



First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virden	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Elice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Rhineland	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
ROCH, Gilles	Springfield	LIBERAL
ROSE, Bob	St. Vital	LIBERAL
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 15, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Mark Minenko (Chairman of the Committee of Supply): The Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the Supplementary Report of Manitoba Urban Affairs, '88-89, and the same for Manitoba Housing, '88-89.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the gallery where we have with us this afternoon Chief Allan Ross from the Norway House Band.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Psychiatrists Retirement

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Today is a sad day for Manitobans because we have learned just this morning that two psychiatrists have requested early retirement from their role as psychiatrists at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. These two dedicated professionals were supposed to go to Brandon. These are the very two psychiatrists who were unilaterally asked by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to move to Brandon.

My question to the Minister is, will he now admit that his unilateral action was wrong and how will he now correct this error in judgment?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I will not admit that the efforts I undertook as Minister of Health on behalf of the people of Manitoba and particularly

2,300 individuals in Brandon who have two days per week of psychiatric service from one psychiatrist, and the efforts I have been attempting to make to resolve that shortage of psychiatric manpower in Brandon is wrong or ill-directed or an incorrect course of action. It is unfortunate that individuals have chosen a course of action of potential retirement from service rather than attempting to resolve on a temporary basis for 90 days a problem which is serious in nature in Brandon, involving 2,300 mental health patients in the Westman region.

* (1335)

Psychiatrists Shortage Filling Vacancies

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): We recognize the problem and we appreciate all efforts to rectify it, but now we have a situation where there is a shortage of psychiatrists in Brandon and now there is a shortage of psychiatrists in Selkirk. How does the Minister intend now to fill those vacancies which were unfortunately created just this morning?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): The situation in Selkirk, as I indicated, in asking for assistance by the professionals at Selkirk to give us some temporary relief in Brandon while we negotiated with the MMA, the Psychiatric Association in terms of permanent replacement of psychiatrists in Brandon will continue. In that temporary period of time, I was assured, as I read back to my honourable friend's benchmate, the Health critic, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), that the Chief Provincial Psychiatrist who said over a period of 90 days that the service at Selkirk would not be jeopardized if those two individuals or two psychiatrists were seconded temporarily to Brandon.

I would suspect that situation still exists with their resignations over whatever issue they choose to indicate. Mr. Speaker, what it simply means is that now we have the challenge of filling vacancies in Brandon as well as Selkirk, but let me assure my honourable friend the priority is still Brandon where we have no psychiatric attention permanently.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order.

Short-Term Plan

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): We understand that the Minister is now faced with a short-term problem. We had a unilateral secondment of psychiatrists to Brandon. These individuals have now chosen to retire early from the service of the Province of Manitoba and we also have a short-term crisis in the City of Selkirk. My question to the Minister is simple. While we are awaiting the long-term plans of the Government, what

does he intend to do to make sure that individuals in both those cities are properly served?

* (1340)

Government Study

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): To assure that individuals in Brandon are properly served, those 2,300 individuals in Brandon are properly served, ongoing recruitment efforts will be continued in conjunction with the Manitoba Medical Association, in conjunction with the Manitoba Psychiatrist Association and within the department.

I indicated to my honourable friend and I will indicate to him again that in the temporary secondment of those two professionals, professionals who were in the employ of Government for a number of years, direct employees of Government, we asked of them to assist us in the short term for 90 days to go to Brandon to help in a very serious situation. We were not asking them to be banished to the nether lands of the world. Brandon is a very pleasant place, and professionally we needed their support out there. They have chosen to decline the offer for temporary support in Brandon. Mr. Speaker, there is no question that provides additional challenges to the department which we are fully prepared to meet on behalf of those residents of Brandon, Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Job Loss Projection Free Trade Agreement

