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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, March 9, 1979

Time: 2:30 p.m.

SUPPLY — HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee come to Order. We are here to consider the Estimates of Highways and Transportation. 8.(b) — \$1,200,000 — the Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairperson. Before lunch I had asked the Minister if he could have available for us at a later time a list of the specific contractors, and community bands, and community organizations that are working on these specific winter roads.

MR. ENNS: Did I say that?

MR. COWAN: No, I asked you if you would.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Yes, I have no objection to providing that information. Just a minute, I think I have it somewhere here.

Well, I can read that into the record for the honourable member if he wishes me to. In the South Bay to South Indian Lake stretch of road, the contractor in question is the South Indian Lake Community Council; in the Ilford-York Landing road and the Ilford-Split Lake road, the contractor is the Ilford Community Development Corporation; on the Whiskey Jack-Cross Lake piece of road, the contractor is Pimadjihowin Development Corporation — that's pretty close — and the same contractor also has the additional Cross Lake 45 miles to .45 mile; on the 45 mile to mile 102, for 57 miles, again the contractor is Ilford Community Development Corporation; on the mile 102 to mile 139, the contractor is the Oxford House Band; on the Oxford House to mile 35 road, the contractor is listed as Gilbert North; the contractor in the Gods Lake Reserve road area is the Gods Narrows Band; the Gods Lake-Ice Road, the contractor is Gods Lake Narrows Lodge.

A MEMBER: Who's that?

MR. ENNS: That's the way the contract is listed. I don't know any more facts. I think possibly the Member for Churchill is more familiar with the names that I'm mentioning, I'm mentioning the way the contractor shows up on the legal documents drawn up for the contract work.

That's the list as I have it here. I'm sorry, there are further roads. One of the major contractors, of course, is the Me-Ke-Si group, which has contracts on the Hole River, Ste. Therese Pointe — no, pardon me, they have a total mileage of some 376 miles, the Me-Ke-Si Group, I believe the largest individual contract on the winter road systems. Then on the Hole River to Ste. Therese Point we have the subcontractor as MOE Company, another subcontractor is the Ste. Therese Band at Cantin Lake to Ste. Therese Point. At Ste. Therese Point to Waasagomach, seven miles, the subcontractor is Waasagomach Band. From Ste. Therese Point to Garden Hill, 10 miles, the subcontractor is Island Lake Band. Hole River at the Bloodvein cutoff, the subcontractor is the Bloodvein Band Foundation and Bloodvein, 10 miles north, the subcontractor, again, Bloodvein Band Foundation. Hole River to the Little Grand Rapids cutoff the subcontractor, again, the Bloodvein Band Foundation.

In the section of road 10 miles north of Bloodvein it appears that we have a Robert Disbrowe contractor. This contractor here, Mr. Robert Disbrowe, would refer to the section described as 10 miles north of Bloodvein-Berens River.

That more or less covers the list of contractors that the department has been able to make available to me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I thank the Minister for that information and I would just like to take this opportunity to mention one constituency matter that was just brought to my attention once again over the lunch hour, and that's with the Oxford House Band and the winter road going into Oxford House. I understand they made representation to the department last year for the purpose of shortening the winter road into Oxford House. Currently the section they're talking about, which goes around the Jackson Bay and the Oxford Lake, is 19 miles and they would prefer to see a route that is 10 miles that cuts right around the Bay. It, of course, would necessitate breaking some new ground but it would also fit into the overall economic planning that the Band is trying to initiate for the purposes of creating a better economic environment in the community.

And so I would just like to direct the Minister's attention to that. I have been on that winter road. I don't think what we're talking about here is so much the mileage that is at issue, the 10 miles either one way or the other, what we're talking about is putting the road through a more economic area and by that I mean I believe they would use it for fish hauling; they would use it for timber and it would fit in with a long-range plan that they have initiated. So I would just like to direct the Minister's attention to their concerns, and we would ask him that in his future conversations with the Band in regard to a winter road in that area that he bear that in mind.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, we're more than prepared to accept that notice from the member.

MR. COWAN: There are a number of other matters. I very briefly just take an opportunity to encourage the Minister to increase the mileage, and we're not talking about a substantial increase in many instances, into some of the areas that aren't served such as the Gods River community, the Red Sucker Lake community, which are very close to existing winter roads networks now, which usually have some sort of a winter road pushed through, at any rate, but it is not of comparable quality to the other winter roads and it does pose an economic burden on them, as well as to consider extending the network into those areas that aren't currently served so that maybe next year when we sit down in these Estimates we can be talking about a little bit more mileage in northern Manitoba, rather than a stan d-pat network.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, this winter, I believe, has been perhaps one of the most ideal winters for winter road construction. I believe most of the problems encountered in the past have been because of late freezing, thawing, and thin ice, and this year has been ideal. And perhaps this is one of the reasons that the cost has been somewhat less than in previous years, but it's unfortunate that this hasn't translated itself into more miles of winter roads that my colleague from Churchill mentioned in his remarks, that there are many other areas that should receive some assistance insofar as winter roads are concerned. I believe that some of the areas used for winter road construction has been along the Hydro line — is that correct? — where they follow the Hydro lines?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, that, I believe, is the case in some instances. I would have to report to the Committee that I have not had . . . I am looking forward to a personal tour of the roads in question. Senior members of staff just, I think a week ago, or ten days ago, travelled through good portions of the road system on a party which I hoped to be part of but will now have to look forward to doing that, perhaps once my Estimates are completed. So I can't speak from personal experience in terms of just where all these roads are, but certainly where right-of-way is available by using right-of-way that Hydro has provided, that that would be the case.

Our difficulty, of course, as the Deputy Minister reminds me, is that there are a few Hydro lines up north and of course that brings on another gleam in the eye of the member for the north as to why isn't there more Hydro lines going to some of the communities.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I was wondering do we have maps or rough maps of where these roads, or just roads are made and when the spring comes they disappear along with the snow and the ice?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I invite the honourable member into my office where I can show him on the large map in the office the routing, but I think we likely have drawings and maps and it might be possible to indicate to the members of the Committee — there may not be maps for each member of the Committee but we'll try to make a map available for members to review. If not, I might add that to the department's task of putting together the program and having maybe a map attached to their winter road system.

MR. ADAM: It might be interesting to some of us here, who have the responsibility of scrutinizing the Minister's Estimates. In the 1977 Estimates on the right-hand side and on the left-hand side, from the previous year, '77, shows a request for \$800,000.00. This shows up as \$1,200,000 instead of \$800,000.00. Were more funds expended? Where did the extra \$400,000.00 . . . What appropriation did that \$400,000 come from?

MR. ENNS: The \$400,000 was recoverable from Canada, the provincial portion being in netted-out figures at about \$800,000, but we have to show, as in all our accounts, the gross figure. The cost of the winter road system is in the area of \$1,200,000, of which \$400,000 is recoverable from Canada. Mr. Chairman, while I have the mike I'd like to, you know, provide to the official critic of the department, this map which, among other things, indicates the all-weather roads in the area; the present winter roads in this system; past winter roads; airstrips, class C and D; emergency airstrips; etc.; cable ferries; ferry crossings; ferry terminals that may be of interest to the honourable member.

MR. ADAM: Yes, last year's recoverable amount was \$450,000, not \$400,000, it shows up this year as \$400,000.00.

MR. ENNS: The reason for the decrease may be because of the somewhat less money that is being spent on the same miles of road this year, or anticipated to be spent. I assume we budget for the particular amount and show the amount that we are anticipating recovering, on a fixed formula. If you recall, the figures that I read into the record earlier indicated that the costs of building roughly the same amount of road last year or the year before, '76-77, were some \$1,700,000; this year they are calculated at \$1,100,000 or between \$100,000 and \$200,000 for about \$500,000 less. Now, that would reflect on the amount recoverable, but I'm looking to the officials for some further explanation on that.

MR. ADAM: The Minister does not anticipate much increase over the 802 miles that has been done this year, eh?

MR. ENNS: No, Mr. Chairman. I think there is a constant and understandable pressure on the department to extend the regular, or take the next step in providing more all-weather and therefore regular road systems, as in fact we are doing in the Split Lake area. We note the Honourable Member for Churchill's concern for expansion of this system and I would point out to the Committee, and to the Member of Churchill in particular, that the efforts should be directed not just to the Department of Highways and Transportation but equally, and perhaps even more so forcefully to the Department of Northern Affairs, who have a primary responsibility of initiating. Essentially the Department of Highways and Transportation delivers the service. We do not pretend to preempt the role of Northern Affairs in recognizing and hopefully responding to the legitimate needs of the northern communities.

MR. ADAM: Well, the Minister has a cushion of about \$80,000 now for winter roads in this year's appropriation, over last year. That's about what it is — \$70,000, I believe, that the Minister has, a very small cushion there to work on.

With those comments, I would be satisfied to proceed to the next item, Mr. Chairman, unless some other of my colleagues would like to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: One quick point, Mr. Chairperson, thank you. In conversations with the communities and the bands that are serviced by winter roads we, every once in awhile, talk about a permanent road following the route of a winter road coming in, and that would necessitate, in many cases, a realignment of the winter road to make it go through ground that is better suited for a permanent road. And I'm wondering if the Minister has any plans for this sort of realignment to be taking place so that these winter roads that are there now servicing the communities for 8 to 10 weeks out of a year can begin to service the communities for much longer periods.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, those kind of examinations are taking place constantly. We would, of course, like to, particularly where as has been earlier mentioned, some of the initial developmental costs of even a winter road are substantial — right-of-way clearing, smoothing out brush, smoothing out very uneven terrain — where we can see a possibility of, even if not in the immediate foreseeable future but down the line somewhere, that an all-weather road could be provided, we are attempting

to realign and keep that in mind.

The problem that is sometimes raised, in terms of the levels of expectation of the winter road, is a real one that I think governments of all description have to face. It's one thing to be able to service a community, crossing frozen lakes and other pretty difficult terrain, which might be possible on a relatively short 30 or 20-mile haul or 40-mile haul under winter road conditions, to duplicate that in an all-weather road system could be quite another matter sometimes, given particular geography and so that's a problem that we have to be aware of, too.

MR. COWAN: I would ask the Minister then. I know there has been realignment in the past of the road system to begin to accommodate the road system into a permanent all-weather system. I'm wondering if there is any realignment that is taking place this year, or if the roads are following exactly by the same paths that they followed in the previous year.

MR. ENNS: I am advised, Mr. Chairman, that there has not been too many changes made this year: A few correctional cornerings, but pretty well on the same routes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 8.(b) \$1,200,000—pass; 8.(c) \$972,100 — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there is a substantial decrease here — \$2,500,000.00. I wonder if the Minister could elaborate on what this amount on the left-hand side was spent for and could he give us an over-view of what is anticipated for this year and what is this amount going to be spent for?

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, this, again, involves the Reconciliation Statement of amounts and decreases that have come from previous fiscal year for such purposes as winter works, capital works, accelerated programs, airstrip and dock construction, and these funds in the bulk of this instance are those same funds that I listed earlier that were part of a capital supply in Northern Affairs that have been expent and are now no longer required. Can we have a listing of some of the actual projects that are being considered for the year on the 972 . . . ? Can I just read off the . . . ? And remembering that this is within the Construction Division of the department of this service.

We are intending to expend some \$500,000 for the Mechanical Division equipment. It's the usual kind of replacement costs for equipment. We have a further \$115,000 budgeted for equipment storage buildings; \$110,000 for minor improvements to airports and \$147,100, which is the contract with Canadair for the water bomber, which is contracted through the Transportation Services Department; and an additional \$100,000 for gravel stockpiling explorations. And the amounts that I have just read, Mr. Chairman, to the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, is the amounts that make up the figure \$972,100 on the right-hand side.

The difference between — and I appreciate the member's concern — the difference between that \$972,100 and the \$3,397,000 on the left-hand side, that has all been taken out and covered under the reconciliation of the figures of the appropriations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 8.(c) — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Where does that amount show in the reconciliation — just a minute now?

MR. ENNS: I am informed that if the member checks back to his first page of the Estimates on the Reconciliation Statement that it is part of the bottom figure, the Carry-over of Capital Authority for Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets, as well as in the other transfer function from Northern Affairs, the \$7,984,600.00.

Mr. Chairman, why it's difficult to more precisely pinpoint the specific areas is because the point that was raised before earlier that the functions of the department transferred to several departments and for an over-view the department that is most capable of making the over-view would still likely be Finance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 8.(c) \$972,100-pass; 8.(d) Canada-Manitoba Northlands Agreement \$3,563,700 — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I wonder if the Minister could give us a breakdown of what is going to be undertaken there. A substantial increase over last year and . . . ?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I believe the principal . . .

MR. ADAM: It's a reduction, really.

MR. ENNS: No, it's not really . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I could maybe caution both members that if you will take a little time then we can recognize the respective members and then it can be recorded. Other than that, there is going to be confusion with the recording equipment. The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can read once again the type of work to be undertaken under this appropriation. It includes further minor airport improvements of \$108,000.00; a substantial or the major portion of the vote, \$1,500,000, for resource roads in the Jenpeg, Norway House, Cross Lake area; a further \$200,000 of resource roads in the Sea River Falls and Rossville area; a \$976,000 expenditure for community airports; a \$300,000 expenditure for maintenance of community roads. These would be the kind of ongoing maintenance and costs involved in the operation of airports and roads within isolated northern communities.

A dedication of some \$300,000 to the Norway House internal roads system, oh, pardon me, the water supply system, safe water supply system of \$976,000.00. Pardon me, the community roads Norway House internal roads system is \$300,000.00, and a further \$132,000 for airport maintenance of equipment.

Then there is 15 percent of the total appropriation placed in the enabling vote, which I already mentioned prior, that's being exercised in all the agreements covered with Ottawa. And that leaves us with a balance of \$3,563,700 as indicated on the right-hand side of the Estimates. Clear as the blue waters that flow down a mountainside.

