffered already, but not as much as they should if they have to go along, and especially when the Minister made — and I don't want to belabour this at this time, because I have a lot to say when we get into the hospitals and personal care homes — so maybe I should leave this at this time.

But I might say to the Minister and the government that I'm not satisfied with the way they treated that Commission. The decision might as well be made, and I can't see that all of a sudden, if they had no confidence in them when they needed them the most, when they first formed the government and they knew nothing, nothing about health at all, and it's obvious by some of their statements. I say this not because of the party, any party, very few parties have people that really know the situation. Where would you get somebody like that? You might have a doctor who might have some thing, and the doctor probably would be the worst Minister of Health, they don't choose a doctor anymore for the Minister of Health. He would have certain advantages, but a doctor is not trained as an administrator, he's trained to take care of people and it doesn't mean that because he is a doctor that he should know how many beds there are more than my friend the Minister.

I'm sure the Minister is very diligent and he is going to learn, and I have no doubt that if he can become a little more human and forget these dollar signs and look at the needs, then he'll be a damn good Minister, but in the meantime he knew nothing about that. He was a P.R. man, and he was a media man, an editor, a good one, and he became the Minister and he knew very little about it.

MR. ENNS: He's a find baseball player.

MR. DESJARDINS: Oh, I'm sure I could strike him out any day of the week, I never knew he was a ball player. —(Interjection)— I know you're a tiddly-wink player, I know that, but I didn't know he was a baseball player.

Well, Mr. Chairman, as I say we'll come back to the hospitals and that 2.9 percent, but I regret that the Minister didn't see fit to at least go through the motion until he's made a decision on the Commission. Let these people have their meeting, not necessarily that the Minister had to be present at every meeting — that's not what I said — he might have misunderstood me when he said I met with them, I know that he hasn't got time to meet, at least he doesn't have to be and he shouldn't be at all these meetings. But they had a policy committee of their own, in their own group, but they brought certain things, some of the things that they brought up to the Minister and the Minister was referring things back to them, and they were very diligent, they worked hard, and I think all in all they serve Manitoba real well, and all of a sudden, you know, there's going to be all these changes and all these things. They don't figure at all. I think that's wrong, Mr. Chairman.

I have a question before I sit down on this. Has the settlement been finished, can we have a progressive report and if the Minister hasn't got it now maybe he can get it later on. What is the state of the owner's equity, the 20 percent? The Commission was reviewing that, there was legislation brought in a few years ago where this money was going to go back to the municipalities if they hadn't paid it, or if they had borrowed to pay it, including the City of Winnipeg, so I wonder if sometime during these Estimates we can have a progressive report on that?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would just like to say for the record that I recognize the service that the Commission has given, and the members of the Commission, the Commissioners that currently comprise the Board. I recognize it and I thank them for it. I would say, though, that circumstances change with different governments and different Ministers, and I think that, you know, the Honourable Member for St. Boniface approaches this thing from the perspective of when he was Minister and in fact when he became Minister, and the circumstances are quite different from what they were when I became Minister. He came out of the Commission, he had been the Chairman of the Health Services Commission, he came into a government whose policies were pretty well set, pretty well established, and I daresay he found it very practical to work with the Commission Board as it was then constituted.

I came into the job as a new Minister with a new government and I can assure him, that as much as the Board wanted to be a help to me, they weren't really in a position to be terribly much of a help to me because everybody wanted to see the Minister. All the Boards of all the health facilities and all the hospitals, they didn't want to deal with the Commission, they'd been dealing with the Commission, they wanted to deal with the new Minister, and in order to try to at least learn as quickly as I could some of the rudiments of the job, I did go through a very intensive process of meeting with them all. And so the circumstances were really different. I couldn't just turn to the Commission Board and say, "You handle it," because the hospital boards wanted to see the new Minister.

As far as the question that my honourable friend raises, 55 to 58, we are dealing with that subject, particularly with respect to the old Concordia site, the old Concordia property. It's not resolved yet, but I'm in consultation with the City of Winnipeg on it right now, Mr. Chairman, and we recognize the obligation. There is some question as to the market value of the site, that I think probably has to be negotiated pretty carefully. At the present time, we are carrying an operating expense of between \$45,000 and \$50,000 a year on the property, simply for care and safekeeping and maintenance of the old Concordia site and building. But once we reach a negotiated settlement on the market value of the site, then I am sure that the whole question will be quickly resolved.

The government has resolved the question with respect to a number of hospital properties in other parts of the province, particularly throughout rural Manitoba. As the honourable member knows, it's just a question of these properties in the City that hasn't been entirely resolved, but we know that we have an obligation there and we will meet it, we're talking to the City about it right now.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I wasn't trying to find fault with the government on this, and I'm not satisfied with the answer. I wonder if the Minister, he singled out Concordia as a problem, what I want is and maybe the Minister can request the Chairman of the Commission to have some documents ready for the next time we meet, not necessarily this evening, but tomorrow, just a progressive thing. You know, if they were all settled, if there was only one or two, if there's only

Concordia fine, if not, how much do we owe, what's the score, then we can have a very short time? It's just a progressive report that I want.