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). At a lunch time meeting today, Mr. Epp, the national Minister of Health and Welfare and presumably the leading spokesperson for the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba, announced that free trade would negatively impact 13,800 jobs in the Province of Manitoba, and we interpret "negatively impact" to mean that there will be a substantial job loss. Has Mr. Epp shared information with this Minister so that this Minister is absolutely up to date on whatever negative impact there might be from this free trade deal?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Carr: I hope that the Minister will take this seriously. These are not our projections. This is not some plot by the Liberal Party. This comes from the senior Conservative in the Province of Manitoba. Will the Minister today telephone Mr. Epp to determine upon what statistical basis this projection of 13,800 jobs are lost and what does the Minister intend to do about it?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear what Mr. Epp said or did not say at the meeting today at noon and I accept my honourable friend's understanding of what was said. But let me say this, I will undertake to try and contact Mr. Epp today to find out exactly what he did say and what his intention was with regard to that. Let me say this, that I have met as I indicated yesterday with just about every single sector of Manitoba's economy and none of them have indicated to me or to this Government that there is going to be any significant major impact at all.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): It is not often that we have such obvious contradictions between federal and provincial Tories, but we will take them. My question to the Minister is this: what studies does he have in— Mr. Speaker, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) will have every opportunity to tell the people of Manitoba what his position is on Meech Lake. It is probably not the same as the position of most of his constituents but that is another matter.

My supplementary question to the Minister is, does he have any studies that he is prepared to table in this House that agrees with Mr. Epp that there is dislocation in the Manitoba job market that ought to be addressed by those in power here now who can do something about it?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I have one very significant study. That is the face-to-face meetings of companies who are operating and doing business in this province and who have said, Mr. Speaker, that they are not going to be significantly impacted by a Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I, too, and many of our colleagues were at the Chamber of Commerce lunch today, an area that we always visit, I can assure you, as New Democrats, and I want to give you the half-time score, Mr. Speaker. We had to leave at half-time and Mr. Pawley is leading 10-0-0 in that debate of the Free Trade Agreement.

My question is to the —(Interjection)— and the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) can attest to it. We are even challenging Mr. Mulroney to make the same speech that he made last week in Montreal to Manitobans this week on the Bristol Aircraft. We think it would be a very good speech to have in this province right now.

Victims Assistance Program Funding Delays

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). Last week, we were told that the Victims Assistance Committee and the Victims Assistance Program had been held up for a bureaucratic reason between the Government and Treasury Board and the committee in terms of wanting further information. If that was the reason for the withholding of those approvals that came from the Independent Victims Assistance Committee, can the Minister please tell the House and the people of Manitoba why his department has not contacted the Ma Mawi Organization, the Manitoba Society for Seniors, and the Main Street Project which were the three projects that were recommended and have been delayed for months at Treasury Board for their funding?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): I would like to put the Honourable Member's mind at ease and tell him that there is no withholding of approvals. The point

is the Government of Manitoba would like very much to spend dollars wisely so that victims of crime in this province are able to take advantage of every possible dollar, so that there is no duplication of efforts, thereby creating a waste of money. The fund is there to assist victims of crime. I think everyone's intentions are the same. It is a matter of making sure we spend the dollars wisely. That is why the Government is asking for further information, so that it knows that the money that is being spent is being spent properly on behalf of the victims of crime in this province.

Funding Criteria

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Certainly we all agree that the money should be spent wisely. Indeed the committee itself recommended to the Government on June 16 the Ma Mawi Program, a program in the Core Area Initiative, a program for counselling adolescents, boys and girls, from abusive homes to deal with the opposite sex, a project to deal with the Manitoba Society for Seniors which is a publication to deal with Elder Abuse, a \$6,000 project, an \$86,000 grant for the Main Street Project to deal with the new program for victims of crime in that very important area of our city.

There is another project, I might add, presented in October but I will not question the Minister on that on Westman, Child and Family Services in the western region. Surely these projects after four months are a wise use of the Victims Assistance Program. Why is the money being withheld and held up in the Government Treasury Board bureaucracy?

* (1345)

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): The situation, as it stands today, in no way is meant or intended to prejudice the value or lack thereof of the programs being discussed. There is no reason at this point for the Government to believe that there is anything wrong with the programs except that the answers that are being sought, dating back to June of 1988, have not been available to the Government.

I would remind the Honourable Member that his Government, the Government he supported, asked the Victims Assistance Committee for the same kind of information back in September of 1987 and did not get that information either. We think that this is important information to assure that not only tax dollars but also dollars raised by surcharges on fines are spent wisely and well so that we get the maximum benefit for victims of crime in this province. The Conservative Party ran, Mr. Speaker, on a platform of better management and this is part of that platform of better management. We do not just talk about it, we do it.

Victim Assistance Committee Elderly Abuse Program

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Tell the seniors of the province who are waiting for a White Paper on Elder Abuse or are waiting for definitive positions on seniors programs, Mr. Speaker. Tell the seniors of Manitoba that.