A MEMBER: In northern Manitoba.

MR. ENNS: In northern Manitoba, except there are no mountains in northern Manitoba.

MR. ADAM: I believe we did deal with airports under another item, and I'm just wondering how many more airports are we building now.

MR. ENNS: I am advised that there is a difference. For instance, the airports that we are now dealing with, they have been acceptable are sharable under the Northlands Agreement. We have a number of airports that do not come under that classification. That's why in the previous listing of \$110,000 for improvements to airports those are in areas of the province that the federal government has not included in the Northlands Agreement and therefore no sharing for the maintenance of these airports is available.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 8.(d) — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: We were talking about staffing of these airports and we were supposed to receive a breakdown of where these people were. One of my colleagues was asking for that information of how many were stationed where, and will this extension of airports require more staffing?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, we don't particularly anticipate additional staffing but there is always a constant turnover of staff and currently we anticipate filling of the vacancies that presently exist.

For the members' benefit, I can give the Committee some idea. The Norway House Airport, one of the larger Airports, we have 12. We have 4 people on the Norway House Road Maintenance, and then in the other airports — and I have them just listed here as the other airports — some 68 persons for a total of 84, and these 84 people are staffing some 28 airports and airdromes, and of the 28, 19 are staffed — I think that was the question the other day too. Not all the airports are staffed; some are just an emergency airstrip. There are a total of 19 where continuous staff is provided in this complement of a total of 84 provides that.

I might add, the staff is essentially native people drawn from the local communities where these airports are located. There is some difficulty in maintaining the staff from time to time. It's happened that a pilot that's coming down to land and seeking some advice from staff at the airport, he doesn't always find it, but on the whole we are doing our best to train more and more people to fill these positions. In some instances it's important to get the necessary accreditation from the Department of Transport to qualify for a particular classification of the airport.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 8.(d) \$3,563,700—pass; 8.(e) \$3,563,700 — I wonder, would somebody be able

to guide me in which number we're looking at here under (e)? 8.(e) Recoverable from Northern Affairs, \$3,563,700—pass. I just covered (e). Resolution 75:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,472,100 for Highways Transportation Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets—pass;

9. Transportation Services \$1,470,100. 9.(a) Administration: (1)Salaries, \$158,200 — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister be able to give us a general overview — this is a new area that's come in to his empire and I'm just wondering whether he could elaborate on the acquisition of this new service for the people of Manitoba.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's true that it is a new portion, or new responsibility that's come to the Department of Highways and Transportation and I'm happy to have the occasion to introduce the director involved in this area, Mr. Frank Barrie, who has joined us this afternoon. Mr. Barrie operates out of the Hangar 27 facilities where the Government Air Service and the administrative offices for this division operate from.

Essentially, Mr. Chairman, this division has in the past, and hopefully will in the future, supply the kind of services that cover many of the items that we have just finished discussing in approaching the Estimates thus far; that is, the maintenance and construction of Airports; the supervision, the building, the maintenance of winter road systems; the involvement with communities, isolated and remote communities; and the development of their water systems; the involvement that the department has in internal road construction and maintenance problems. In addition to that the Branch, of course, provides the Government Air Services and the Northern Ambulance Services. To this we have fairly extensive radio services set up that provides for the communication system throughout the north.

We quite frankly hope that perhaps with the addition of the Radio Services Division can and might well benefit and profit the rest of the Department of Highways in terms of beefing-up or improving the communications systems that we have in the Department of Highways generally.

In addition to that this Division is also responsible for the delivery of the marine services, the operation of, I believe, five or six Ferries — six Ferries that are currently operating in northern Manitoba — not currently, but when the weather permitting, and a fair amount of staff involved in the operation of the Ferry Services. We can deal with them in terms of staff numbers and the kind of arrangements that they operate under as we come to the individual appropriations. But that, Mr. Chairman, is a general overview, brief as it may be to the Honourable, the Member for Ste. Rose, of what the new responsibilities are within the Department of Highways and Transportation now with the inclusion of this segment of what formerly resided with Northern Affairs.

MR. ADAM: Yes. The Minister indicated, I believe, under previous questioning that he anticipated some reorganization in this department since it has been taken over by the Department of Highways — I wonder if he could elaborate on what kind of reorganization is he looking at in the future, perhaps he could elaborate on what actually he was referring to when he mentioned that.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, considerable reorganization has already, of course, taken place in the past 14 or 15 months within the Department of Northern Affairs, prior to its further organization in the transferring out of Northern Affairs to not only the Department of Highways, as it was then constituted, but to other departments as well — I believe Municipal Affairs, Mines and Natural Resources, with the guiding principle, if you like, being that the delivery of certain services ought and should best be carried out by departments that traditionally have the experience in providing that kind of a service.

Thus, in the field of transportation, the field particularly of surface, providing surface transportation, building of roads, construction of roads, that the Department of Highways is a natural place for that portion of activity for Northern Affairs to come home to rest. The difficulty that presents itself when there is a melding together of functions from one department to another department, there needs always to be a look at the manner and way it can best be accomplished, the kind of guard for unnecessary duplication of services, the kind of utilization of staff that provides for the maximum value being returned to the communities in question — in this case northern Manitoba and the taxpayers as a whole for the dollars spent. And I have no particular reorganization plans to talk about at this time, but I know that the immediate task facing the department was the reorganization taking place in late October or early November — that the immediate task was to ensure that the level of services that the northern communities had come to expect was maintained or indeed improved upon. I think we can say with considerable satisfaction that we were able to do this, that our winter roads systems, which is so important to the north, were onstream. Let me

simply say, they were onstream as good as, if not better, than in other years. A lot of this is attributable to the fact that people engaged in the business are getting more experienced at it and with a great deal of help from the weather.

The immediate concern was for the department not to in any way interfere with the delivery of these services that the northern communities needed. Having done that we are now in a position to re-evaluate our manpower requirements, re-evaluate the most appropriate use of personnel and/or the proper allocation or the proper slotting into the different areas within the department of the functions of this Division that has come to us from Northern Affairs.

MR. ADAM: Yes. I believe in the past the Department of Northern Affairs were facing, I suppose, a shortage of funds to build roads in the northern areas of our province and I believe because of this they were building roads, and I have had personal experience in seeing the construction done and I don't believe that the construction necessarily had to be up to the acceptable standards of the highway and I do believe that perhaps the Department of Highways would look with a frown on some of the construction that took place under Northern Affairs. I'm just wondering: Has there been a conflict there in this particular area? What are the standards now? Are the roads that are going to be constructed in northern Manitoba by the department, up to a better acceptable standard, or are we going to carry on the way we have in the past, where we would build maybe a road with a 20 ft. top instead of a 25 ft. top? I don't know exactly what the standards are of the Highways Department but this is the impression I received when I was travelling around in Northern Affairs and there's quite an area in my constituency that does fall under Northern Affairs and I'm just wondering whether the minister could advise us if there's anything in this area that is of some concern or otherwise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I know what the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose is alluding to, and that is, I suppose there will always be a certain question, the expediency of providing in places where no road exists, firstly, you know, a pioneer trail, and where no road has existed and the traffic doesn't warrant it, the standards of course, have to be different. We see no change in that approach taking place. We think that that will be one of the responsibilities for the department to so structure itself, that there is sufficient flexibility built into the department's approach to the changing conditions of road-building, whether it's building to handle, you know, 5,000, 6,000 vehicles per day traffic in and around the City of Winnipeg or the more remote requirements in remote communities in northern Manitoba. In principle, we do believe that anything that's yellow, and crawls over the ground and carries a bucketful of dirt, ought to belong to The Department of Highways and be run by the Department of Highways.

MR. ADAM: I'm glad the minister made that statement because I had something to bring up in that respect, but we've already passed that department under Maintenance and I was having some difficulty as to how I could bring that back in, since. . .

MR. ENNS: The something yellow or the something that crawls over the ground?

MR. ADAM: Yes, yes, now that the minister has opened that line of questioning, you have allowed him to make those comments, then I hope that the Chairman will not call me to Order, because I wanted to ask him what was the policy of hiring private contractors to work for the highways?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Just if I may, to the Members here, the Member from Ste. Rose indicates that I've allowed latitude by having the minister make a statement. If I continue along that line, we can probably re-do the whole Estimates. I would still like to have it within the general context. There is still provision under the Minister's Salary to bring these items up that maybe have been bypassed, so I would request that the Member from Ste. Rose stay as close as possible to the item under discussion.

MR. ADAM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe I have adhered all throughout on that Point of Order. I have adhered very scrupulously, I've adhered to that, but the minister has opened up a new area here and I thought I would just ask him because he made that statement .

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the Members here, it is not my interpretation that that would come under the category that was being forwarded by the Member from Ste. Rose, however, I'm at the mercy

of the Committee. It's like you mentioned before, I think there is provision under the Minister's Salary to pretty well cover anything that has been missed or that would be the desire of the Members opposite. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I was intending to bring that matter up on the Minister's Salary, but since he had opened into that area, that's why I brought it up, but if the minister was out of order when he made that statement, I will proceed with another question and say. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would consider the minister was out of order. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Then the minister, Mr. Chairman, is satisfied that the department can adjust to this new type of construction that will be required for them to provide when they get into this northern, you know, where we need a road, it doesn't have to be up to the standards of highway acceptability, if we just need a corridor to get across a piece of marsh or something with a little bit of dirt on it and that's all that's required that's all we'll do. You know, this is what I'm trying to get at.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that the concern is a real one that the member expresses and one that we will have to be constantly aware of. I'm further satisfied that the honourable member representing the north will be the first to remind the minister and the department if this is not the case and because of inability to respond to the unique situations in the north, that we aren't doing our job. But I'm satisfied that junior people within the department, working together with those people that have come to us just recently, of October, that they are more than aware of the particular responsibilities and the different approaches that are required for responding to the needs in northern Manitoba and the kind of roadwork that the honourable member refers to, that we will be able to deliver that.

MR. ADAM: Yes, in the overview, the minister mentioned Amulance Air Service, and I wanted to know whether that is still continuing and that service still being provided for the north.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, you know, I should be clear that the cost of the services provided for under the Estimates of my colleague, the Minister of Health and Community Development, but we provide the physical craft; station the one craft in Thompson and the other craft here at Winnipeg, and I'm advised that the services being carried out at an acceptable level, acceptable to the people that the service is designed to serve, there has been some, I suppose, re-examination of the service, in itself, but in my visit to the Hangar 27 not so very long ago, I was assured by the Director of Air Services, Mr. McCoy, that the service was being carried out in a satisfactory manner.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I have one more further question in the same line. I wonder if the minister has a record of how many flights were provided for ambulance services for people in the north?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that may just take a moment to get, but we can certainly. . .Mr. Chairman, I cannot give him the figures in the number of flights, but I can give them in the number of hours travelled and the miles logged. In total of January 1st, 1978 to December 31st, 1978 a total of some 611.2 hours were flown on what we call the Northern Patient Transportation Program for a total of 133,585 miles.

I'm assuming that it is logged that way because of a particular chargeback arrangement that is then made to the Department of Health and Social Services.

We have a further breakdown which includes that this involved a total of some 269 flights were carried out involving some 310 patients along with 295 escorts.

MR. ADAM: Could the Minister advise, does he have the figures for last year or the previous year? How does that compare with. . . ? That information is not available?

MR. ENNS: I'm advised that the level has appeared to have levelled off at about that level and that the level is much the same as in the immediate preceding year or two. It should be available in the annual report, last year's, of the Department of. . . well possibly the Department of Health and Social Services again, I think, as the main funding dollars for it are covered under that department.

MR. ADAM: Well, yes, it's only off the top of my head by but I'm trying to recollect that there was some criticism last year that the program had been curtailed somewhat and I believe the criticism came from the doctors residing in the North. I stand to be corrected; my memory isn't that good

anymore. Maybe some of my colleagues may know.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm not attempting to evade the question. I think it's a question that would have to be more appropriately directed to the Minister responsible for the program as such. I can only cite to you the mechanical figures of the numbers of patients or passengers handled and the number of flights flown. We have received no requests from either the medical profession or the northern communities about the level of service or the nonavailability of service. We are led to believe that the service is being carried on at a level that is acceptable and it has been kind of established for the past number of years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you Mr. Chairperson. I'd like to examine in a bit more detail the differences where the staff are being let go in this particular area because I see under administration there's a substantial decrease in funding. I'm just wondering, not which positions currently exist, but which positions have been let go.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, with the bringing together of this division from Northern Affairs to the Department of Highways there has been, as one would hope to be, substantial savings and, hopefully, along with it, greater efficiency of the use of the manpower in place. The administration alone was reduced by some six positions, in the construction division or department some further 13 positions, and in the equipment and stores area another six positions were reduced, for a total of 25 positions. Now, I can indicate to the honourable members or indeed I'll ask my staff to indicate to me that in most of these instances this was carried out through simply not filling vacant positions. Can I say all? All but one or two, I'm advised, Mr. Chairman. By the way, that reflects on that item 9(a) — the reduction that you see there, not totally, but part of it is there, certainly.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you. Then I'm to understand that these 25 positions, total of 25 positions' only partially s, account for the reduction, or they account in full for the reduction? In other words, you set a high in May; is it throughout the whole series, or . . . ?

MR. ENNS: I'm just looking at the other items on the Estimates. I suppose the principal reduction here in Item 9(a) would be the six administration positions and , as possibly part of the unfilled construction positions well.

The Member may not have been here the other day when I provided the , to overall staffing breakdown of the department which I had sorted or singled out the Transportation Services Division, the section that we're now dealing with, as having an approv staff complement of 242 with 25 vacancies —the 25 vacancies which we do not feel we have to fill.

MR. COWAN: I thank the Minister for that information. I did have that sheet before me but it just gave us a bloc figure of 25 and I had. . .