But, Mr. Chairman, I can't let this other thing go, not with the added words of the Minister, because I think he is getting in deeper and deeper. You know, we can argue, everybody can have the last word. The Minister said that it was a different situation because I had been the Chairman of the Commission, and maybe I appreciated the Commission more. Well, I wasn't the first — I'm talking about the change of government to start with — I wasn't the first Minister in this government when this party took over, it was the Member for Inkster and then it was Mr. Toupin, and then it was my colleague to the right here, and myself. And you know, those things don't change, any time there's a new Minister even in the same government, a group of people want to see the new Minister, especially those that aren't satisfied. They think, well, here's our chance, there's a new Minister — it's so obvious — the minute that you are named to a post the requests that you get for meetings. Well, that has nothing to do with it at all, and at no time did the former government just say to the Commission, "Here, you decide, you have the last word, don't come back to me and don't bother me." That is not the way it's done either, and that is not what I'm suggesting at all. You know, the Minister can be meeting every day with 22 different groups if he wants, that doesn't prevent the Commission from going through. The Minister said that they were protecting the status quo, it doesn't prevent the Commission from meeting and doing their work.

And when I became the Minister, although I wasn't the first Minister, there is no doubt that every hospital in Winnipeg wanted to see me, and I went over and met with the directors of all of them, many many times, but that didn't prevent the Commission, if there was a request that there was something that they might have accused the Commission and the Commission wasn't being fair, well I went to the Commission, I didn't go over the Commission's head and ignore them, which is even worse. I met with these people, I think that certainly if the Minister, I'm not faulting him, it's the last thing I would do is fault him for meeting with somebody that wants to meet with him.

You know it's the same thing, the Minister responsible for the Telephones can say the same thing. The Hydro could be the same thing, but you have a Crown Corporation that has a certain mandate, maybe the Minister should start by reading the Acts, and they have a certain responsibility. And as I said, Mr. Chairman, I said right from day one, before I am reminded by the Minister that it is up to the present government to decide if they are going to go ahead with the Commission. I think that there is certain value, I think it's going to keep you honest, and I think that it's going to take partisan politics out of it. When you start dealing with individual hospitals and personal care homes, and the choice and prioritize, I think it's going to be because if the government does it on its own, well then there's going to be partisan. . . There is no doubt, it doesn't matter what government there is.

So, Mr. Chairman, I'm not debating the right, I'm incensed because the Minister might not think that the Commission has any value. Whatever he decides and the government decides, that's there business, the same as it was ours during our days. I understand that, but the Minister got up and said, "I am not ready; that's one thing I want to know more about. . . I know that the Task Force said certain things, but it would be ridiculous . . ." — the same speech he made on the department. And he said, "I want to know more, I want to take my time; I want to make sure; then I'll make the decision." "But," he says, "in the meantime, we'll keep the status quo, "and that's not true. For all intents and purposes, the commissioner and the commission doesn't exist; either the commission is going down and it will be just like a division of the department. Yes, it is one of the recommendations of the Task Force, or the Minister is so paranoid about having people that are named by the past government that he's waiting for their time to go, and then they'll be thrown out, somebody else will come in, and then they'll go to work. And this is the part that I think is certainly wrong, between governments, if that is the case, because you have no continuity at all; you don't take advantage of the things that were done, and there's no government that leaves that's all bad. Even the former government wasn't all bad, Mr. Chairman. It must surprise you — it must surprise many members of the House, but it wasn't all bad, and it didn't have that many horror stories, or fat, or abuse, and so on.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am ready to let it go, but I think that the reason of the Minister is certainly no reason to — and as I say, we might have in a couple of days or so, a progressive report of the 20 percent owner's equity.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister .

MR. SHERMAN: On the owner's equity, Mr. Chairman, the total liability that we took over was \$22 million, in liabilities of municipalities generally, including \$8 million for Winnipeg. The total liability in Winnipeg was \$8 million, and \$2.3 million of that relates to the Concordia, the old Concordia. —(Interjection)— Pardon?

MR. DESJARDINS: Are you paying them for Concordia when they didn't put any money in at all, or what? Or are you taking over the Concordia site then? I hope they're not having it both ways?

MR. SHERMAN: This is the whole thing that's under negotiation with the City right now —(Interjection)— The amount, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. SAUL MILLER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have listened to the Minister explaining some of his comments. I feel perhaps the key sentence he used is when he said that the essential initial thrust of the government was restraint, and that was his justification for bypassing the Commission, because he really did feel the Commission members couldn't be expected to undertake that restraint, and that his government, as he views it, was elected on the basis of restraint. I believe also that his government was elected on the basis that they would retain services, and what we are seeing, therefore, is one part of the equation being operative; the restraint. A restraint that's crippling the service and denied till the cows come home, in this House. The fact is that out there, the people in the system, the people who work in the hospitals, the people that try to make it run, the patients that have to go in there, the service is being crippled, it is being hurt, it's being down-graded, because this Minister says that he perceived the mandate to introduce restraints, not the other part of the equation which was restraints, but maintaining services, because they thought they were going to find these tens of millions of dollars floating around which, of course, we knew weren't there. Now he knows it too, I suppose, but that doesn't deter him from introducing policies, budgets, estimates, of a 2.9 percent increase, which is totally irrational in light of the fact that hospitals have costs which reflect the lower dollar value, because a lot of their materials have to come from the United States, so they're faced with that; the need to replace equipment every year in a hospital; they're faced with that, at a much higher cost, and he's coming in with a 2.9.