Is it Tory management and Tory priority to withhold \$6,700 as a one-time-only grant to the seniors organizations of Manitoba to provide a publication on Seniors Elder Abuse, a program that is not in existence, there would be no duplication, an application that was made to this Government on June 21 for \$6,700.00? Is that Tory management to withhold that \$6,700 from the seniors of this province for this unique program on Elder Abuse?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): I am going to tell seniors subject to abuse, I am going to tell children subject to abuse and I am going to tell other victims in this province that the Government of Manitoba is committed to getting the maximum advantage out of every Victims Assistance dollar raised through the surcharges in the courts.

The Honourable Member is taking a path here which leads a very clear impression that the path that he is taking is one of irresponsibility. I do not think that is the path the Honourable Member wants to portray to the people of Manitoba. I certainly do not want to share in any part of a platform which would allow Governments to be spending money without having asked the proper questions and receiving appropriate answers to those questions before expenditures are made. That is not the idea of management. This Party put forward to the people of Manitoba, the Honourable Member's Party, I am sure he will tell you that was not the platform of his Party either. But his actions today say something else.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Duplication of Programs

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Last week, if the Minister can remember or recall, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) said that they wanted to ensure there was no duplication and no ongoing costs of Victims Assistance Programs and there would be no interference from the Conservative Government with the committee. My question to the Minister is, given that this seniors, and many of the other programs, do not provide any duplication of programs and given the fact that they provide valuable services for the funds that have been levied pursuant to the act, funds of \$1 million that are sitting in the Government accounts right now, my question to the Minister, given it is not a duplication, given the fact it is a needed program for the seniors, given the fact it is a one-time-only program and will not require additional cost, why has the senior's program not, under the Government's own stated criteria last Thursday, not been approved pursuant to the recommendation of the committee so the seniors' committee can get on with their work, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): The Honourable Member talks about interference. I hardly think that Members of his Party should be able to keep from blushing when they talk about Government interfering in certain matters. The Honourable Member has repeated in substance the same question several times, and I think the answer is clearly on the record.

* (1350)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Before I recognize the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), I am sure Honourable Members would not mind a small break in our Routine Proceedings to acknowledge the fact that we have in the public gallery from the Centennial School, twenty-seven Grade 5 students under the direction of Miss Rosemary Martel. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD (Cont'd)

Ethnocultural Community Advisory Group

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Over the last five years, the Manitoba Intercultural Council has become a model for other provinces in the development of relations between Government and the ethnocultural communities. The Manitoba Intercultural Council has evolved and changed over time. It has become a representative of Manitoba's ethnocultural groups. It enunciates the collective aims and group objectives of ethnocultural groups in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) is, given that the Minister has had the Task Force on Multiculturalism Report which is dated August 1988 for some time now, does the Minister agree with the principle of an independent arm's length and effective body being the representative of the ethnocultural community in Manitoba?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I want to thank my honourable friend for that question. I believe that we, as a Government, have to ensure that the multicultural community, the ethnic community out there at large, is represented and has a voice that can provide input to our Government and suggest recommendations how we can better improve communication and coordination of services to the multicultural community. I believe that we do have to have an arm's length advisory body working with the Government to ensure that the needs of the multicultural community are met.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

MIC Special Audit Granting Process

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): My supplemental question is to the same Minister. The Special Audit of the MIC advised that there were no serious problems in the council's granting functions. We were advised last week that the Deputy Minister and the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) met with MIC to deal with the concerns of the Special Audit.

My question, Mr. Speaker, has the Minister and the Manitoba Intercultural Council addressed the concerns, as expressed in the audit, to ensure that the MICs granting process operates in an effective, equitable and accountable manner, thereby ensuring that the granting function remains with the Manitoba Intercultural Council?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Yes, I as Minister and my Deputy Minister have met with MIC. The auditor did clearly indicate that there were loose accountability practices and procedures in place at MIC. MIC has worked together with departmental staff to try to address those needs. They have got an implementation plan in place and they are working towards addressing all of the concerns of the auditor. There were concerns there. It is quite clearly indicated in the auditor's report that there were concerns of loose accountability. We are working towards addressing those issues. We are working towards ensuring that the grants that are awarded to the ethnic groups in our community are granted in a way that there are accountability procedures in place.