MR. ENNS: Yes, well I think now we've broken that down some more, the 6, 13, 6.

MR. COWAN: I appreciate the breakdown. I would also like to go a bit further on it if the Minister can help us in this regard, because to eliminate one position, or to eliminate one specific position, may give some indication of different prioritizing or may give some indication of a shifting of priorities. So I'm wondering if the Minister in this particular item, which I believe would be the six positions, could tell us what those— I realize they were vacant— actual positions were that were vacant.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, in general they were the kind of natural thing that you would expect to take place. We have always had, I'd like to think, a reasonably efficient administration set up within the Department of Highways. The Department of Northern Affairs in this division also, when it was a separate entity, had to do a lot of its own administration. And when I say administrative work, I mean just simply the processing of invoices, requisitioning materials; they involved several clerks, I believe an accounting position. These functions are now simply being carried out in the main administrative component of the Department of Highways and Transportation. It represents absolutely no shifting of priorities within the functions carried out. It's simply that under the general administrative offices of Mr. Dyck we were able to absorb, I believe, in total, some 16 or 17 people

from this segment of what formerly constituted the administrative offices of Northern Affairs into Mr. Dyck's shop, but not having to worry about filling the six vacancies.

I point out that that doesn't include, again, the entire shifting of administrative personnel from Northern Affairs. A further 20 or 22 — I can't account for the numbers — went, for instance, to Mines and Natural Resources. A component stayed with Northern Affairs. So you had that breaking out. But in the melding together with existing administrative offices there were very definite savings in manpower without any reduction in capability.

MR. COWAN: For my own mind then, Mr. Chairperson, to clarify what the Minister has said, he has said that the reduction in staff in no way should be taken to indicate a change in prioritization within the department.

MR. ENNS: That is correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9(a) (1) — 1 the Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, just one question. It's a question of clarification again. The Minister, under this item, mentioned government air. I'm wondering if we would be discussing it under this item or the next item — the government service?

MR. ENNS: We're on 9(a)? I believe it would probably be more appropriate to discuss it under 9(b), Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9(a)(1) \$158,200—pass; 9(a)(2) Other expenditures \$35,200—pass; 9(b) Air Radio Services (1) Salaries \$1,062,600 — the Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. There have been some substantial changes over the past 16 months in the makeup and the responsibility of the government air service and I'm wondering if the Minister can inform us as to right now how many planes are still operating within the service, how many pilots, and where they are based?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that at year end the total air division fleet, formerly known as the red fleet —(Interjection)— contains a total of some 14 aircraft. If you want a breakdown of the aircraft involved it's one CL-215; one MU-2, which is continuing on the lease purchase arrangement; one Cessna 337 Skymaster; two Piper Aztecs, one leased; five Turbo Beaver, equipped with ground to ground missiles, I believe; one DHC-2 Beaver; two Otter; one Cessna; for a total of 14 craft. All aircraft are operated in accordance with the Ministry of Transport air regulations.

MR. COWAN: . . . if the Minister could inform us as to what the actual reduction in aircraft is from the previous year.

MR. ENNS: Four DHC-2 Beavers were sold by tender in May; One five-passenger Piper PA-23 Aztec and two four-passenger Cessna 337 Skymasters.

MR. COWAN: Yes, the Minister says that the four Beavers were sold by tender in May and neglected to inform us as to how the Aztec and the Skymaster were gotten rid of.

MR. ENNS: They were also sold by tender in June. We had leases on the two Piper Aztecs; the leases were simply terminated or not continued on May 15th.

MR. COWAN: And the Skymasters then were sold by tender?

MR. ENNS: That is correct.

MR. COWAN: There were three Skymasters for clarification. Do I have that correct? They were sold by tender?

MR. ENNS: No, I just have the one shown here, Mr. Chairman. One out of two.

MR. COWAN: And then there is one Skymaster remaining in the fleet.

MR. ENNS: That is correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: I wonder if the Minister can indicate as to where the different planes within the fleet are being based.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that during the summer season aircraft position was as follows: The Lac du Bonnet base had the two Turbo Beavers and the one DHC, two Beaver. At Winnipeg, we maintained on the tarmac the CL-215 water bomber and the one MU-2, which is the Winnipeg end of the ambulance service; one Aztec 337. The Pas had the one Otter and at Thompson two Turbo Beavers; one Otter and one Cessna 180 and one Aztec and we had at the Norway House base, one Turbo Beaver. So we had the fleet well-dispersed, you might say, to keep us in a good state of readiness in the case of a general attack.

MR. COWAN: Seeing as how a great number of those planes were based in the north, is the Minister indicating that he's expecting an attack to come from the north and proceed southward?

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, the way the freedom-loving people and democratic republics of this world are behaving, one must always be in a state of readiness.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I have to agree, Mr. Chairperson, that we should always be in a state of readiness, which brings me to my next question. Has the minister received representation from northern residents in regard to re-stationing the MU-2 in the community of Thompson?

MR. ENNS: My staff advises me that, not in a specific way, or at least not directly to us.

MR. COWAN: Can the Minister indicate if an MU-2 has been stationed in Thompson within the past number of years on a regular basis?

MR. ENNS: I'm again advised that that is not the case.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (9)(b) Salaries—\$1,62000,600 — the Member from Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I wonder . . . , the Minister indicates that we have tendered out several planes no longer in the blue fleet. Could the Minister give us a breakdown on how much we received for those planes that were sold?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that information is certainly available. It's public information. The sale was made possible by an Order-in-Council. Again, it was not done by the Department of Highways and Transportation. It was done by the Department of Northern Affairs. I could, perhaps, advise the honourable member to ask for that information from the department, or indeed, ask for that information in the House, but in my usual manner of trying to supply any and all reasonable information, I'll undertake to see that the honourable member has that information when next we meet.

By way of general information, Mr. Chairman, some historical data, as of December 31, 1978, Air Division has flown a total of 23,170,627 miles, carried 231,424 passengers in excess of 43,706,425 passenger miles and more than 44,525,167 pounds of freight have been carried, some ton miles of over 1,697,118 ton miles. We have every reason to credit and be thankful to the Air Division for the safety record that they have managed to maintain in carrying out these responsibilities and in the safety record that the Air Division still continues to enjoy.

MR. ADAM: The Minister just answered the next question I was going to ask. —(Interjection)— I'll let you ask that question. I want to ask the minister if he could advise the Committee how many charters we've had to contract because of the sale of some of our aircraft.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I don't appear to have that information readily available. Again, Mr. Chairman, I think that this kind of information, however, would be available to the honourable member by an Order for Return.

MR. ADAM: This is not an unreasonable request, Mr. Chairman. If a request for an aircraft is required by the department, they would phone the Air Services Division and ask for an aircraft, and if it's not available the Air Services Branch will charter an aircraft. That information should be readily available. I can't see the difficulty there in having to file an Order for Return and wait

two years to get it.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised that we can provide that information and are quite prepared to provide that information. We just have to get it here.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I would like to ask the Minister when does he anticipate that we will be selling off the balance of the air fleet to the Sheik of Alberta? Ween will we be selling off the blue airforce to the Sheik of Alberta?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, let the record show that I'm refusing to answer that kind of a question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Churchill.

MR. COWAN: I'd ask the minister, then, if the government Air Division is still responsible for fire detection and suppression in northern Manitoba?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, very much so.

MR. COWAN: I note that the forest protection in another series of Estimates in the has Mines and Natural Resources Estimates increased by some \$400,000 over this year. I'm wondering if that would indicate that the level of fire detection and suppression that is done by the Government Air Services is expected to decrease by a significant amount also.

MR. ENNS: No, Mr. Chairman. What that reflects is again an attempt to realistically portray in all our Estimates the actual anticipated expenditures of government. It used to be a matter that is of long standing, that, because of the unknown factor as to what amount of dollars would be spent on forest fire protection, a relatively nominal sum would be placed in the Estimates, knowing full well that it would likely not bear any true relationship to the actual dollars spent.

There has been, on the instructions of the Department of Finance this year, an attempt to place a more realistic sum in the Estimates and that accounts for the substantial increase shown in that department. That figure may not be the correct one, too, because it is difficult to accurately predict, but the instructions of the Department of Finance have been throughout to portray, as accurately as possible, anticipated expenditures. And so rather than putting the nominal 100,000, or like that, that was figured, if the member goes back over several years he'll find that it was always that figure that was put in the Estimates. There has been attempt to average out the kind of anticipated average costs and that's what the increase reflects.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairperson. While the minister is digging out detailed information on a number of charter flights flown, I'm wondering if he'd be kind enough to also dig out information as to the cost of leasing airplanes for the purpose of fire detection and suppression airplanes outside of the fleet, the number of hours that were flown by the Government Air Service for the purpose of fire detection and suppression and the number of hours that were flown by leased aircraft for the purpose of fire suppression and detection?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I think some of the information that the Honourable Member for Churchill requests would be more appropriately found from the Minister directly responsible for carrying out the forest fire suppression services, namely, the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, but, you know, I will consult with my colleague and, in conjunction with our own information, attempt to arrive at the figures the honourable member is seeking.

MR. COWAN: The reason I bring this matter before the Committee is that restraint is not always what it appears to be on the surface and we had a classic example of restraint that wasn't really restraint, restraint that ended up costing us more money in the long run, occur in northern Manitoba last year in specific regard to a fire in the Snow Lake area, that it is assumed it was started by a lightening strike, and that fire grew and grew and because they weren't flying the normal patterns because there had been cutbacks within the department for fire protection and suppression and the Government Air Service was not operating at peak levels, that fire went unnoticed for a number of days — I believe, 3, 4, 5 days — until the fire was sighted from the ground from the community of Snow Lake, some 15 to 20 miles away from where the fire was at that time, and a great deal

of good timberland was burned. We had a very tragic episode there when I believe it was a cancelled bomber that was on lease from B.C. went down with a loss of life; extremely tragic, and I'm not saying that that is in any way the fault of any party or even the fault of the cutback, because the pilots who fly those cancelled bombers will tell you that that's part of the inherent risk within the job.

So I'm not trying to tie that in in any sort of emotional way, I'm just trying to point out that sometimes when we try to restrain, when we try to cut back, we cut back a bit too far, and in the end it results in costs that we wouldn't normally have to bear and it not only wipes out that which we were able to save in the short term, but it adds significantly to the cost that we were suffering before; that is the cost we were paying out before. So when you do cut back in this instance, cut back in the fire detections program, when you cut back in the Government Air Service so that it cannot fully adequately serve the purposes for which it was intended, we find that the taxpayers of this province end up paying more than they should be paying. That's why I seek some clarification on this matter, because I want to assure myself that this is not going to happen, from my perspective as a Legislator and one that is concerned with the use of taxpayers' money, but I also want to concern myself with this matter from the perspective of a northerner who deplores that sort of tragic loss of fire, tragic loss of forest, and tragic loss of life, when it didn't seem to be necessary.

So I just want to impress upon the Minister the necessity for maintaining Government Air Service, not at the levels that they have it now, because there's not enough there to do the job effectively, there's not enough to have an effective fire detection and suppression system, but to maintaining at least at this level, for these Estimates, and to give some active consideration to increasing it again, because I believe in this particular instance, as with many others but in specific with this one, that we are practising false restraint, that there is a cutback that is unnecessary and unproductive in the end run.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (9)(b) Salaries — the member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: I notice that airstrips is included in the Transportation Services Section. I'm wondering if this would be the appropriate place to discuss it?

MR. ENNS: Well, I think we probably had an opportunity and I don't wish to cut off the honourable member's opportunity to express his concern about it, but I suppose perhaps in the initial Resolution of 9 which undertakes the construction and maintenance of activities in northern and remote Manitoba winter roads, airstrips and water systems on 9 here as well as earlier on the preceding page of (d) Airport and Roads. I could recommend to you, Mr. Chairman, that if the Honourable Member wishes to raise a particular matter or in general that the opportunity of course exists if and when the committee decides to consider my salary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Yes, I seek direction from you, Mr. Chairperson, because it is one minor item that came to my attention over the lunch hour. It was a call from a constituent in Oxford House and they're quite concerned. There's a rumour in the community that their airport which is licensed by the federal government and that license runs out at the end of this month, that the license is not going to be renewed for that airport. And the Band manager who talked to me at that time, assured me that it was just a rumour but he asked me to enquire as soon as possible as to if there was any basis to this rumour and I'm just wondering if the Minister has been in any conversation, this is the one question, in any conversation with the federal government in regard to the closing of the Oxford House Airport for lack of a license at the end of the month?

MR. ENNS: I'm advised by the director of Transportation Services that is a rumour to us as well, but certainly one that we can pursue at the first of the week. We haven't been given any such indication.

MR. COWAN: Just on a point of clarification the Minister says it's a rumour to them. Is it a rumour just because of it being initiated in this conversation or have they heard it previous to this conversation?

MR. ENNS: I'm further advised that it's not a question of the licensing expiring. There's not an imminent expiry date to that license that would take place.

MR. COWAN: I said one question and I apologize but I just wanted to clarify it from that one question; the reason I mentioned the license is the information came to me at the lunch hour from the Band and that was their perception of the problem that it was a licensing problem. I'll just ask the Minister then, is there any basis in fact to the rumour that the airport may be closing at the end of the month? The airstrip at Oxford House.