Mr. Chairman, I think that sentence, more than any other, really is the tip-off to what has happened this year. That Minister, and that Cabinet's concept of what their role is. Their role is, and he's said it in another context, but it applies now: "Cost first, need second. We're going to cut, and if we happen to cripple these services, well, so be it. They'll get over it somehow. If we make a shambles out of the service, well, that's too bad." Now, why on earth, if they wanted to make changes, and changes are always in order, then you look at what's happening; you look at the system; you say, "There's a better way of doing it; we'll introduce the other system," but very often you have to have two parallel systems, or two parallel programs going on, until one can take over from the other. You just don't lop it off at the knees, which is what the Minister is saying and what the Minister has actually done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with the Administration of the Health Services Commission, and I'd like to know the Minister's instructions to the Commission in regard to certain aspects of the operation. For example, apparently hospitals are now on a global basis rather than a previous procedure —(Interjection)— Global, yes the global funding, but what I want to get clear is whether or not the hospitals are being paid on an occupied bed basis; that is, per bed per day — per occupied bed per day — or is it based on the general budget submitted by the hospital? The Minister has refused to accepted responsibility for the internal management of hospitals on the basis of saying, "Well, we gave them so many dollars and it's up to them to work it out." I want to know the extent to which the Minister has instructed the Health Services Commission to get involved, and the nature of the delivery of the services in the light of the reduction in costs. Can he just answer as to whether or not there are instructions given in that respect?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the situation with respect to the hospitals is that their position is based on a general budget, a general budgetary figure, divided by 24 semi-monthly payments. It's not based on the number of occupied beds; it's based on the operating budget in the hospital field, and where it stood with the increase applied for this year, superimposed and added on to that. At the present time we have asked for, and there are coming in, responses and submissions from the various health facilities, hospitals and personal care homes, to the Commission to detail their posture and their response with respect to the budgets and the budget limitations with which they've been asked to operate, to show us what they can do and what they can't do; what they can do and how they're doing it; what they propose to do; what they've considered doing. We want that response from them so that they and the Commission and my department can examine the steps

being taken and the stringencies being imposed in order to determine that proper services are being carried out and that the budget limitations will not impact on standards, and particularly on the quality of patient care.

When this review is complete, I'll know better, just precisely what the government, my department and the Commission may be able to do to ensure that those standards that might appear in these initial reports to be impinged upon, are maintained without difficulty. We want to ensure that those standards can be maintained, and we may have to make some adjustments, but that exercise isn't completed yet.

Now, as far as the remarks of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks, he says to me that restraint is crippling the health facilities out there, and he said the Minister can deny it till the cows come home in this House — I believe that was his actual quotation. Well, I want to say to my honourable friend from Seven Oaks, that he can continue to say what he's saying till the cows come home in this House. He can continue to cry that restraint is crippling these facilities; he can continue to say that, to misquote and distort and misrepresent the position that I put when I was talking about the Capital Construction Program in the health field, in which I said we would be measuring the costs and we would be measuring the downstream costs before anything else because of the requirement to ensure that the taxpayers could afford to maintain the facilities and the programs that we have in place now. So, he can continue to distort that position till the cows come home in this House, but it doesn't happen to be true.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I said what I said, and I'm not going to back away from it. There have been instances brought up in this House, and there's enough information around this community now, to know that in fact the hospital boards are being forced to curtail services in various ways; in their maintenance, in their services to people. They're doing it; I brought up a case the other day, at the Misericordia Hospital, where they simply discontinued the Psychiatric Day Care Program, and they are on record as indicating by letter that they didn't want to do it, but they have no choice, because the so-called flexibility the Minister gave them with 2.9 percent isn't worth a damn. If you haven't got sufficient funds, if you are given one meal a day, and say, "You can eat it in the morning, or the afternoon or at dinner, and call it lunch, breakfast or supper," it's still only one meal a day. So, there's lots of flexibility; I can call it a midnight snack, too, but it's still only one meal a day. And Mr. Chairman, the Minister can argue that they want to review — and certainly, they should review at all times — but the way to have done it, with a modicum of sense and reality, without taking it out on people, is to review something and after review find that a better way could be found, or certain inconsistencies are there, or certain unnecessary costs are there, then you change it. You don't cut it off and say, "We're reviewing it, and we'll see. If it's terrible, if it's very bad, maybe we'll then do something about it." They didn't even say that. But to simply say, "It's 2.9; live with it; it's up to you," is abdicating the responsibility. The Minister cannot get up in this House as he has persistently and said, "We gave them a budget; it's up to them; we don't want to get involved or we don't want to dictate to them." I am saying to the Minister that he cannot hide behind that sort of statement.