Multiculturalism Report Media Release

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): With a final supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister, yesterday when I received the copy of the press release with respect to the task force report being issued, I fully expected the report to be tabled in the Legislature for the attention of all Honourable Members in the House. My question to the Minister is, could the Minister explain why she released the report to members of the media before the elected Members in the Chamber?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Mr. Speaker, I do want to indicate, in private conversation with the Member opposite last evening when I gave him a copy of the report, I indicated to him quite clearly that I was sorry that the official copy that went to him was not in his hands as the news release went out. It was instructions to my department that was to happen. I explained and gave him my sincere apologies that did not happen. As a matter of fact, he did have a copy of that report during Question Period.

I also explained to the Member opposite last night that I really did not feel—we are a Government that is committed to be accountable and be concerned about expenditures and extra expenditures. I receive many, many copies of many reports in this Legislature that go into the garbage or are not read by myself because there is no specific interest. There is a waste and I did indicate that I was—

* (1355)

An Honourable Member: Unbelievable.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, we all know that is true and, if the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) indicates

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that he reads each and every report that comes through this House, I question his honesty.

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

An Honourable Member: That is absolutely shocking.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The indignation expressed by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), Mr. Speaker, leaves much to be desired.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, on a point of order.

Mr. Doer: The Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) is implying motives in terms of our comments. It is the responsibility and the right of elected Members of this Legislature to get copies of reports, not this stick-handling like Rafferty-Alameda and this Minister in terms of reports for MLAs.

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

Affirmative Action

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Mr. Speaker, with a new question, the Chair of the Task Force on Multiculturalism advised that the task force members spoke to some 100 groups and individuals, including senior officials in the Government departments. We had heard the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) on many occasions speak about the success of this Government's Affirmative Action Program. This task force makes several recommendations with respect to affirmative action. Recommendation 41 states that Government should assist departments in preparing action plans and training staff for the implementation of these plans.

My question to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) is that the Minister of Labour undoubtedly has had a chance to review this report, which the Government has had for some time now. This recommendation seems to suggest that there are Government departments which do not have affirmative action plans and are not implementing them. Does this mean that there are departments which do not have affirmative action plans? Will the Minister advise this House which departments need assistance in the preparation of affirmative action plans and the implementation thereof?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to review very quickly the recommendations put forth. Yes, in Recommendation 41, there was not that clear a definition of the affirmative action prior to us coming into office, and we have worked very hard to ensure that all departments are very aware of the need for affirmative action. We elevated the position to an Assistant Deputy Minister of Human Resources.

They are working through the personnel department because it is through the personnel departments that

hirings take place. You can have somebody in any position you want. If they do not get to and ensure that the personnel departments understand the program and do the hiring, we will not have a sound Affirmative Action Program.

Affirmative Action Monitoring Program

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), with a supplementary question.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): With a supplementary to the same Minister, Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) suggested that he will, "Come down hard" upon departments which do not comply with the Government's affirmative action policy. My question to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) is, what does the Minister intend to do when he says he will come down hard?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): Being my size, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to physically take them on.- (Interjection)- I wonder if the Members opposite would like an answer. I have had good cooperation with the Members of our Government, my colleagues in the Cabinet. They are very concerned and working with us to assure that affirmative action takes place.

I would like to quote Recommendation No. 42 where it says that all Civil Service positions should be open to all Manitobans. The Civil Service is not in that position at this point because of a sweetheart deal the previous Government had with the MGEA. One-third of all Government jobs are closed to external applications from people outside the Civil Service. Recommendation No. 42 recognizes that failing.

* (1400)

Multiculturalism Report Recommendation Implementation

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): With a final supplemental, my supplementary is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Is the Minister prepared to implement immediately Recommendation No. 44 of the task force report and to make representations to the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Albert Driedger) and other appropriate Ministers to ensure that larger businesses having contracts with this Government put in place effective affirmative action programs in their workplace through contract compliance?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I will have to take that question under advisement, read Recommendation No. 44 and get back to the Member.

On a point of clarification on the last question that was asked, I do want to apologize to the House for comments that I made a little earlier. I was not trying

to downplay the report. I indicated just that I was willing to provide copies to the Opposition critics and to the Leaders and to the House Leaders on both Opposition Parties with clear indication that anybody else who wanted a report could receive a copy of that report. I apologized quite clearly. I was not trying to downplay the report in any manner or in any form.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Minister.