MR. ENNS: None whatsoever, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9.(b)(1) — the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I wonder also another component of that department is radio services and I'm just wondering what is happening in this area. Is there any expansion of this? This is for telecommunications or whatever they call it, radio services for remote communities that do not have telephone service.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, this appropriation deals solely with the internal communication systems of the department. It enables us to provide communications with our people in the field, our aircraft, our contact with the 30-odd airports that we have located throughout northern Manitoba, as well as with the construction crews, etc. that are working on various projects throughout the North. It is not in any way tied to a provincial or, I believe the member mentioned telecommunications systems, something like that. This is entirely departmental communications radio service that we maintain.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9.(b)(1) — \$1,062,600—pass; 9.(b)(2) Other Expenditures 9.(c) \$900,200—pass; Marine Services (1) Salaries \$218,900; the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: I wonder, this is another new service that is being provided by the Department of Highways and I wonder if the Minister could give us an outline of where these services are provided, the ferry service and barges, if it's operating satisfactorily and does the cost involve cost to the government such that the program should continue or be expanded? I believe this is similar to the Winter Roads Project, only this is for summer.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, the question as to whether or not how the economics of the operation of this service works out is I suppose one that can be looked at in many different ways but I can just indicate to the committee that we have six vessels in operation, three are cable ferries, three are self-propelled vessels; the two cable ferries and one self-propelled unit are operated by the communities with a subsidy given by Marine Services. That is, the communities operate them and we supply a subsidy in the order of some \$18,000, I believe to assist them. Total cost projected for '79-80 is \$420,300 and this excludes some 14 SMY positions that are associated with this operation; it provides jobs to ten local people for six months of the year and we have some following stats that we can indicate to you as to the kind of service they provide.

Well, I can perhaps just indicate or read into the record what one ferry operated; we have distinctive names for all these ferries, by the way; they're called the MV Edgar Wood, the MV Charlie Sinclair, the MV Joe Keeper, the CF James Appitigon, the CF Ingimar Carlson and the CF Thomas McIvor, I assume all named after notable and prominent pioneers of the North. But the CF Sinclair carried, from the period June 14th to August 15th, 1,696 passengers, 136 persons and bike, 1 motorcycle, 893 cars and up to three-quarter ton trucks, 15 cars with trailers, 18 trucks tandem axle, 3 trucks with trailer, 71 semi-trailer trucks, 7 buses and 15 miscellaneous matters. That gives you an indication of the kind of service that these ferries provide.

MR. ADAM: This would be the cable ferry that did all that work?

MR. ENNS: This would be one of the motored units. Self-propelled unit. Of course the cost of shipping goods by air from Winnipeg to Cross Lake for instance is 23 cents a pound with a minimum charge of \$13.00. If one were to charter a DC3, about as large an aircraft that can fly into some of these communities, the cost would be approximately \$1,500 and would carry a maximum of 8,000 pounds. The kind of truck loadings that we're able to get, as I just indicated, the 71 semi-trailer units hauling freight into that community, we would have to say justify the expense of the operation.

MR. ADAM: Could the Minister tell us where these ferries are operating?

MR. ENNS: Supplying economical transportation. They supply the following communities — Split Lake, Cross Lake, Norway House, Island View, Princess Harbour, Bloodvein, York Landing. The Joe Keeper ferry operating seven days a week, twelve hours a day, one return trip from the Odie River to either Split Lake or York Landing. The Charlie Sinclair also travelling working seven days a week, twelve hours a day, two return trips North Whiskey Jack to Cross Lake. The James Appitigon travels across Nelson River at Sea Falls on a seven day journey a week, twelve hours a day, always wanted to be an admiral.

MR. ADAM: Yes, does this service provide this summer service that would be done to the same communities, I mean, with a winter road, in some instances, this provide a summer service?

MR. ENNS: I would have to check. I would believe that in some instances, these services are not necessarily serviced by winter roads, some of them would be.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9.(c)(1) Salaries \$218,900—pass; 9.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$320,000—pass; the Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Just before we leave this item there's one short question to the Minister. We note with interest that as well as Highways he also has responsibility for the Airforce and the Navy. We wonder if there's any truth that the name of the Department is to be changed to the Department of Highways, Flyways, and High Waves?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, that recommendation will be taken under due and serious consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 9.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$320,000—pass; Resolution 76: \$1,470,100 for Highways and Transportation Services—pass; the Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I wonder if I would make a suggestion to the committee at this time. We have gone through pretty well the estimates with the exception of Item 6 on page 56 and the Minister's Salary and in view of the fact that we do not have the program as of yet and with the weather that is presently prevailing and some of us that have to go 200 and 300 miles to get home, I'm wondering if the committee would be agreeable that we adjourn and we'll have these two items on Monday. I wonder if that would be . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman. I could concur with that recommendation but I would certainly feel, I just wonder whether committee members wouldn't want to express some compassion and understanding for a Minister who is always in jeopardy for whether or not he will in fact get paid for the coming year, and whether or not we wouldn't want to deal with the Minister's salary at this point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: I might sympathize with the Minister and his salary but it's always been the policy that it is the last item that's to be discussed and since I understand that one of these items has been set aside, one of the items under the estimate, there may be questions that people might think of over the weekend that they may want to question the Minister on on items that have already been covered. And so, if we give up this opportunity by giving the Minister his salary right now, unless the Minister wants to throw it wide open in that item section that has been set aside, that wide coverage will be allowed and quite an amount of latitude given by the Chairman, and I'd have to have his assurance that he would do so before I would be prepared to deal with the Minister's Salary right now even though there are some questions that I have missed, unfortunately I have been in the other committee, I would like to ask on the Minister's Salary. But there are other members of the committee who may want to deal with other matters pertaining to the Minister's Salary and the department as a whole when we get to the item of the Minister's Salary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rock Lake.

MR. EINARSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that you have been very reasonable with the dealing of the Estimates for all members of this Committee opposite, and from the comments that I gathered from the Member for Logan, we don't want to start going through the Estimates all over again. I think that we should proceed. We still have 25 minutes to go and I believe we could complete the Minister's Salary. I mean the main critic, I think he could observe his comments and we could complete it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. MCGREGOR: I know it is stormy 150 or 200 miles from here and I do feel that the Committee rising now would be a proper one because I would like to comment on the Minister's Salary, but the whole basis is No. 6, do I get any or don't I, and my comments might vary which way I go, and I would surely like that open. If we touch his Salary, not to close out his Salary until we do know our program. That's life or death for the rural member.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, it was worth a try because, of course, my whole basis for putting on the final touches of the program depends on how you comment on my Salary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: I just want to point out further that some of the Committee members have been snow-bound for two days and they haven't been able to participate in the deliberations here today and yesterday, last evening. Therefore I believe that on Monday hopefully the roads will be open and some of the other Committee members will be able to get in that were members of this Committee and haven't been able to participate. .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did I hear a Motion for Committee Rise? Committee Rise.

SUPPLY — MINES, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would draw to the attention of the honourable members that we are in the main Estimates, Page 67, Mines, Natural Resources and Environment, Resolution No. 87, 7. Lands and Surveys. (a)(1)Salaries—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Before we were completed this morning we were discussing at some length the issues relating to the Lands Program which provided for wildlife habitat for the Province of Manitoba and which this government has admittedly terminated and which, I believe from the Minister's silence Mr. Chairman, have not been replaced by anything substantial. In fact, I believe in the Minister's words this morning he was relying on some encouragement to private initiative to maintain habitat for the wildlife of our province and Mr. Chairman, I believe it's a conclusion that has been arrived at by wildlife groups, by ordinary citizens of Manitoba for many years that the decision to maintain habitat and the responsibility for maintaining habitat for wildlife in the Province of Manitoba by its very nature cannot be left to the individual actions of private individuals. Mr. Chairman, the government has a responsibility in this area to undertake to maintain habitat, to protect habitat for the wildlife of our province, to maintain that heritage which is a common ownership and right of all people who live in this province. Mr. Chairman, unless the Minister has something to offer in terms of what his department is going to do in this area, I must assume that he is abdicating his responsibility and thereby this Provincial Progressive Conservative Government is abdicating its responsibility to the wildlife of the Province of Manitoba, and we all know, Mr. Chairman, that the wildlife is not in a position to influence government decisions; they're not the voters of the Province of Manitoba. It seems to me this government is taking a very short-range opportunistic partisan political approach to this problem and certainly not looking at it with any kind of long-range view to protecting the heritage which is the common right of all the people of Manitoba.

As I described this morning, Mr. Chairman, this Minister had indicated in a debate which we had participated in during the election campaign in the fall of 1977 that it would be his desire to find out what the people of Manitoba wanted to do and then proceed in that fashion, and I would like to know what steps he is taking to find out what the people in Manitoba want in terms of protecting the habitat and what his department is prepared to do about it.

MR. FERGUSON: What did you ever do?

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Gladstone is asking what we were

prepared to do. We were prepared to make lands available to protect lands for habitat development. That's something that this government has terminated. They've terminated those programs.

And Mr. Chairman, further to that they seem to be moving in the direction of even selling off those lands which are in the hands of the Crown at the present time, Mr. Chairman. So on one hand they're terminating programs which could be adding at least marginally to those lands which we now have for wildlife habitat in the Province of Manitoba and on the other hand, they're aggravating the problem even further by considering selling off these lands into private hands. Now, Mr. Chairman, it's just an impossible situation to expect a private person to maintain habitat on his own land. As I was explaining this morning, it's the same philosophy as we were dealing with when we were talking about parks.

We don't see any parks in Manitoba operated by private people and the reason for that is there's no way of obtaining return on your investment to operate a park and, Mr. Chairman, it's the same for maintaining habitat, in fact, it's even less of a possibility to be able to get a return on your investment by maintaining land and wildlife habitat, so it's natural. It's not anybody's fault that a private person will try to get the best return from his land that is possible and he does not see, as an individual, the need to maintain habitat on a piece of private land when he can turn that private land into productive land, whether it be for forest-harvesting, cutting the trees for forestry or for fuel wood or clearing the land for agricultural purposes. Either way, Mr. Chairman, when that individual makes that decision to turn that land into another use, that land is being taken out of wildlife habitat and perhaps lost forever.

Mr. Chairman, it's essential that this government decide what its policy is in this area and to take steps to maintain the heritage that we have in Manitoba today. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, from the lack of answers we had this morning, that we just have another example of lack of policy initiative by this government. There seems to be no policy. They're operating in a policy vacuum and I would appreciate hearing from the minister as to what his intentions are in this regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. FERGUSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, the least I can say is that I'm truly amazed because in the period of time that the Honourable Member for Rupertsland was the Minister in charge of Renewable Resources, you'd almost think that his idea of good wildlife management was getting home safely from a pub, or something, because that's about the only input that he put into it. I really am amazed to hear him stand up and start condemning our minister for what he is doing and what he hasn't done and I would like to compare his record probably in 18 months against yours. How many of your years were there? If it was 1, 2, 3, 5 or 10' you'd no idea what was going on, so why do you now stand up and profess that you do, I just can't fathom it at all. But to go on, the only one I really think that does have a little bit of grasp of what's going on over there, is the Member from Inkster. He really does kind of grasp what we in the rural are talking about but the Member for Rupertsland doesn't, and I'll point out once more. There were 200,000 acres established in this province under the guise of wildlife managers or whatever reason they were purchased for. Now, under a classification you can say it was made by a judicial decision, which it was, but, it wouldn't have made any difference to the Member for Rupertsland because he wouldn't have known what was going on in any event.

All he was trying to do was purchase land under the guise of wildlife management areas —and I'm possibly one of the most conservation-minded people in Manitoba —I do believe in good game management. I do believe that there should be some laws and regulations concerning them, but they just are not happening in this province. I never at one time, heard the Member for Rupertsland stand up and say: "Look, our wildlife herds are being depleted through poaching, through this, that and the other thing." Did he ever stand up at any time and say, "I believe that those who are hunting out of the bounds of the treaties, etc., should be prosecuted." Never once, Mr. Chairman. And when he says that, I'll go along with some of the rest of his arguments. But he hides behind skirts. He made no provisions. He was a coward and tried to pick up land under the guise of this with no reason at all except for state management.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery on my right where we have 25 students of Grade 7 and 8 standing of the General Wolfe School. These students are under the direction of Mr. Fendon. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Wellington. On behalf of the Honourable Members of the Legislative Assembly, I welcome you here today.

The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I find it rather amusing when we have the kind of diatribe that

we receive from the Member for Gladstone, since he obviously thinks the best thing to do would be to turn the wildlife management areas over into private hands. He is simply exhibiting a lack of understanding and a lack of knowledge about pure economics in terms of how you are going to be able to finance wildlife management areas in this province. There is no private person who is going to be able to invest money in land and leave the land in natural habitat. It's simply not possible. Mr. Chairman, the government has a responsibility in this respect. They must get their act together and protect the lands that are now in wildlife areas and in fact try to stem the tide of those lands that are being taken out of habitat.

Mr. Chairman, we were making moves in that direction — even though the Honourable Member for Gladstone may not agree with the methods — but, Mr. Chairman, we were making moves in that direction and I don't know of the exact figures of how many acres of land we established by way of The Resources for Tomorrow Program, The Alternate Land Use Program, The Urban Periphery Program but, Mr. Chairman, we were at least making steps in that direction.

This government has terminated all of those programs. They have said, well, we're looking at the situation, we're — what are the words they used? — we're monitoring it, we're reviewing it, we're studying it. These are the kinds of things we hear from the other side, Mr. Chairman, whether it is in the area of health, whether it is in the area of resource management. And, Mr. Chairman, what I say is that this government is abdicating its responsibility; it is not living up to its responsibility as the protector, the conservator of the resource for the generations to come. Mr. Chairman, this government is not living up to its responsibility.

It is very clear from the lack of answers we are getting from the other side that this government has no policy whatsoever in that respect. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Chairman, it is obvious. The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs doesn't even know when he puts together a report for the Legislature, as a report from his department, which year he is reporting on. It was pretty obvious from the report he tabled here a couple of weeks ago that he didn't even know what was in the report that he tabled in the Legislature.

So, Mr. Chairman, it is not surprising that he wouldn't know what the policy is in the government, particularly when it is obvious that the government has no policy with respect to wildlife management and protection of wildlife habitat.