I recall when we brought in a budget of 8 percent for hospitals there was a hue and cry that the hospitals would have difficulties, and it was also a global budget. But compare 8 percent to 2.9; it's ludicrous in this day and age. So to me, the response by the Minister reinforces what I've said; he says he wants a review, that's fine, then introduce changes after review; don't introduce a change, such a vicious type of change, of cutting a budget down to 2.9 percent increase and give the excuse of "We're reviewing it." In the process of review people are being hurt. The health services are being damaged; they're not able to deliver on the same basis they have in the past.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In accordance with Rule 19, Section (2) I am interrupting the proceedings for Private Members' Hour, and will return at the call of the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSON: I might just point out to the honourable members that arrangements have been made that we'll be dealing with one bill only, and that would be Bill No. 18. I understand that the Member for Brandon East attaches some urgency to this particular piece of legislation and we'd like to deal with it. Well, there will be a debate on it, I am sure, because there is not — well, I shouldn't speak for honourable members, but — (Interjection) — It's not likely that we will, no.

BILL NO. 18 — AN ACT TO AMEND THE BRANDON CHARTER

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. ARNOLD BROWN: Mr. Speaker, I stood this bill for the Member for Brandon West, the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, I was not in the House when this bill was introduced by the Member for Brandon East, but I am aware of the circumstances which led up to the bringing to the attention of the Legislature an urgent problem that has developed in the Brandon community, which relates particularly to the supply of mobile home sites.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill specifically brings to the attention of the Legislature a desire of the City of Brandon to acquire by annexation, or by some means, an area of some 40 acres of land that is adjacent to the present boundaries of the City of Brandon, but which now is part of the Municipality of Cornwallis. The particular area is of importance because it is adjacent to a present mobile home site, which requires to provide more mobile home sites for its customers and for those who have applied to it for sites for the mobile homes which they now possess.

Mr. Speaker, the hope was that this matter might have been resolved by the two municipal governments involved, that is the City of Brandon and the Municipality of Cornwallis. It was the feeling of people who were familiar with the problem that if this matter could somehow be resolved, this dispute could somehow be resolved and that there could be agreement reached between the City of Brandon and the Municipality of Cornwallis, and that the developments could have gone ahead in time to accommodate the people who now are urgently needing additional sites.

Mr. Speaker, the matter was brought to the attention of the Municipal Board and without dealing in any specific details with the decision of that Board, the Board ruled that they would not approve an annexation of a parcel of land from the Municipality of Cornwallis by the City of Brandon, because in effect this was only necessary through the failure of the City of Brandon over the past number of years to accurately provide for a need that was fast developing in this particular area.

Mr. Speaker, the whole matter has changed somewhat in its complexity since the holding of the hearing by the Municipal Board, and not that in any way the circumstances which now have occurred have in any way relieved the City of failure to provide for this need over the past number of years and to plan for the development of mobile homes in general, which is occurring all across the country.

I might say, in defence of the City of Brandon, that they are not the only civic government that has failed to provide good planning in relation to mobile home sites. They are certainly amongst many such communities across the country who for one reason or another have not felt it important to set aside or to zone areas for the development of mobile home parks. Now, they and other communities are caught up in a rapidly expanding development and one that appears to be at least a partial answer to the growing need for living accommodation in our country, and with the greatly increasing cost of conventional types of private residential accommodation there becomes a greater and greater pressure on the market for mobile homes and the desire of people to seek this kind of accommodation as more affordable than the conventional type of construction.

Mr. Speaker, we have reached now a circumstance where after having had this proposed expansion rejected by the Municipal Board, that another mobile home park in the City of Brandon has been decommissioned and the present residents have been told to remove their homes by June 30th of this month. They are in a very difficult situation, Mr. Speaker, because there is only one alternative site within the City of Brandon, I am told, where there are still sites available. But even those are not available to all of the residents of the present mobile home park, which is being decommissioned because their trailers do not meet the rather high standards of the operator of the park which has sites available. So perhaps one-quarter of those that are now having to find new homes, new sites, are not able to take the one area which is available.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this is a matter where it would be of benefit to the members of the House to hear the representations of those directly concerned and in view of the deadline which some of them are facing on June 30th, it would be a helpful move to get this bill into Committee in order that that those representations might be heard.

I say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that I do not in any way feel that the City is entirely blameless in this matter and as I have said there should have been adequate planning and there should have been sites zoned and made available for development in this area so that the kind of emergency that these people are facing now would not have occurred. Nevertheless it has occurred. I think

it has become somewhat more urgent since the Municipal Board made its ruling, because of the decision more recently to close down a whole mobile home park area in Brandon, and to reduce the sites available. What we need is an expansion of sites. I feel that it is regrettable that Cornwallis and the City of Brandon could not have reached an agreement which would have been mutually satisfactory.\$

The area which they are now requesting, that is the City of Brandon is requesting of the municipality, is smaller than that which was considered by the Municipal Board. I believe the present request is for something in the neighbourhood of 40 acres, 37 acres, and that the original request was 83 acres.