Polar Bear Compound Vacancy Rate

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). It has to do with the vacancy at the Polar Hilton (Polar Bear Compound) in the community in Churchill. For clarification, the Polar Hilton was a hotel built to accommodate polar bears in the Churchill region during this time of year that tended to congregate in and around the community and sometimes became uninvited guests of the residents. I remind Honourable Members that facility was built by an environmentally conscious Minister and Government in the late Seventies. My question to the Honourable Minister, is that hotel full at this time?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): I appreciate the question from the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), and I do say to the Member for Lakeside I am sure that the community of Churchill does appreciate the Hilton that he built there for the polar bears. Yes, the accommodation is now completely filled up and the bears are apparently—and this is very serious—roaming the streets. Due to the mild weather conditions, the ice has not developed on the Hudson Bay and the bears have not been able to move out onto the bay where they would normally to.

It is a serious concern and I think that the Member is quite justified in bringing it to the attention of this House. I am sure that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) may want to consider putting additions onto the polar bear hotel.

Polar Bear Watch Churchill, Manitoba

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, the Minister anticipated my answer. As the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), has he informed his colleague the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), who is the proprietor of the Polar Hilton, about the situation, and will the department be monitoring that situation to make sure that we do not have some serious situations that can develop with the influx of bears at this time in the community of Churchill?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Yes, it is a very serious matter when you are dealing with animals of that nature, and I think that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) is aware of it. In

fact, it is my understanding that he probably will be going to that community very shortly. One of the things that he will probably do is have a first-hand investigation as to what is taking place in that community.

Mr. Enns: A final question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Lakeside, with a final supplementary.

Mr. Enns: Just as a matter of information, what is the double occupancy rate?

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

Child and Family Services Centralization

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), I have a very serious concern to raise this afternoon in the House.

My question is for the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson). It relates to the concern expressed by Members of the NDP Opposition for some time now about this Government's apparent plans for centralization of Winnipeg and rural Child and Family Services agencies. The Minister has conveyed in the House and in Estimates that she supports community-based services but at every opportunity has left the impression with the volunteers and board members and staff of the agencies that she is moving in the direction of centralization so, therefore, a very real concern for us.

My question to the Minister of Community Services is, can she tell this House what action she has taken or what actions she has taken or instructions given to her department and staff in her department to centralize or to move in the direction of centralization of the delivery of Child and Family Services in Manitoba?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): I have given no direction to staff that they are to move to centralize Child and Family Services.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I am quite concerned by that answer—surprised. I would like to table, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of Members of this House, a draft letter dated November 9 by a director of Child and Family Services, Jim Bakken, to all executive directors of rural and Winnipeg Child and Family Services agencies indicating that this Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: —is committed to centralize—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the Honourable Member have a question? Would the Honourable Member kindly put her question down?

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Given that letter talks about having every agency go through her

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department for authorization of every expenditure when operating in a deficit situation, could this Minister indicate to us, given her previous answer, if she is now prepared to veto this draft letter or any letter establishing conditions, establishing strict procedures, administrative procedures, for tying the hands of agencies and centralizing the delivery of Child and Family Services throughout the Province of Manitoba?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Is it acceptable for—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Oleson: —tabling of draft letters as evidence?

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order.

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

Mr. Alcock: This is not strictly a draft letter, Mr. Speaker. It was circulated to all the agencies and is part of the directions that have gone to the agencies.

Mrs. Oleson: That is what she said, it was a draft. I, of course, have not had a chance to look and identify this exact letter that the Member is tabling. But you will recall, I am sure, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), that at the time that we authorized extra funding for the Child and Family Services Agencies this fall, one of the conditions of that emergency funding was that we have some accountability and also there is a review under way. This in no way hinges on whether or not there is any centralization. This is an attempt to find out why there are all these constant deficits. It is directly as a result of neglect from her Government for years.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: There is one thing to work towards greater accountability and there is another thing to take away all decision making from elected boards and volunteers at the community level.— (Interjection)— My question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Emergency Funding

Mr. Speaker: I am sure all Honourable Members want to give the Honourable Member for St. Johns the courtesy of asking her question.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) is, can she confirm that she is embarked on a course whereby in the event of an emergency or an exceptional situation at the community level involving the expenditure of funds, that will now require written authorization and, worse than that, in duplicate form, in very bureaucratic red tape form, from directors in her department before being approved? Would she not agree that lives may be put in danger as a result of this Government's commitment to

centralizing operations and removing community participation?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Mr. Speaker, I have not removed community participation. I have asked for accountability. It seems strange to me that this Member would be condoning massive deficits every year. Does she not want us to find out what funding is needed and why it is needed for those Child and Family Service agencies? We need some accountability. We are attempting to get that. Nothing that I have done should put anyone, any child, in jeopardy. That is the very thing that we are trying and attempting to do is protect the children under our care by giving them extra funds, by asking the Child and Family Services to use it prudently.