Mr. Chairman, I still maintain that we need to have an answer from this Minister, and I mean the fact that the Honourable Member for Gladstone gets up and makes his contributions is no help for this side whatsoever, Mr. Chairman. We still have not heard from the Minister as to what his intentions are with respect to maintaining wildlife lands for the protection of wildlife in the Province of Manitoba.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I recall with some satisfaction the debate that the honourable member refers to at which he and I were present at a meeting during the election and while I couldn't say that it was really the turning point in the election campaign, I can say the ultimate outcome was to our satisfaction and I believe that that probably was one of the biggest indications right there of what the people of Manitoba wanted was when they changed the government in October, 1977.

Now, the honourable member, I believe, has a genuine interest, Mr. Chairman, in the interest of wildlife in this case but the problem has been that over the years of their government there really hasn't been the direction — there were some programs, some land purchase programs and, as I said earlier, that sort of program was established by the Roblin Government, the establishment of wildlife management areas was something that was done under that Administration, but for the past few years there really hasn't been any sense of where they wanted to go. They had that feeling that something should be done and I applaud the member for his concern, but at this stage, after programs have gone without direction for so long and without end goals in mind, it's time to pull back a little bit and see really what has been accomplished. That's really the point that we're at, Mr. Chairman, is that when we see that the result — I shouldn't say the result — but happening concurrently with some of the honourable member's programs, we're at a situation where the deer season was closed for three years, three consecutive years. Now, that has to indicate some kind of a problem that really the habitat wasn't there. Perhaps there was some failure with the programs that were ongoing, so it's necessary to pull back and have a look and see and establish where we want to go and see what kinds of programs meet with the approval of the public and especially with the approval of the people who live in the country and with the rural municipal governments.

That is what we are undertaking at this point, Mr. Chairman, and we will be developing programs that recognize the reality that in the area that most of those programs applied I would guess that there's at least 90 percent of the habitat exists on private land, in order for government to think that they are going to take over enough land to maintain those populations at the same level just

isn't realistic, Mr. Chairman. I agree that there need to be some areas that maintain the particular high quality, nucleus-type areas that are important for wildlife areas populations, and there are some areas that should be in public ownership and managed by the government for public purposes. But in the long run, that is not going to accomplish the kind of purposes that we want to see and so we have got to take a fresh look at it, Mr. Chairman, and while we are doing that, it is simply not possible to move immediately from one program into another.

But the honourable member should acknowledge, at least, that The Alternate Land Use Program was a federal/provincial one which was planned to terminate at the end of December, and the program would have terminated then whether or not we were in office.

MR. BOSTROM: Just to conclude this section, Mr. Chairman, on that issue, I certainly am not impressed with the empty comments that we received from the Honourable Minister. He certainly has indicated, to me at least and I believe to many people in Manitoba, that while the Progressive Conservative government were in Opposition, they were able to make all kinds of criticisms; they were able to make many promises of better things to come, but, Mr. Chairman, when they actually have the opportunity of carrying out some of the things they were talking about, we see absolutely no action whatsoever except, if anything, steps backward. And that's what we have in the area of wildlife management, the protection of wildlife habitat. We see the cancellation of programs that were doing some good things and, Mr. Chairman, no policy or action or programs to take their place. After 16 months of this government being in office, they can no longer look back and say that somehow it was the fault of the former administration because they have been in office long enough now, after 16 months, to make up their minds which direction they want to move in, Mr. Chairman, and what programs they are going to put into place to achieve those policy objectives.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister refers to the debate which we had while the election was on and I believe there were people in that room who have heard what he had to say, who are now saying to themselves, well, what is that Minister doing about the things that he was talking about? Because they see no action, they hear no policy and, Mr. Chairman, this stop, look and listen campaign, or whatever this government seems to be undertaking, is not good enough. And when we hear the Minister of Resources or the Minister of Health and Social Development studying and monitoring and reviewing the problem without taking any action on it, Mr. Chairman, that is not good enough for this side, for this party and, Mr. Chairman, it is not good enough for the people of Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (a)—pass; (b)(1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, just on this section, as I indicated, Mr. Chairman, I would ask most of my questions on the first part. However, here, I would like to know what changes, if any, there are in terms of the Salaries, Other Expenditures; how many staff man years there are in this section; how many are on staff; how many, if any, positions are going to be cut or terminated in this fiscal year.

MR. RANSOM: There are 43 staff man years in that section, Mr. Chairman, and there will continue to be 43. There are 5 vacancies there at the moment. While I'm on my feet I wonder if I could just table a couple of items that I promised earlier that I would have. These have to do with the Environmental Acts and its summaries for 1977 and 1978 and I promised the honourable member some information with respect to layoffs in the department and they are as follows: With Environmental Management there would be one permanent position due to termination of a program; in Minerals there were 6, again because of termination of programs, for a total of 7 permanent positions, and within Minerals there were 8 term positions due to termination of programs. There are still some other term positions within the Alternate Land Use Program which had actually been scheduled to expire the end of December and were extended until the end of March and we hope to be able to place some of those — I cannot say all.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I was just interrupted there for a moment and I didn't quite hear the last part of the Minister's statement. Am I correct in hearing that there was one from Environment, 6 from Mines permanent, for a total of 7 permanent and 15 term that were removed, or was it 8 term?

MR. RANSOM: Eight.

MR. BOSTROM: Eight term, for a total of 15 staff altogether, correct?

MR. RANSOM: Plus, Mr. Chairman, I said there were 8 people in the Alternate Land Use Program which was to have terminated in December which we extended at provincial expense till the end of March, and of those 8 positions we will be redeploying some, but I cannot say all.

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

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, on that same point. Of the total number of people that have been terminated, positions that have been terminated, could he indicate how many of those positions were actually filled at the time of termination; that is, that he had to send termination notices to actual people in the jobs?

MR. RANSOM: Termination notices would have gone to the 7 people in permanent positions. The term positions, as I understand it, don't require termination notices as such because they automatically expire at a particular time unless they are renewed.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, in the area of Other Expenditures there, could the Minister indicate what are the things that are contained in that amount?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised that it's mostly to do with field expenses and with filing and handling office work, etc. Probably the same description that the honourable member has in his session book.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I have a specific question in this area which I would like to relate to the minister to see if he could perhaps answer it. If not now, he could take it as notice. It's relating to the re-survey of lands which are located along the Winnipeg River which are located near Great Falls and the Silver Falls area. I believe his department is undertaking to re-survey those lands with a view to having the people that are now living on those lands on a permanent basis, permanent residents, that is, have the option to either lease them on a long-term, or preferably purchase the lands, because, Mr. Chairman, I believe those lands fall in the same kind of category as those which we had allowed purchase of in the past because the people living there find it very difficult to obtain long-term mortgage financing, just as they do in the remote communities in Manitoba because the traditional lending sources do not make mortgages on Crown Land or on Crown Land leases. So Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the minister has had any reports on that, what the status of that present arrangement is?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that the survey of those lots is proceeding and that they're attempting to get them to the point where they could be sold but there are some concerns — environmental concerns, for instance — that have to do with disposal fields, that sort of thing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, the minister was speaking quite softly there, towards the end of his comments and I didn't quite hear if he said when he expected the surveys to be completed and this request to go forward to Cabinet so that a decision could be made on the issue and whether or not the people in that area could purchase those lots. The people that are living there are very desirous of being able to purchase the lots that they are living on, that is, the permanent residents, and I would state here and now, that it would be my recommendation to the minister that he proceed on that basis; that once the surveys are completed, that the people living on those lots on a permanent basis, be allowed to purchase those lots and I know that takes a Cabinet recommendation. I mean, it has to go to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council and I would ask the minister if he's prepared to follow that to that conclusion; to take that to Cabinet for approval.

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised, Mr. Chairman, that people are there now. There is no plan naturally, to have them removed at all. It's just that the various stages that have to be gone through before the recommendation can be brought to Cabinet, simply haven't been completed yet, and because they are of a negotiating nature, or require communications between the local government and our people, it's hard to say how fast they'll move ahead. There doesn't appear to be any particular major stumbling block, but there are, at least environmental considerations that have to be worked out mutually and satisfactorily.

MR. BOSTROM: I thank the minister for his answer on that. My specific question with respect to the policy here is very important to the people who live in that area and that is, is the minister prepared once all of the administrative details have been worked out and the negotiations have been concluded, is he prepared to take the proposal to Cabinet for decision on whether or not to sell that land to the individual permanent residents who are now residing on those lots, who are desirous of buying their own lot? Would he be prepared to make that recommendation to Cabinet?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Well, the honourable member, I think, realizes that no Cabinet Minister wants to be put in the position of saying: "I'm going to take this particular recommendation to Cabinet, " and then maybe find that Cabinet turns it down, so I'm not going to tell him specifically that is the case. I can tell him that in principle, I think that the concept of individual people owning land that they are working or living on, is a good thing.

MR CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; (b) —pass. (c)(1)—pass. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, in this comprehensive Land Use Planning section, I would like to know what purpose these funds are being used for; what type of planning and what areas are being concentrated on in this fiscal year under review?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: They're doing some community planning and some regional planning, as well. I'm advised that some of the community planning is taking place at Norway House and the regional planning at Thompson, Grand Rapids, the Churchill area, and looking at development of policies having to do with things like remote cottaging, etc.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I recall when this section first began under The Northlands' Agreement, that the Comprehensive Land Use Planning had the scope of dealing on a more of a mackeral-type planning nature, where they were looking at, say, the whole region, rather than the area specifically around a community and I would like to know what direction the government is following at this time. My particular preference in this area is to have that planning concentrate more on the micro aspect, that is, the area immediately around and in a community, so that when the planning process is complete, at least you have a package there that can be utilized by someone. It's not simply a study that's been put on a shelf and people forget about it, but it's a document which has relevant information on resources and land and water and people and employment possibilities, and so on, that would be of value to the particular community. Is that the direction this planning is now going or has the scope been changed?

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, this group will no doubt be greatly influenced in the direction that they take by the policies that we are now in the process of developing and hopefully, will be in place before very long. I would expect, then, that there would be some change in direction, because this obviously is one group of people that respond very sensitively to changes in thrust. So, while at the moment, they still have been doing some of the community-type planning, some of the regional planning. It's hard to anticipate precisely what they will be doing, but I would think that in terms if there would be some involvement in general resource allocation in trying to determine what the areas of public need are and generally providing information that could be used in allocation of resources.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (3)—pass; (c)—pass. (d)(1)Salaries—pass. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, am I correct in assuming that this is the area which was terminated and where all the staff have expired their terms as the minister had earlier described?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This was the alternate Land Use Program. Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (d)—pass. (e)(1)Salaries—pass. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I see somewhat of an increase here in the area of Salaries. I wonder if the Minister could indicate what new positions, if any, are being added in this area.

MR. RANSOM: There are no new positions there, Mr. Chairman. There are 77 staff man years.

MR. BOSTROM: Can the Minister indicate how many of those positions are filled and if it is his intention to terminate any of those positions during the year?

MR. RANSOM: There are six vacancies in that area right now, Mr. Chairman. There are no terminations in this area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (e)—pass; (f)(1) Salaries — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, in this section, I would like to hear the Minister's description of what exactly they will be doing under the Northlands Agreement in the fiscal year before us.

MR. RANSOM: These are controlled surveys and community mapping, Mr. Chairman.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister be more specific as to which areas of the province they will be concentrating on in the fiscal year we are examining.

MR. RANSOM: Well, it is in the Northland areas, Mr. Chairman. I understand there are 55 communities located there and they are doing a control grid as well.

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

MR. BOSTROM: Perhaps the Minister doesn't have the information at his fingertips there but I would appreciate having a short list, if he has it, in written form, as to which communities and areas they will be concentrating their surveys and mapping efforts in this fiscal year that we are reviewing.

MR. RANSOM: I am just advised, Mr. Chairman, that by next year that all of those communities that were included in the area will be completed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass; (3)—pass; (f)—pass; (g)(1) Salaries — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I would like to know, in this area, what staff are covered by the Salaries portion and if he is considering terminating or has terminated any positions in that department?

MR. RANSOM: There are three staff man years here, Mr. Chairman, and one of those is vacant now. There are no terminations in this section.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, there is a considerable sum of money involved here. Could the Minister give us a breakdown as to what activities are being planned for this section for the coming fiscal year?

MR. RANSOM: The money would be used for water control works, Mr. Chairman. I guess we could

give some indication of where that would be if the honourable member wishes.

MR. BOSTROM: Yes, I would like to hear some specific details on that, Mr. Chairman, and also if any of those funds would be used for other things that I had mentioned earlier such as assisting the communities in actually organizing the harvest and/or doing some of the planting that seems to be very successful in assisting these areas in increasing the potential harvestable crop.

MR. RANSOM: The areas that we are involved in would be a couple of lakes in the Whiteshell, Poplar River, Little Grand Rapids, and Whitemouth Lake. We are providing assistance, technical advice to people as requested. We are not as actively involved in some of the things that the honourable member referred to earlier, such as harvesting.

MR. BOSTROM: Is the Minister saying, Mr. Chairman, that his department has the capacity there to be receptive to community requests to assist in organizing for the wild rice harvest, and also, to assist them in obtaining wild rice mechanical harvesting machines and also, in the area of assisting them in the planting of certain natural lakes to increase the potential harvest?

MR. RANSOM: I guess it depends partly on what we mean by assistance. Our people are available to provide advice and direction.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; (3)—pass; (g)—pass. Resolution 87—pass.

Resolution No. 88, Item 8 — Fisheries and Wildlife, (a)(1) Salaries — the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I got a call from a gentleman — and I think this would be appropriate, just to get an answer to a question — he indicated to me that with regard to fishing licences, that they usually run out in March and that they don't start again until some weeks later, so that there is a period during the spawning season when there is no licence available. Apparently this year they carry over until April 15, which means that people will have fishing licences during a time of the year that it never had before. I wonder if there is a reason for this or if I am incorrect in what I have been told.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, that is sort of a technical point that I'll have to take under advisement and get the answer.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, that is fine. I don't expect the Minister to know it, but I would hope that he could find out by Monday so that I could . . . Because if what the gentleman says is correct, then apparently there will be some problems with regard to fishing licences being in effect during the spawning season when they are not supposed to be.