I am prepared, Mr. Speaker, to recommend to you and to the House that we move this bill along to Committee in order to receive the representations of those directly concerned and to make sure that we have all of the facts that relate to this matter, and to ensure as best we can that we do not delay a decision any longer than is necessary.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I have nothing further to add at this time, except I would hope that the House would deal with the matter as expeditiously as possible and send the bill to Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: I have a question. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister knows whether Cornwallis objects because they don't want mobile homes on that land, or is it a question that they don't want Brandon simply to expropriate them, to acquire that extra land?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, to deal with the member's question one has to perhaps recall the circumstances of the Brandon Boundary Bill that came before this House, and came before the Committee, in 1971 I believe or 1972, I am not clear, in which there was a rather major change in the boundaries of Brandon and as a result of which the relationships between the City of Brandon and the Municipality of Cornwallis were somewhat less than cordial. That difficulty, I believe, has persisted to the present time. I think, however, one has to be very fair to the Municipality of Cornwallis to say that they did try very hard to come to some agreement with the City of Brandon in respect to this particular property, but there were terms and stipulations laid down by the Municipality of Cornwallis in which they asked the City to accept in return for their approval of the annexation, and one or two of the terms, I believe, the City found to be constitutionally perhaps beyond their powers to grant. I cannot deal with those matters in precise detail, but I believe that the municipality asked the City of Brandon to guarantee the development of certain properties for mobile home sites within a certain period of time, and the present administration in the City were advised by their council that it would be not possible for that council to grant such a requirement for a period of years beyond which they might normally be responsible.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak briefly to this matter because I think there is an important principle at stake in considering the position that the Legislature will take in either approving or disapproving of this Private Member's bill.

Certainly it will come as no surprise to members of this House with more experience than I that these matters and disputes between the towns and the cities and the surrounding rural municipalities are very contentious matters and there have been quite a number of them that have come to my attention in the past seven months, that under the terms of The Municipal Act have been referred to the Municipal Board for their report and recommendations. I think this change was made in the legislation some time back in 1976, establishing the Municipal Board as the forum and the arbiter of these disputes in the determination of what amount of any land shall be annexed and the terms thereof, and the compensation to be provided.

In this we have here, Mr. Speaker, a particular case and in considering which way we should vote in this matter, I think we should be very careful to define the reasons for which we shall either approve or disapprove of this bill. Because, Mr. Speaker, I would not like to see it as a general rule that whenever the Municipal Board makes a recommendation against annexation, that a Private Member's bill will be introduced in the Legislature. Although, of course, that is not something which anyone can stop, but there should be some rationale in considering this matter.

I point out that in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, I think there is justification for the approval of this Private Member's bill. The order of the Municipal Board expressly pointed out that there was a need for mobile home space that was evident to them, and in their conclusion pointed out

if there be any justification at all for the proposed annexation, it must arise out of need and need alone, by reason of there being no appropriately zoned land at the present time within the confines of the City of Brandon, which would offer a greater choice of accommodation for mobile homes. Mr. Speaker, in all of the annexation matters that have come before me since last fall, there has been no similar case, or one that is close to it at all. Even in March of this year, Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the municipalities involved, attempting to persuade them to resolve their differences between themselves. As a result of this letter, a resolution was passed by the R.M. of Cornwallis agreeing to a limited annexation and as the Member for Brandon West has pointed out, the area that we are now considering in this bill is substantially smaller than that contained in the original application for annexation, which was 80-some acres, and this, I believe, is approximately 37 acres.

But in that resolution passed by the R.M. of Cornwallis, even they recognized the necessity of establishment of a mobile home park. However, they passed the resolution, subject to a number of conditions which are impossible for the City of Brandon to fulfill; the City of Brandon simply as a municipal corporation can't comply with those conditions of the R.M. of Cornwallis. But I think, Mr. Speaker, by passing that resolution they have recognized a special need and although their conditions seem to be directed towards the City of Brandon fulfilling a commitment to ensure that this property is used for the purpose of mobile home parks, I would take the personal view that even though it's not legally possible for the City of Brandon to comply with those conditions, that those conditions will be complied with, because they too recognize the special need which is the whole reason for the annexation and the private member's bill.

I have indeed, Mr. Speaker, some sympathy for the position of the residents of the mobile home park, because I think we too, even in the City of Winnipeg, at the present time, face an urgent need for the establishment of a mobile home park. Even in my own constituency in Osborne, a mobile home park is at the present time in the process of being closed. I, while a member of City Council, urged the Planning Committee of Council, the Environment Committee, to direct themselves to the establishment of mobile home parks; I think that will bear some fruit in the next short while. But I can sympathize a great deal with the position which the residents of the City of Brandon find themselves in, a situation which, as the Member for Brandon West pointed out, is even worse now than it was at the time of the Municipal Board order and recommendation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that certainly I am in favour of approving this bill, but I do it, Mr. Speaker, by establishing that there is a very special need in these particular circumstances, a need that is recognized in the Municipal Board Order by the City of Brandon and even by the R.M. of Cornwallis' resolution of Council in March of this year, and it is only on that basis, Mr. Speaker, that I will vote in favour of the bill on second reading and hear further representations of the Councils and citizens involved, and make it clear, Mr. Speaker, that there must be a special need demonstrated before I would in future vote for another Private Member's bill on any annexation, and in my experience in seven months, Mr. Speaker, I have not yet seen any other similar case that established such a special need.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce.