* (1410)

Court of Appeal Public Records

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). Today yet another story reporting alleged comments by Manitoba's Chief Justice appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press. These comments appear as reported to cast the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as a burden to Manitoba's courts. A few weeks ago I asked the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) to consider putting some kind of reliable court reporting device in the Court of Appeal both to aid public scrutiny and for the protection of the judges themselves.

My question is, will the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) now take this advice and reinforce the Court of Appeal as a public forum so that all Manitobans can know exactly what is said and indeed the judges themselves can have the transcript of the comments?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): My department is still following up on the suggestion and looking into that matter.

Tobacco Sales to Youth Legislation

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, again for the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). This is Drug Awareness Week in Manitoba. Very briefly we know that 92 percent of tobacco smokers first smoked by age 16. We know that 85 percent of teenage smokers who smoke one or two cigarettes a day escalate into adult smokers. The federal Act in place has a fine for a first-time offender of selling cigarettes to youths under 16 of \$10.00. The Act is a joke. Will the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) investigate the constitutionality of introducing provincial legislation to strengthen these fines, and will he also contact his federal counterpart to express his support for strengthening the federal Act which is already in place?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): The suggestion of constitutionality of increasing fines for offences, it seems to me we should also be looking at

what is the right thing to do. Mr. Speaker, constitutionality is a very important part of lawmaking in this country but, on the assumption that Parliaments and Legislatures have the right to make laws which do fall within the rights contained in the Charter of Rights, it seems to me it is a matter of the right of Legislatures and Parliaments to make laws and to see that the laws can be enforced, and that there are sanctions in laws to see that they are obeyed.

On the matter of Drug Awareness Week and the matter specifically raised of abuse or use of tobacco, I will be discussing this matter with the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Cigarette Vending Machines

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, finally for the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), by constitutionality, I meant the relationship between Sections 91 and 92 of the BNA Act in relation to occupying this particular field.

Let me go on and ask very briefly. The City of Winnipeg presently licenses cigarette vending machines. Has the Attorney-General's (Mr. McCrae) Department or the Attorney-General himself investigated tying that licensing to the responsible placement of the machine in a place where persons 16 or under would not normally have access to that machine as is already provided for in the federal Act and, if not, will the Attorney-General do so at the earliest opportunity and hopefully within this Drug Awareness Week?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): We are all concerned I think, Mr. Speaker, that young people are becoming involved in the use of various kinds of drugs, particularly young female people are involved in larger numbers with the abuse of tobacco which should be a concern to all. I will take the Honourable Members' questions as representations.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): May I ask leave of the House to revert back to Presenting Petitions, and Reading and Receiving Petitions?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Rupertsland have leave to revert back to Presenting Petitions? (Agreed)

Mr. Harper: I beg to present the petition of Caroline Bull, Elizabeth McDonald, Yvette Malcolm and others, calling upon the Attorney-General to consider the submission made by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and others for funding to make presentations before the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

Mr. Clerk, William Remnant: "To the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba:

"The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry is conducting hearings in Manitoba that are of vital importance to restoring

confidence in the administration of justice in this province.

"The need for effective carefully prepared presentations by Aboriginal groups to the Inquiry is obvious to anyone who understands the purpose for the Inquiry.

"The success of the Inquiry will depend to a large degree both on the participation of Aboriginal people and the documentation of the extent of the problems of the current judicial system.

"We the undersigned request the Attorney-General to seriously consider the submission for funding by the Justice Committee of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and other Aboriginal organizations wanting to make presentations to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry."