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

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, here again, as in the previous section, I have a number of questions which are complex in the sense that they fall into different areas of the sections below the divisional administration level, and I would again attempt to impose my questions here rather than to try to break them up into their specific parts to fit into the other areas.

In the area of Fishery Management, for example, I would ask the Minister if there has been any change in the policy of licensing of commercial fishermen on Lake Winnipeg?

MR. RANSOM: No, there has not, Mr. Chairman, but again — and I know this is unsatisfactory to the honourable member — but in each of the policy areas within my department we are actively reviewing them all and while we have not made any changes at this point, they are under active review and I certainly would not want to leave the impression that there might not be changes made. If and when changes are to be made, again, there will be full discussion and consultation, at least with representatives of the people that might be affected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: I wonder if the Minister could give us a status report on the administrative and regulation changes that were implemented for Lake Winnipegosis, and I refer to the changing of the mesh size there on a stage basis. I wonder if that problem has been brought to the Minister's attention and if he can tell us what the status of that is.

MR. RANSOM: I'm sorry Mr. Chairman. I was dispatching a note out of the House there. I know the Honourable Member was talking about Lake Winnipegosis and some problems. I wonder if he just would state the specific question.

MR. BOSTROM: Well some years ago there was controversy regarding the size of the mesh for the fishing season on Lake Winnipegosis. Administrative change was made and regulation change was implemented and Mr. Chairman, I would just like to know from the Minister what the status of that program is of implementing a mesh size change.

MR. RANSOM: I would assume that he is referring by the change from a four inch to a four and a quarter inch mesh and it remains at four inches at this stage. There is a commercial fishermen's advisory group established there who have met with government people on a number of occasions. I believe that the harvest has substantially improved and that there did not seem to be the same necessity to move towards a larger mesh size and so there is agreement that we would remain at that point to see what developed really, whether there was an indication that that was satisfactory or whether it would indeed be necessary to go to a larger size.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd be curious to know who is making that recommendation to the Minister. Is it a combination of the fishermen and the departmental technical staff? It was my impression that the departmental technical staff was pretty adamant about the four and a quarter inch mesh as being the only long-range solution to the problems of the Lake Winnipegosis fishery. I'm wondering if the Minister has perhaps chosen an easy short-term solution here which may not be the advice given to him and his government by the technical staff in the Department of Resources.

MR. RANSOM: Well I think the Honourable Member is correct in his recollection of what the situation was a couple of years ago, Mr. Chairman, but in view of the improvement in the fishery now, I think I'm correct in interpreting it, that to use his words, they're not that adamant at this point; they're prepared to say that there doesn't appear to be the same basis now to make that change and bring about all of the investment and such that's necessary. So as long as the situation is improving then it's hard to make a case to make that change so it's not a matter at this stage of me making a decision one way or the other. I think it's fair to say that there's agreement that this shouldn't be done another year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well Mr. Chairman, what the Minister's telling me is that the biological science is not very exact and it's amazing how recommendations change with the change in government. If he's telling me that the biologists are now recommending that four inches is acceptable when they were pretty adamant in recommending to me that four and a quarter inch was the only way to go and I personally took a fair bit of abuse, I believe, from the fishermen of the area who were pretty adamant on the other side of the question. But the biological advice that I received while I was Minister was that the four and a quarter inch was the only long-range solution to that problem and any other decision was an irresponsible one. Now, if the Minister is telling me that the biologists in his department have changed their recommendations then something is highly suspect here. Either the biological science is imperfect or the Minister's answer is somehow imperfect in that he's not complete revealing all the facts behind this case. Mr. Chairman, further to that, I would ask him if the biologists have given him any other specific reasons for the increase in the catch on that lake? Have there been some other factors which have been previous to this undetected in bringing about a greater catch in particularly the pickerel fishery of that lake?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I think being able to lay some claim to being a biologist myself I would be the first to admit that it's an imperfect science and I wouldn't want to leave the impression that the technical recommendation has changed. What I am saying is that the evidence now is not as strong as it was before. The catch per unit of effort being exerted by the fishermen is rising and in view of that taking place then it's much more difficult then to see the merit in making that change. So, I wouldn't want to leave the impression that the recommendation has changed. I'd say it's not as strong as it was.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, I was hoping the Minister would have given us a bit of a status report on the success of the departmental efforts in the area of trying to rehabilitate the Lake Winnipegosis fishery. One of them was an experimental program of pickerel rearing ponds, for example, which may or may not have been part of the reason for the success in rehabilitating the Lake Winnipegosis fishery. I'd like to know if the department is continuing that program under this Minister and if he has any confidence in its potential success and the department has given him any reports on the effects this pickerel rearing experiment may have had one way or the other on the increase in the pickerel fishery of that lake?

MR. RANSOM: The program is continuing, Mr. Chairman, but at this stage there's nothing conclusive that can be drawn from it but the Honourable Member is certainly raising a point that may be one of those things that's involved in what we're seeing there.

MR. BOSTROM: In the area of fisheries also Mr. Chairman I'd like to know in the northern area of the province, an experimental program of pulse fishing was attempted by the previous administration and several lakes had been selected, and an attempt made to fish as extensively as possible each one of those lakes with the idea of rotating them every two or three or four years to determine if that may be a more efficient harvesting method of northern lakes that are really of really uneconomic size to establish an annual limit on. Is the Minister continuing that program? Does he have any status report to give us on the program?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised that the program has turned out to be on uneconomical one. A report is available and I would be happy to provide it to the Honourable Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: I would appreciate receiving a copy of that report. The other question I have with respect to the fisheries — is the Minister responsible for the fish subsidy program for transportation and is that program continuing and if so, at what level of funding for the fiscal year under review?

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, the transportation assistance program is in the Department of Northern Affairs, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Minister some questions about the coarse fishing. There were attempts in the past to try and establish some market for coarse fish, develop some processing ability in that respect and I'm wondering if the Minister has anything to report to us as to the progress of efforts in terms of increasing the value added of coarse fish to Manitobans?

MR. RANSOM: Not really, Mr. Chairman. We had scheduled a meeting today as a matter of fact with the Lake Manitoba fishermen advisory group or group of commercial fishermen from there who were going to discuss that sort of item especially with respect to a plant at Eddystone I believe and I think there was something in the paper within the last day or two on that item but unfortunately that meeting had to be cancelled because of the weather today. But no there really isn't a major effort at all being mounted to my knowledge by the corporation who of course have the responsibility for marketing of fish. Unless the Honourable Member has some specific item then to refer to, Mr. Chairman, I have nothing more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: I'd like to ask the Minister whether he believes that there is a viable industry in the area of coarse fish? I know that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board hasn't really been that dynamic in its marketing policies and programs in the past and I think that some fault lies with them. At the same time I think it's important for the province and for this department to define what the potential might be in this area because if coarse fish are just being thrown back or taken out of the lake but not processed further, then I think there may be a potential and significant loss of revenue to fishermen and there may be a potential and significant loss to the gross provincial

product of the province if this isn't followed up. So, I'd like to ask the Minister if the department has done any work in trying to determine what the potential from the coarse fish industry might be in Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's an interesting point that attracted attention of course for a lot of years, not just in Manitoba but in Saskatchewan and other areas and I think there were some private companies that were quite active in that prior to the advent of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and it is perhaps significant that now in Manitoba, it's a private individual who is managing to at least develop an acceptable product and do some limited marketing within Manitoba at least. Certainly we're going to be looking closely at what he's doing there and see what further potential there is but really in terms of marketing, I've always been advised that it would really require a pretty major promotional effort if you're going to get into markets that would really be substantial and into foreign markets. And that sort of effort has not been mounted by the corporation in that there did not seem to be at this point any inclination to do that.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, I'd like to ask the Minister if it's the government's intention to make representations to the Freshwater Fish Marketing of a Board to pursue this matter of a possible coarse fish market to the south of us and in other countries and in so doing, if they do make representation to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to do some work in this area, will they do so on the basis of some homework that the department may have done determining what the potential yield of coarse fish might be in Manitoba, determining what that value might be given prevailing World prices for coarse fish? We're talking about a budget here of \$4,376,000 and it would strike me that when you start getting into areas of determining what the potential value of this type of resource is, that's something that possibly is too great a job to leave to one individual. So I'm asking the Minister if any work has been done on this, is it available, what type of technical work is it, and are representations being made to the Federal Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation because we are talking about a fairly significant budget item at present?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, this is to me an example of the lack of initiative really, or lack of willingness on the part of the Freshwater Corporation to pursue this. They are the people who are charged with the responsibility of marketing fish. They are the people who have the contacts outside of the country and I believe I'm correct in saying that they have maintained that there is not a market available, it could not be developed and promoted without the expenditure of a substantial amount of money and they were not prepared to do that. Now we have a situation where on a local basis an individual working on his own initiative has developed a product which seems to be acceptable and he is working to market it. He is paying a percentage to the corporation while he's doing this but he no doubt is restricted in what he is able to do. So I have some sympathy when the Honourable Member says that it's necessary for someone to pursue this, but I think that really the way that it's going to be pursued is by some aggressive marketing group, either an individual or the corporation and the corporation does not seem to have been able to develop that over the past few years and certainly we can bring pressure on them; I'm sure the fishermen intend to bring pressure on them to get the markets going for these rough fish so that it pays them to sell them rather than throw them away but it's going to require more than that if we're going to really develop a viable market.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, the Minister hasn't provided me with any factual information regarding the potential yield of coarse fish in Manitoba. Well, the reason why I raise that is that if you look at the salt water fish industry the claim had been made occasionally by some of the Atlantic provinces that the limit should be extended out to 200 miles and there has been discussion on that for a number of years. Frankly, it was not until a member of the Newfoundland government, took hold of the issue, did homework, didn't rely on the private fish companies, indeed there were some members of the Newfoundland government who had made their money out of the private fish industry. But, the man involved was John Crosby who was Minister of Resources at that time for the Newfoundland government and I can recall his coming to first ministers' conferences or resources ministers' conferences and making this an issue.

He did his homework, he brought forth data which indicated the potential yield that might accrue to Canadians if foreign vessels were prevented from fishing within a 200 mile limit of Canada. He

was very, very effective in pressing that case, but he was effective in pressing that case because he had done his homework and I would assume that his department had done the homework as well. I think that what we're having in Newfoundland right now is a revival of the fisheries industry because foreign offshore fishing has been restricted to outside a 200 mile zone. That restriction came about by government action and it came about because the Minister responsible in Newfoundland, a Conservative minister, decided that the government had to do something in this respect. He was a Progressive Conservative, my colleague said. That's right. So I would ask the Minister to be a Progressive Conservative, to use his department to emulate the model set by John Crosby in Newfoundland in terms of pulling together an adequate documented case and I think if that was done it might be possible for the minister at resources conferences to put this forward or even to include this item on the agenda of one of the many first ministers' conferences that will undoubtedly take place between now and the next provincial election.

Therefore, I urge the Minister to actually do some homework and not slough this whole area off. I think it is an important area; I think it has potential. As I said before, we are talking about a fairly large budget item here and it would strike me that it wouldn't be too difficult for the department to pull together some factual material in this area. Perhaps they're already done so. But I've asked the Minister if that exists and he's not been answering the questions I've been asking him about fact. We've been talking about strategy and I do think that we can continue to talk about strategy but I think it's important for the department to get down and do some homework in this area. Now, perhaps he could answer if any homework has been done with respect to the potential yield of coarse fish in Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, about the only analogies between the situation that the Honourable Member refers to in here is fish and Progressive Conservatives, really, because you're dealing with an entirely different situation. He's talking about restricting foreign vessels. Now, we'd be quite prepared to restrict foreign vessels from Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg if he thinks that would make any difference.

He's talking about a situation where there was a market for those fish. It wasn't a matter of not being a market. It was a question of who was going to harvest the fish and who was going to sell them. We're talking here about a situation where there is no market. Now, the Honourable Member was a senior bureaucrat in the planning and priorities in the previous government for a number of years, both before and after the 1973 election and he should certainly be aware of any kind of studies that were carried out in that period of time. There have not been any additional studies carried out in our term of office.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister keeps wanting to talk about the period 1969 to 1970 and yet these estimates don't talk about that period. These estimates are really requesting funds for the period April 1st, 1979 to March 31st, 1980 and I think that's the important subject at hand. And, the point is that there's potential and it requires some homework being done and if sufficient homework wasn't done in this area in the past — and I don't think there was — that is no reason for saying that we shouldn't do anything now and I'm urging that the Minister consider this. I think he's admitted that no work is being done of a technical nature on this matter so that we're not in the position then to put forward a substantial case to the Federal Government to get it to change its role in policies with respect to the Federal Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation.

I think there is some potential here for the fishermen of Manitoba and I think there's also some potential here for related industries in the fishing industry. So I ask the Minister if he would take that under advisement, if he can possibly squeeze out some research capacity out of this entire allocation of \$4,376,000 and allocate some few dollars to determining what the potential yield of coarse fish in Manitoba is because if we have that data, then I think we're in a position to argue our case much more effectively with the Federal Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, just a word. We probably have yield information that is sufficient at this stage for any decisions that have to be made. The problem is whether or not the market can be developed and I think that before we address that specific question, and I'm not saying that the government shouldn't give attention to it, particularly if there are individual people who are prepared to promote it. I think the broader issue that has to be addressed first is the effectiveness of the Marketing Corporation.