MR. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, Mr. Speaker, unlike my two colleagues, who have just spoken, can't support this particular bill. Mr. Speaker, I have to give credit where credit is due, and one of the credits I would like to give out today is to the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Member for Selkirk, when he made the provisions in the Act which allow the Municipal Board to deal with annexation problems. Having served on Municipal Council in rural Manitoba myself, I realize the animosities that build up between different municipalities that are involved in the annexation fight. I say fight, because it becomes a pretty heated battle. I think that we have entrusted the Municipal Board with this particular responsibility, we have established that as a principle, and that is the reasonable course of action that we should follow. I sympathize with the particular circumstances involved in this particular piece of legislation, but I think it sets a dangerous precedent that we, as members of the Legislature, will be asked again to deal with this problem should it arise in other jurisdictions. I realize that we are dealing with a very small piece of land; we're dealing with 40 acres, but I would ask the members in the Legislature to consider not only the fact that it is a small piece, but what is to stop somebody from Beausejour or Steinbach or Portage la Prairie coming in and saying, "I'd like to annex a 20 parcel piece of land to the town, and I want to establish a mobile home there." What assurance have we got that this particular facility will remain there as a mobile home park? Mr. Speaker, I think there are too many problems that will arise if we start dealing on an individual basis with every annexation problem in the Province of Manitoba. As I mentioned, I was happy to see that the Municipal Board was given that, and charged with that responsibility a number of years ago, and I feel that that is the proper authority and the proper body to deal with this particular problem.

The bill, as members have mentioned, does not make any substantive alterations to the borders of the two municipalities involved, however, I would just like to say it is a precedent; I know, as I mentioned, having been involved in the Town Council in Steinbach, and the R.M. of Hanover a while back, there are moves in that particular area to get involved in annexation of this nature again, out in my area, and I'm sure there's many other areas throughout the province that are dealing with this particular problem.

So I would, Mr. Speaker, urge that the members do not support this bill. I think it's setting a dangerous precedent; it's unfortunate in a case like this that the two municipalities couldn't get together; that, of course, is the best way to deal with these particular problems. But if indeed, as members have said, there are substantive changes in this bill compared to what was presented to the Municipal Board, I would urge that these changes then be put forth to the Municipal Board and have them decide on it and then adjudicate whether this particular annexation is in the best interests of Cornwallis and Brandon and the residents of that area, or whether or not it should stay the way it is.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I will be voting against the bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. ALBERT DRIEDGER: Mr. Speaker, I also would like to rise to speak in opposition to this bill. I realize, and appreciate the fact that we have a unique problem in the Brandon area regarding the trailer park there. My concern only is that the Municipal Board has been presented with facts and figures from both sides and has ruled against the annexation. By using this approach, and bringing in a Private Member's Bill, we are setting a precedent that regardless of whether the bill would pass later on or not, we will be faced with numerous — I think possibly a lot of members will be faced with bringing in Private Member's to this effect. Not only that, the validity of the ruling of the Municipal Board is being challenged here, and I know for a fact that within my constituency, the R.M. of Hanover, if this bill even goes to Committee stage, they will be coming up with a unique situation in their case, and ask me, or possibly the Minister of Industry and Commerce, to present a Private Member's Bill, if nothing else, just to have it debated at the Committee stage. I think we have to be very careful; if we do this, we'll be debating every annexation that is going to be taking place and that has taken place in the past. Basically, those are the comments I would like to make. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister responsible for Housing.

HON. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief on this bill. I am well aware of the consequences of a private bill of this nature, having been involved in municipal politics myself, mainly in the City of Winnipeg. Certainly I do have sympathy for the people that are living in that trailer park at the present time, and it is very obvious that if both parties believe that the extension should be there, and people who are in very dire straits at the present time should have some place to go to have shelter. As the Minister of Housing I assure you that I am very much concerned about the fact that trailer parks such as we have seen in other areas in Canada, well developed trailer parks, are not happening in this area. I think that the circumstances surrounding this particular one are such that we have to give it consideration. There is a Municipal Board, as my colleagues have said, but we are the highest court in Manitoba to make decisions for the benefit of the people of Manitoba, and if we have a group that are in a problem such as we have in Brandon at the present time, we should face up to it and have a look at it. But certainly, all members, on a Private Member's bill, can vote as they please.

But under those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I feel I will have to support the bill, because I believe there are people that have shelter, that could be in a position where they won't have shelter. I think both parties, Cornwallis and Brandon, really believe it should be there too, but I think it's come to the point where we have to make a decision in this room.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I feel that I should also comment on this particular bill, with our sister city of Brandon being a suburb of Minnedosa and Rapid City, which are the larger centres in my area. I am of two minds on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. I know the problems experienced by the municipalities, and the fears they have, those municipalities, that are adjacent to the bigger growth areas, the fears they have on annexation. They see their tax base being gradually eroded away or gobbled up by the larger areas with one annexation bill after another. I have some feelings of rulings that are made by Boards, and in this particular case the Municipal Board has sat in judgment of this particular case, but I also have feelings on decisions made by Boards that

sometimes, maybe, they could have a second look and possibly be changed, and as the Minister without Portfolio has mentioned, we are the highest court in the land on this particular case and it's within our powers to sit in judgment on this particular case. There is no question, the mobile home park is a popular one and the people there are certainly in need of the shelter that they have and entitled to it, and it would be a difficult decision to see them forced to move elsewhere.