MR. PARASIUUK: Yes, I tend to agree with the Minister on that. I think that it would be very important for us to really critically evaluate what the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation is doing and where some gaps exist and to point out what should be done in order for those gaps to be filled. And, as I said, I think that case can best be made if the department undertakes some work in this area so that we just don't talk in generalities about this, that we in fact provide some hard documented evidence. And, I think that it is possible to show that there is the potential in the market for coarse fish especially if the present coarse fish is just being thrown back in the lake or hauled out of the water and dumped somewhere.

I think that the line of attack is with the Federal Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation and a secondary line of attack is with the Federal Department of Fisheries, and I think a third line of attack in this area would be with the first Minister of the country. We haven't paid enough attention at all to the fisheries potential of the fresh water fisheries. We've concentrated as a country on the salt water because that was the traditional fishing industry of Canada and yet I think the fisheries industry does provide significant potential for many people of native ancestry, people who are generally of lower incomes and therefore I think it's important for us to try and do everything we can to break that cycle of poverty, break that cycle of dependency and start building up those potential industries in close proximity to where Indian and Metis northerners live.

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

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, just on that policy, Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, I'd like to know if the Minister has had the opportunity to examine the operation of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and if he can give us any indication of the policy he has towards the operation of that particular corporation. There were certain indications by the Minister who was responsible for this department prior to his assuming the responsibility, that there would be certain changes that he would be seeking in the operation of the corporation. I'm wondering if he is knowledgeable about any changes that have been achieved and/or any changes which he personally, as the new Minister responsible for this section, will be pushing for in terms of that total scope and operation of the FFMC.

MR. RANSOM: To some extent, Mr. Chairman, we are I think getting some understanding of what some of the difficulties are. I believe my predecessor said that basically he was in support of the corporation but that he wanted to see some things happen that would make it more effective, and I think that also is my approach to it. I assumed the responsibilities for this part of the department of course just at a time when he was getting a pretty good understanding of the corporation and naturally it's taken me some time to appreciate what's going on. But the issue that really again has to be addressed is how well is it serving the people that it's intended to serve, and I think there are some indications that it hasn't done that in the way that it was expected that it would do it and the percentage returns to the fishermen have perhaps not risen to the extent that was expected. It doesn't seem to have been sensitive enough to the wishes of the fishermen if we judge from the reactions that I have heard from fishermen. It seems to be rather restrictive in the sense of particularly of local marketing and that area, so there have been some reviews done. The governments that are involved, the Provincial and Territorial Governments have been involved and put together a report that has now been distributed among the provinces and we're seeing what sort of common positions there might be and we expect to be meeting with Mr. LeBlanc as soon as we can arrange that meeting and I would expect that following that we'll have a little better direction and better sense of which direction we're going to be pushing in.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, as vague as the Minister's remarks are, I am somewhat encouraged by them in the sense that I believe he's taking somewhat the same position that we took while we were in government and that is that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, while it does require some improvement and where they could make some changes to make them more responsive to the fishermen, and some administrative changes to make their operating costs more in line with the single desk selling agency that they were originally conceptualized as, I believe that he's not saying we should throw the FFMC out but rather to make the kind of changes that need to be made. Mr. Chairman, I wish him well in that respect because I believe I'd be speaking for the fishermen when I say that they are generally in support of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. There are some groups of fishermen who are in a minority who are absolutely and completely opposed to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, but Mr. Chairman, these are not

of the total group of fishermen in the Province of Manitoba, and I would say that the majority of the fishermen are generally supporting the concept of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and they do not want the government to give the FFMC the boot, so to speak, and to throw it back to the old method of the private fish companies competing for every last fish that's in any of the lakes in Manitoba because, Mr. Chairman, under that system it was the individual fisherman who suffered and a few of the strong, so to speak, survived, and a few of the strong, those with the so-called longest reach, managed to capture most of the profits and the vast majority of fishermen were left very poverty-stricken as a result of the activities .

So, Mr. Chairman, I believe I'd be speaking for the fishermen when I say that they generally want the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to continue operating, they support the concept, they would want this Minister and this government as representing the people of Manitoba to continue to press the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation to improve their activities, to improve their administration, to reduce the percentage amount of the total final selling price that is absorbed in the operation of FFMC.

When I first started as the Minister of Resources, Mr. Chairman, I believe the corporation was at that time returning 50 percent of the corporation's final price to the fishermen. As a result of pressing the corporation and having the meetings that we did with the federal government and the federal Minister responsible for that corporation, we managed to press the corporation, I believe, into sharpening their pencils and the last tally I had was that they were returning approximately 60 percent of the final price to the fishermen. Well Mr. Chairman, I think even that figure can be improved upon and I would give this Minister my full support in pressing for that action, to have the corporation review its operations.

I have a couple of other questions with respect to other areas of responsibility within Fisheries, and one is the hatchery operations in the province. The Fish Hatchery operations a few years ago — there were at least three main Fish Hatcheries operating on a permanent basis — the Whiteshell Trout Hatchery, the Grand Rapids Hatchery which produced whitefish and pickerel and supported the commercial fishing operations, and the Dauphin River Hatchery which produced whitefish in support of commercially fished waters. Can the Minister indicate the status of the Hatcheries in the Province of Manitoba at the present time, if he's planning on maintaining those Hatcheries or reducing them or what is the status at the present time?

MR. RANSOM: I'm advised they're continuing, Mr. Chairman, and in addition there are a couple of seasonal hatcheries as well. I'd like to make a brief response to what the honourable member said about the corporation, I think one thing that needs to be understood is that Northern Fisheries in particular are in extremely serious shape and that the amount, the poundage of fish to come out of the north really is decreased from what it was under pre-corporation times, and that the percentage return to the fisherman has fluctuated in the time of the corporation and prior to the time of the corporation. But the figures that I have seen have indicated that really the percentage return to the fisherman is not greatly different from what it was prior to the corporation. You pick an individual year and you'll find one that's high, but take the life of the corporation and the ten years prior to it and there's very little difference, if any significant difference.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, the Northern Fisheries as the Minister is probably aware, is certainly in a unique and very problematic situation in the sense that while the prices that they receive for their product have not gone up substantially, the costs that they are faced with, in terms of the transportation of the product particularly, and other production costs associated with fishing in the far north part of Manitoba, have been escalating at very high rates. And, Mr. Chairman, it's not only the transportation of the product out of the particular small lake where the fishermen may be fishing, but it's the transportation of the fishermen and his gear and his equipment into that lake and out of that lake at the beginning of the fishing season, and at the conclusion of the fishing season. Mr. Chairman, it's a combination of those factors that has caused the problem, and it is for that reason, Mr. Chairman, that we instituted programs while we were in government to assist those fishermen.

One of those was the fish transportation program, which used to be under this Department and I will be questioning that program when we come to the Northern Affairs Estimates. I would suggest to the government generally, that that program should be within the Department of Resources because it relates to a product which is within this Department, relates to an area of expertise that is within the confines of the Department of Resources. I believe that I would support this Minister in attempting to get that program back into this Department. That's where it belongs.

Mr. Chairman, there are other programs we had to assist the fisherman. We had the SNEP program, which assisted fishermen in building lakeside facilities. There were grants available to individual groups of fishermen to build lakeside facilities at their lakes where they were fishing, and

this helped to cover some of the high costs that they were facing. We also had a program to assist them in putting up ice in the wintertime. Now I understand, Mr. Chairman, that this government has cancelled those programs. So while the Minister is saying that he in his Department is concerned about the price costs squeeze that the fishermen are caught in his government is doing nothing to assist and everything to aggravate that problem. I don't think it falls within this Department really, to follow that line of argument much further than I'm following it. But, Mr. Chairman, nevertheless I believe it is a responsibility of the Minister of Resources, to try to assist the fishermen that are part of the client group that are served by his Department, to fight for those fishermen that attempt to get the kind of programs in place by his government generally if he can't get them within his Department, to assist those fishermen in the harvest of the resources and in pursuit of the livelihood which they have traditionally followed.

Mr. Chairman, I still maintain, even though the fishermen are in the north are dissatisfied in many ways with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, that they're a lot better off dealing with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation than they ever were with the private fish companies. It's a matter of record and many people in the north will remember the prices that the individual fisherman used to receive when he fished on the lakes, in the north, in years past when they were fishing for private fish companies. It was really starvation wages, Mr. Chairman, and I would not be recommending to the fishermen that they go back to those days. So I would maintain even in that case that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation should be maintained. We should be fighting to get that corporation to do a better job for the fishermen, but at the same time the Provincial Government has a responsibility to assist those fishermen in other areas, that are not FFMC responsibilities; they are to a certain extent Federal Government responsibilities, however, and we were always pushing the Federal Government to assist the northern communities, particularly the Treaty Indian communities, where they do have a distinct and constitutional responsibility. They should be assisting those communities in the fishing industry.

We managed to drag them in to helping the Island Lake Fishery, and it seemed to be the only one that they would step in to assist. But, Mr. Chairman, I believe they have a responsibility. I would suggest to this Minister that he talk to the federal officials, who are responsible for the delivery of services to Treaty Indian people in Manitoba, and attempt to get them to cost-share with him in the provision of adequate lakeside facilities for those fishermen, adequate assistance in terms of providing the gear and equipment necessary to do the fishing, and also to assist those fishermen in an equitable way in terms of transporting their fish to market because that is a cost which they simply cannot afford under the present price structure of fish.

I don't know if the Minister is aware of it or not but the fish in Northern Manitoba are of a particular quality, which makes them less viable from an economic point of view because many of the fish are of a cyst-infested type, which makes them less valueble per pound than the fish that are fished in the more southerly lakes, such as Lake Winnipeg. It's rather ironic, Mr. Chairman, but true that the fish that are the most expensive to catch are the ones that bring the least price when you get them to the market place. So, Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the Minister doesn't take too long to acquaint himself with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, and the problems that are facing the northern fishermen, and I would hope that he would press his government to reinstate some of those programs and/or introduce new programs to help those fishermen, who are in Northern Manitoba who are simply not able to operate if they are not given some assistance in the areas that I have outlined. And, Mr. Chairman, the only alternative to many of those people is welfare. So to the extent that this government is not assisting those people to continue the livelihood that they wish to continue, then, Mr. Chairman, this government is abandoning those people to welfare.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

MR. BARROW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd just ask a few questions on the replanting of exotic fish, like the brook trout, rainbows, where they were put into sloughs or small lakes. The program is successful I might add, Mr. Minister, it's very well patronized in my area. It makes a difference to the people who fish the deep seas, the deep water fish because these fish are surface feeders. What makes them attractive, Mr. Minister, is they feed on the surface. You can see them; it's an experience for anyone, especially the youth. I'd like to know first of all, Mr. Minister, the program as I said is successful up there, it's a big thing. How is it Manitoba-wise, where they plant them in sloughs and so on? Is it a successful program? Is it working well?

MR. RANSOM: Perhaps the Honourable Member is referring to two different things, Mr. Chairman. One, the sport fishing stocking, which has been done in a number of different small lakes in the Province, which to my knowledge has been quite successful. Also, there has been the commercial

farming of rainbow trout in the area around Erickson, for instance, which also I think has proven to be quite successful.

MR. BARROW: Well, Mr. Minister, can anyone buy these fish? And if they can, could you tell me the price per thousand of the fish, in the fingerling stage?

MR. RANSOM: Well, I'd be happy to get the address of the group, the company that provides them on a commercial basis to the fishermen. I don't believe that the Province has been involved in providing fingerlings to individual people, but there is a company that does that on a commercial basis.

MR. BARROW: One problem I ran into, Mr. Minister, and I hope I was right. This individual found a small lake with no inlet nor outlet, and he stocked it at his own expense, and then he had people going in fishing in that particular lake. He tried to stop this, but the lake was on Crown land. I assumed that they were perfectly right in being able to fish even though he had stocked the lake himself. Is this right?

MR. RANSOM: Without knowing the details, Mr. Chairman, I would expect so.

MR. BARROW: Well, Mr. Minister, I want to ask you one last question and I should have done it myself when I had the opportunity, but Flin Flon has a lake in the center of town, it's unique, Ross Lake. It drains from the company, that's where these two dump tailings, and this has been prevented. Would the Minister consider stocking that lake more or less as a tourist attraction?

MR. RANSOM: I'm sure, Mr. Chairman, that our people have looked at that over the years, and my guess, and that's all it is, would be that the area simply is not suitable for fish but I'll certainly check that for the Honourable Member and if it's any different I'll report to him.

MR. BARROW: Well, that's right, Mr. Minister, I recognize your answer and I appreciate it, but evidently as years go by the poisons of the lake become less so eventually it will sustain these fish. Is this the point where you'd consider stocking?

MR. RANSOM: I'm sure there would be no question, Mr. Chairman, that if the habitat was satisfactory the stocking would be done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Minister, I was just sitting, listening to the questions of the Member for Rupertsland and also the Member for Flin Flon, and I wonder now that the environment and the fishery things are kind of under one Minister, if number one, if he could take it as notice and find out where the private effort stands out in Stony Mountain, where they had established a fishery. They had bumped into some environmental problems, I think it was nitrogen in the water or something like that that they had to go out of production. And also, just if the Minister in his consideration of assistance to people such as the — I'm sorry for the moment I can't remember the name of the company. But if in assisting these people to develop enterprises in the Province, and who does it I'm not that much concerned with, whether it's in the private or public sector, but nevertheless if he could make it available to these people the amount of public assistance that has been made over the years in other fields, for example, in agriculture. Everybody is aware, and I don't question the efficacy of providing the money for this purpose, but for years we have provided millions of dollars for the development of different types of seeds and rust-resistant strains and all the rest of it for agriculture, and I think that this kind of effort should be made relative to helping people trying to establish businesses in the Province.

I was slightly familiar with the effort in Stony Mountain at the time and it seemed to me in passing strange that efforts couldn't be made to assist that particular concern at that time so that they didn't go belly-up but I'm not criticizing anything in the Minister's Estimates at this time but just perhaps sharing a few thoughts with him in this regard.