However, I still haven't heard any strong arguments for and against the case from the particular people involved, and I mean the city and the Municipality of Cornwallis, but I suppose that there will be ample opportunity in Committee to look at the pros and cons of this particular bill. I feel that here is a good example where some previous knowledgeable and long-headed planning might have been of real benefit to the particular case, but as I say, Mr. Speaker, I felt that I should comment on it because it's one further instance of possibly a tax base being eroded away, and there are some dangers here, but in this particular case I really have no objections to the bill going to Committee when we can hear the arguments of the people concerned for and against it, and I would reserve judgment on my final vote, after I've heard the pros and cons of the particular people involved.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Selkirk.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a word or two in connection with this matter. As has been mentioned earlier, there has been a history of dispute involving the boundaries of the City of Brandon and Cornwallis, and I might say, not only Brandon and Cornwallis, but of course, we've had similar forms of disputes involving other municipalities. Reference was made to the Steinbach-Laverendrye dispute of 1972-73. Certainly there have also been disputes involving — if I may remind the Member for Sturgeon Creek, because I know he recalls it so well with such affection, the dispute involving the pipelines, the Town of Dauphin and the Rural Municipality of Dauphin. I believe we have heard the pros and cons there for a three or four-year period. It's true that we did think that when we inserted provisions in The Municipal Act providing for petition to the Municipal Board in the event of an annexation, that the Municipal Board would have at its disposal such technical facility that they would be able to deal with the particular request in a manner that would evidence deeper research than members of the Chamber would be able to do during the short period of time with limited facilities that would be available to us in the Chamber. And for that reason I recall that we did pass the provisions which are presently in The Municipal Act under Sections 20 to 22. I note that in this particular case, a petition has gone to the Municipal Board. The Municipal Board apparently has refused the petition and has provided reasons for its refusal. And then as is provided for under the Act, an appeal was made to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council who has seen fit to uphold the Municipal Board.

So we're really caught in a very difficult situation. The procedures have been followed and those procedures have not given the City of Brandon, as I understand, what they have been looking for. And therefore, the question arises as to whether or not we should permit the City of Brandon to appeal directly to the members of the Legislature. That of course is what we were trying to avoid when we inserted these provisions in The Municipal Act a few years ago, that it would be dealt with in a manner that would remove it from the somewhat shortened space of time, limited research, and sometimes a political heat that would be involved and which sometimes can interfere with proper professional judgment.

So that all that I would say to members, because I think I for one would be reluctant to see any body or group refused an opportunity to give a submission to the Legislature, all that I would say to members is that I think that in this particular case, we should okay approval to the Committee only to hear submissions. I do think though that the City of Brandon has a very, very heavy onus to overcome, since it has already been made very clear by the procedures that we've provided for, that they haven't been able to substantiate their claims, that a portion of Cornwallis should be annexed, and thus I do feel that they have a very, very heavy onus to discharge in Committee itself. And so I only leave that as a thought to Committee, but with some misgivings, because it seems that the provisions that we did introduce into the Act some years ago haven't been able to deal in every case and it may be that this is only one of a number of cases that have not been successfully dealt with in the past three or four years, so I would vote for the bill to go to Committee but with certainly very heavy foreboding of what I'm doing.

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

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be brief in my comments as well. I will indicate that I will support the bill to go to Committee as evidenced by the recommendations made by the Municipal Board at the time of hearing on the application for annexation. The Municipal Board did conclude that there was in fact a lack of planning, and a lack of, I would say, intestinal fortitude of the Council

of the City of Brandon, to proceed with their proposed development plan for that city which included, I believe, approximately between 40 and 50 acres of land that would provide adequate space for mobile home development, and Council did give First Reading to that development plan but did not proceed further with that proposal. There is no doubt as well, that there is, as was noted, within the Municipal Board hearing, a need — a very urgent need — within the Brandon area for adequate sites for a mobile home park. And only on that basis, Mr. Speaker, I would like to hear the representations made to Committee as to the necessity and the increased need that there exists today.

I have heard the comments of the Minister of Industry and Commerce, and certainly I would not want this bill to become the beginning of really the debating and the hearing process of the Municipal Board on every hearing of annexation that comes before the Board. Because if this bill in effect will become that measure, then we may as well tell the Municipal Board, "Go home, we don't require you, we will do the debating right here in this Chamber. " I don't think that is the desire, and the points that have been made by the Minister of Industry and Commerce and some of his colleagues, certainly I share that concern. So only on the basis of need, would I support this bill going to Committee. I would hope that Brandon Council and maybe the Department of Municipal Affairs could indicate how far the city has proceeded with their development plan which they gave First Reading to, I believe, in the spring of 1977; whether they have proceeded to adopt that development plan. Because if they have adopted that development plan, which did and does provide for adequate space for mobile home parks, then there likely may not be as urgent a need as exists today in the passage of this bill. I would like to know from the representations that they will make as to how they have proceeded with their development plan.