MR. RANSOM: As I recall, Mr. Chairman, from last year's Estimates, I offered to personally investigate that situation for the Honourable Member at Stony Mountain and think he declined at the time because he felt there were a lot of civil servants, government people that were around there at that particular point in time. But certainly I agree that this is an area where if people need some technical assistance then it's something that government can assist with.

And certainly with respect to the trout farming, there was a lot of government input by the Freshwater Institute and I believe also by this department. So there has been a good deal of technical assistance provided in that particular instance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. BOYCE: Just briefly, Mr. Chairman, to use it as a case in point, and I'm not suggesting that it should be done with reference to this specific company, but nevertheless I had understood at the time that it was a matter of solving a particular technical problem and riding through that storm — and I didn't know at the time, I share that with the Minister — on how you resolved these problems, but nevertheless it appeared to me that it was just a matter of riding through a storm and perhaps, in conjunction with his other colleagues, he could make not only the technical assistance available to these people, but financial assistance.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2) —pass — the Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: I would ask the Minister if he can inform us as to whether the Savage Island Fish Processing Plant in the Island Lake area is currently operating?

MR. RANSOM: I don't know the answer to that, Mr. Chairman. I could find that out.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I wonder if the Minister can confirm that he has been approached by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Board to help fund certain repairs at the Savage Island Fish Processing Plant, both his department and the Department of Indian Affairs have been approached for the purpose of funding? To date, I understand that the Department of Indian Affairs has replied by offering approximately the same level of funding that they did in the previous year, which is \$159,000, but that to date no funding guarantees have been put forth to the institute by the department on behalf of the Government of Manitoba. I wonder if he can confirm that?

MR. RANSOM: I can't confirm the offer from the Federal Government. I know there were some ongoing negotiations and that last year the Federal Government had not participated at a time when the province did put up some additional money on transportation assistance that the Honourable Member for Rupertsland was referring to. I do not know what the status of negotiations is there and I will have to take that under advisement and find out.

MR. COWAN: Can the Minister assure us that the freight equalization program of the province, or the subsidy on transportation of fish, is going to continue at previous levels, out of the Island Lake area?

MR. RANSOM: I previously had said, Mr. Chairman, that the freight assistance program was in the Northern Affairs Department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, further to those comments and further to the discussion I was having a bit earlier regarding the assistance to fishermen, I would like to pose a question to the Minister and I would like to hear his answer on what exactly he as a Minister, and his department, will be doing to assist fishermen in northern Manitoba to continue their livelihood? What kind of assistance is contained within these Estimates, or what kind of assistance would he be proposing to his Cabinet colleagues to provide the necessary financial and technical support to these community areas to allow them to continue their livelihood in the fishing industry in northern Manitoba? Or is he not concerned and he is just going to study and monitor the fishing situation and not concern himself with the harvesting of the resource which, I suggest, is also a responsibility of his because I believe that the government should act in an interventionist way in assisting the northern communities to harvest resources of every kind and by so doing, provide job opportunities at the local level rather than to allow people simply to take the only available alternative, which is welfare?

MR. RANSOM: Of course it is an area of concern, Mr. Chairman, but I don't believe that the solution necessarily lies with simply putting more money in. There is a tremendous amount of money now, public money, that is going in to support the industry and despite all the public money that has gone in, as the honourable member knows, the northern fisheries are in a critical situation. I'm not

entirely sure that the answer is simply to throw more money at it. I think that we have to address the whole system, really, from harvest to transportation to marketing, and perhaps particularly the marketing, to see if there isn't some way that the industry can be made more viable at that end, rather than simply increasing the freight assistance or helping to buy boats or nets. That really doesn't, I don't think, solve the problem. It deals with the symptom.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, what I consider throwing money into a problem is throwing money, in a welfare sense, to people rather than using money as a tool to assist people to follow a viable course of action which will produce something. I would rather see people working and producing something, in this example, fish — have them produce an edible, useful product for society — than to have people simply get money for nothing. Mr. Chairman, it is not as though you have to force these people to do that. These people want to fish; they have always wanted to fish. It has been a traditional livelihood to them. And, Mr. Chairman, if this Minister is going to just sit back and study and monitor the situation, he is the one who is going to be throwing money at the problem. He is going to be throwing money down the drain in welfare when these people could be working and doing something productive like fishing.

Mr. Chairman, there is a request before him at the present time, and before his government, to assist the Island Lake Fishery. Mr. Chairman, it is very timely that he make a decision on this and get the lead out, because this fishery has to have the ice put up now, if it is not already put up, they have to get the ice put up so that they will be ready to fish by open water and, Mr. Chairman, they need the kind of financial assistance that this government should provide in conjunction with Indian Affairs. We have the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation coming forward at this time offering to do something. I am sure Indian Affairs at this time are prepared to put up some money towards assisting the fishermen to follow a viable occupation this summer, to be fishermen rather than to exist on welfare. And, Mr. Chairman, I think this government and this Minister should be taking some initiative in this matter as well rather than just sitting back and throwing money at the problem in the form of welfare.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass; (2)—pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, before we go past this section, I would like to continue on another area and see what the Minister and his department are doing in the area of live bait industry in Manitoba. There have been, I realize, a number of proposals and requests coming out of particularly that northeastern part of Manitoba with respect to the live bait industry. I know there are differing biological and technical advice probably coming to the Minister on this matter — if he is not aware of it himself, through his own technical training — as to the pros and cons of the live bait industry and whether or not people should be allowed to handle and sell live bait. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what the status of those proposals are within his department and if he is intending to have regulations limiting or restricting the sale of live bait, or if he is going to allow a more generous attitude in that respect?

MR. RANSOM: The regulations in the coming season will be the same as they were last year, Mr. Chairman. I am looking at the possibility of making changes that would encourage the industry rather than be more restrictive.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Minister could indicate in that respect, regarding the live bait industry, more specifically what changes he sees his department making to allow more generous regulations, if you will, to allow small operations, small entrepreneurs, to handle that as a sideline? I know there are a number of operations that are proposing to handle it. I believe there are some regulations limiting their handling of live bait, the types of live bait they can handle. Could the Minister be more specific, for the benefit of those people who are proposing to do this as a private enterprise?

MR. RANSOM: Well, we will be more specific when we are able to announce what the policy is, but it is a matter of weighing the arguments against liberalizing the use of it, and those range from the possibility of the introduction of exotic species to increasing the take of sport fish. But the potential is there, seemingly, for a rather significant industry. A pretty substantial return could be generated by it because live bait is considerably more valuable than the frozen. So it is a matter of assessing what those arguments against it are, and I think the honourable member realizes that some of the contrary arguments are put by the same professional people that he was referring to earlier with respect to some of the commercial fisheries. So it does require a very careful consideration before we move but my inclination is to try to encourage it as an industry.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I had indicated that in this section I would be asking questions which fall into different areas of the whole fisheries and wildlife vote which is before us. I would like to ask a question with respect to The Wild Fur Program, which I believe is cost-shared 50-50 with the Federal Government and which became operational in 1975. I wonder if the Minister could tell us what the status is of that program and what kind of activities he will see his department carrying out in this fiscal year before us?

MR. RANSOM: I think as the honourable member will see, the amount of money being provided there is approximately at the same level as it was last year and the sorts of services that they will be providing will be essentially the same as they were last year.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, on a related issue to The Wild Fur Program, is the Minister aware of the Manitoba Trappers' Association proposal to establish their own wild fur auction outlet in the Province of Manitoba? If so, if he is aware of that proposal, is he in support of that proposal and will he work towards assisting the Manitoba Registered Trappers' Association to establish their own wild fur auction outlet in the Province of Manitoba?

MR. RANSOM: I believe that that proposal is pretty well dead at this stage, Mr. Chairman, because the Hudson's Bay Company had bought out Dominion Soudack, that the Trappe Association had been looking at. I have had discussions with them and I think what they are interested in in particular is having a method of financing their operation so that they are not dependent upon the government. I have undertaken to look at a proposal that they have with respect to royalties and providing a portion of that to provide their funding. I said that I would examine that option.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, on the issue of a wild fur outlet for Manitoba I believe that the issue is not necessarily dead. There was one specific request that they were making and that is to attempt to get the provincial government to assist in some way, even in a permission sense, so to speak. I believe they had requested of the former minister a letter from him saying that in principle he was in agreement with the Manitoba Registered Trappers' Association proceeding with a plan to buy out the Dominion-Soudack Fur Auction. And their idea was to go to special ARDA DREE, Department of Regional Economic Expansion requesting assistance from them in the purchase of that outlet. They had already produced a feasibility study of the operation and it, I believe was a very positive feasibility study, but this government, the former minister, refused to even go to that extent of giving them a letter saying that he would be in agreement in principle with this group of trappers working in this collective way to achieve some measure of economic independence by establishing their own auction sale outlet.

As a result of this government's lack of action in this request, even to the extent of providing a letter with an agreement in principle which the Manitoba Registered Trappers' Association wanted as backup for them to go to the DREE board here in Winnipeg with their proposal to find the financing to give them the means by which to purchase the Dominion-Soudack Fur Auction. And they had already negotiated with the Dominion-Soudack people. The principals of Dominion-Soudack I believe were in agreement to stay with the Manitoba Registered Trapper's Association for a period of years to assist them in learning the management of the business and, Mr. Chairman, it would have been a very valuable acquisition by the trappers of Manitoba, giving them a measure of economic independence which they will certainly not achieve under the present circumstances. And as a result of this government's lack of action, Mr. Chairman, we now have the Dominion-Soudack Fur Auction, which was an independent entrepreneurship in the Province of Manitoba now having been taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company and Mr. Chairman it leaves one wondering about the even more horrendous implication of having this taken over again by another conglomerate in the financial field and having the concentration of power in the area of fur auction controlled by a very few people.

Mr. Chairman, the Hudson's Bay Company in Canada owns the only other major fur auction that I know about and that is in Montreal. They now own the one in Winnipeg. So, Mr. Chairman, they own two of the major outlets for fur in North America. I believe there's one operating in Saskatchewan which the Saskatchewan government many years ago assisted the Saskatchewan trappers to establish.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly deplore the government's action in this matter in not assisting the Manitoba Registered Trappers' Association in what was a very viable project. The purchase of the Dominion-Soudack Fur Auction which would have given them a measure of economic independence, a measure of control over their industry and Mr. Chairman it would have given them a means by which to maintain their organization from the profits of the sale of the fur. Mr. Chairman, the

fur auction as you probably are aware operates like any other auction, there's a commission made on the sale of fur. Sometimes the same fur turns over hands several times in the same company so a certain commission is paid on each sale and Mr. Chairman, it was a very viable industry which could have assisted the trappers in this Province.

I'm wondering now, Mr. Chairman, now that the government has failed to take that action, moved so slowly if nothing else, that the Hudson's Bay Company was able to move in and take over the Dominion-Soudack Fur Auction, I wonder if now the government is concerned about that monopoly control of the fur industry in Canada and if they will be doing anything to assist the trappers in establishing some alternative means of marketing their fur so that they will not be forever at the mercy of only one company.

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Chairman, I have not had any proposal from the Registered Trappers' Association. I've met with the president two or three times, I've spoken to them at their meeting and if they bring forward a proposal to me, ask for request for assistance, then I certainly will have a careful look at that request.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well just on the other issue which the Minister alluded to Mr. Chairman, he indicated that he was considering other means of providing financial assistance to the Manitoba Registered Trappers' Association, and he, I believe, suggested that the royalties that are coming to the government may be one area which could provide some measure of support to the MRTA. Could the Minister expand on that statement and tell us exactly what his intentions are in that area?

MR. RANSOM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I just said that was just a suggestion that was made by the Registered Trappers' Association. I said I would be prepared to look at some means of them being able to provide themselves with independent financing which was their request, not my request.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I recognize that it was the request of the MRTA. Could the Minister indicate within his estimates how much, if any, provision is made for assistance towards the MRTA?

MR. RANSOM: There is a substantial grant available for the Trappers' Association. I'll have to just check the exact figure.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, while the Minister is looking for that figure, perhaps he could give us some status of the Wild Fur Development Program, what exactly it has accomplished in his opinion and what he hope to accomplish with it over this next fiscal year. Does he see it as being a useful and viable program that will continue for the full five years of its intended life as a 50/50 cost-sharing with the federal government, that is?

MR. RANSOM: At this stage, Mr. Chairman, I would anticipate that there will be a continuation of that program.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, a continuation doesn't give me much to go on. I'm wondering what he means by continuation. I'd like a little bit more breakdown as to what exactly he is doing with that program. Where is the majority of the money going that is being asked for here in terms of the fiscal year 1979-80? Will he be doing work in habitat development or in the area of marketing, if any? Will there be any funds to assist the Wild Fur, or I should say the Manitoba Registered Trappers' Association, for example to examine the possibility of alternative methods of marketing their fur? If they so come to the Minister with that request he said he would be prepared to look at it, but would he be able to back up his commitment with some funds to assist them to examine the possibilities of alternative marketing?

MR. RANSOM: The basic thrust of the program has been one of habitat management and infrastructure, Mr. Chairman and the amount of money that's available to the Association, of course, if they wish to use some of that to pursue a particular avenue that they're interested in, then they're free to do it. The amount of money which they will receive from us will be \$35,000.00.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass; (a)—pass; the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, I believe the time has expired for this section, so I would not proceed at this time but I intend to proceed on this same section next time we examine the estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 4:30, Private Members' Hour, Committee rise. Call in the speaker.

The Chairman reported upon the Committees' deliberations to Mr. Speaker and requested leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Wolseley, that the reports of the Committees be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is general agreement that the House adjourn at this point or whether they want to proceed with Private Members' Hour? (Agreed)

I move, seconded by the Member for Inkster, that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried, and the House accordingly adjourned until 2:30 p.m. Monday.