Certainly I believe that the Municipality of Cornwallis in its agreement with Brandon, insofar as when the first annexation took place, that they agreed that they would not have stripped development on the border of the City of Brandon; they would not allow that. And that is one of the reasons why they have disallowed the expansion of this very mobile home that wants to be now annexed to the City of Brandon because of that agreement. They felt they were committed to a development plan of the City of Brandon being developed in an orderly way, having adequate room for housing and for trailer parks, or whatever, and that they would not do as in many cases, where the rural municipality decides it wants to have development in its own area, and on the fringes of the urban setting; whether it be a town or a city, they will allow a development to go in, then before you know it two or three years later, the City Council or the Town Council says, "Well look, we've got more development on our boundaries; we now want to annex this property and bring it in within our boundaries." I believe that's probably the very reason that the Minister of Industry and Commerce is really speaking about voting against this measure with the Town of Steinbach and the R.M. of Hanover with the commercial developments just on the fringe of the Town of Steinbach, have grown up over the last number of years. Now the Town of Steinbach says, "Look, they want to use our services, but they are outside our boundaries; now can we bring them in." — not really needing for many years the land that they will have to encompass along with those commercial developments, because there is adequate land within the particular jurisdiction.

So, Mr. Speaker, I only on the basis to hear representations as to the demonstrated need that I would hope that if I am to support this bill, that the City Council of Brandon can come to Committee and show that there is adequate information to not only overrule the Municipal Board ruling, but also the Executive Council ruling on this measure that I believe Executive Council of the present administration upheld the ruling of the Municipal Board in this case and if there is need shown, that it will be dealt by the Legislature, and only on that basis.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East will be closing debate. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I listened to what was said by members pro and con. I would say that my inclination would be to be supportive of the Municipal Board which had the opportunity to listen in detail to it, and I would like to indicate that what has persuaded me to vote in favour of the bill was to get into Second Reading for several factors. One, this is one opportunity we have that we have not had for quite a while to review the opinion expressed by the Municipal Board to see what the reasons were in a quorum where we can hear arguments pro and con again. I think that that is a good opportunity, mainly because there is no appeal from the decision that is before us, as I understand, except to the Legislature in this way, and we have that very, very seldom.

The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council apparently did consider it, and rejected it, and yet I understood from the Minister of Municipal Affairs that he appeared in favour of the application and is supporting it. On that basis, I am inclined to feel that this matter should be reviewed, and although I am not usually one to worry that much about closing the door, the fact is that if we take the

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advice of the Minister of Industry and Commerce, we will have closed the door on this question and I am not quite prepared to close the door yet; I'm prepared to leave it somewhat ajar to get a further opportunity to hear the arguments and I really am very interested in hearing the position of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, because primarily it is his responsibility, and therefore the only opportunity we would have to hear all these arguments is in Committee; for that reason I would be inclined to support the bill for Second Reading.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East will be closing debate. The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, to close debate, I would thank the Honourable Member for Brandon West for his support and for his remarks, which in effect substantiated some of my comments when I introduced the bill for Second Reading. I would also thank a number of other honourable members for their support and indeed to all members for their comments.

I did explain the history previously and it is certainly not my intention to repeat this. I would only answer one comment that has been made, that is the comment that this may be a precedence and it would be a bad thing to carry on in the Legislature certain matters pertaining to annexation by one municipality of land belonging to another. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that it really depends on the problem involved, depends on the MLAs' judgment as to whether or not the particular problem posed by annexation, or that annexation perhaps might solve, is a matter that will have to be weighed by the MLAs, and to that extent, it may not be a precedence at all. I can state categorically, Mr. Speaker, that I would not have brought this particular bill in; I was requested by the City of Brandon and brought it in because of the special circumstances, because of the special need referred to by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In my judgment there was some merit in the Legislature considering this as a Court of Appeal, and I am pleased therefore, that has been indicated by a number of honourable members.

I would just indicate again in case some members didn't hear me or didn't understand, that we are dealing with a particular problem, mobile home, which is immediately on the border of the two municipalities. And it's a matter of providing adequate mobile home space for that community, particularly in view of the pending closure of one other mobile home court, or trailer court, and it is simply a matter of viding additional land, approximately 37 acres, so that this particular expansion might take place.

I might also add that the owner of the land in question, the owner of this 37 acres of land, has indicated a willingness to see it used in this fashion, and he is apprised of this matter and I believe that if this matter does get to Committee, I can present a letter to the members of the Legislature indicating the position of the specific owner of that land.

So on that basis, Mr. Speaker, I do commend this legislation again to members of the Legislature and urge them to support it.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

A MEMBER: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Has the member got support?

A MEMBER: We've got support.

MR. SPEAKER: Call in the members. Order please. All those in favour of the Motion please rise.

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

YEAS: Messrs. Adam, Blake, Bostrom, Brown, Cherniack, Cosens, Cowan, Einarson, Evans, Fox, Gourlay, Jenkins, Johnston, Jorgenson, Lyon, MacMaster, McGill, Mercier, Miller, Pawley, Schreyer, Sherman, Spivak, Steen, .Uruski, Uskiw, Walding, Wilson.

NAYS: Messrs. Anderson, Banman, Driedger, Enns, Green, Hyde, Kovnats, McBryde, McGregor, McKenzie, Orchard, Mrs. Price, Messrs. Ransom.

MR. CLERK: Yeas 28, Nays 13.

MR. SPEAKER: I declare the motion carried.

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Do I detect any inclination on the part of members to call it 5:30.

The hour being 5:30, I am leaving the Chair and the House will resume at 8:00 in Committee of Supply.