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Rupertsland have leave also to revert back to Reading and Receiving of Petitions? (Agreed)

I have reviewed the petition and it conforms with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the Rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense. (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Others funding request re Aboriginal Justice Inquiry)

* (1420)

HANSARD CORRECTION

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): I would like to make a Hansard correction. On Tuesday, November 8, Hansard, on the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources, on page 146, where it says "French communities," it should have been "fringe communities," f-r-i-n-g-e. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that outside the Chamber the Department of Highways Estimates are being considered, and inside the Chamber the Estimates of the Department of Health are being considered.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Department of Highways and Transportation; and the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) in the Chair for the Department of Health.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I would like to announce that the House Leaders have come to an agreement that next Monday the House will not sit, but that on Tuesday the House will sit between the usual hours on Tuesday and, in addition, between the hours of 8 and 10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: We are not going to be sitting on Monday, and we will consider Tuesday to be a Monday. Is there leave? (Agreed)

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I call the committee to order. This section of the Committee of Supply we will be dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation. We will begin with a statement from the Honourable Minister responsible.

Mr. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highway and Transportation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to indicate that I am pleased to be able to present the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation to the committee here. The Member asked whether I had a prepared statement; I do not have that. Ironically, I have to also indicate that staff will be coming, I am sure, but it just so happens that I have approximately 40 of my Highways people who are all meeting in Room 254 at the present time, the District Engineers, as well as all the other staff. Because of the shortness of notice that we had, my deputy is at the present time having a meeting with the delegation, people who had come from a long way off and he will be conducting a meeting with them and then he will be joining us in a little while.

I would just like, in my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, to indicate to the committee, go over a little bit of the history of the Department of Highways and Transportation. Basically, as you are aware, there are two categories. One is the Highways, the construction and maintenance of highways, and then there is the Transportation aspect of it. The Highways aspect of it is relatively straightforward. It is a matter of how much money is available for construction to try and upgrade our PTH and PR systems throughout the province, and deals with monies for the LGDs, as well the Grant-in-Aid Program.

The Transportation aspect of it is much more complex, especially at this time, and I will get to that in a minute. In Highways, part of the problem that has been facing the Province of Manitoba, I suppose along with other provinces, to some degree in some areas, is the fact that there never seems to be enough money. Since 1982, I think this is when we hit our peak in terms of highway construction when the budget at that time was \$100 million for Capital construction. Since that time, it has been decreasing every year seemingly. In 1987, the total estimated expenditure was \$83 million, I

believe, and this is a thing that has been reflected and shows up in the sorry state of the condition of our highways. I am pleased to indicate that in this particular year that we have the construction estimates up to \$95 million. Had we just, since 1982, maintained an inflationary rate of expenditure on that, then we should possibly be spending in the area of \$120 million to \$125 million a year.

This is a thing that certainly, in view of the constraints on Government in terms of spending, creates a problem and I am going to do the best I can in terms of getting the expenditures back on track in that regard.

A few comments that I would like to make based on information that is available, 77 percent of all traffic in the province travels on the PTH system; 23 percent of our traffic travels on the PR system. Our PTH system, by and large, I think needs dramatic improvements. When we talk of some of the developments taking place on the national level in terms of weights, dimensions, the National Safety Code, all these things have a bearing on it when we establish national routes for the carriers on which we have heavier dimensions, weights and dimensions. We find that some of our bridges and structures actually are not capable of carrying those kind of weights and so, when you consider the fact that some of these kinds of structures that are required, the cost is phenomenal. Just for an example, we just let the contract for the cloverleaf at Highways 7 and 101, and the cost of that project is estimated to be about \$13.5 million. It is these kinds of projects that eat up an awful lot of a major budget.

* (1430)

We have also indicated, and we will be dealing with that later on, we have prioritized the escalation of construction of Highway 75. That total project to the date of completion is estimated around \$95 million. So when you consider the total Capital budget for this year is \$95 million, that gives you an indication that we are falling behind in terms of the kind of monies that should be coming forward. Certainly I believe with the support of both critics that we can probably put pressure on to have the Government of the Day maybe give consideration for more expenditures.

The transportation aspect of it is the one that I have found possibly most challenging. There are many aspects of it that have taken myself as a new Minister some time to become acquainted with it and get a feel for it. There are many exciting things happening there, some that create concern.

We have the ongoing Rail Line Abandonment Program that I think has created a lot of concern for Manitoba, as well as provinces to the West. I would just like to indicate I feel that possibly the western provinces are not being dealt with fairly in this regard when you consider that it appears that some of our eastern provinces have been in a position to cost share some of their highways and got compensation. I use the example of Newfoundland who, in terms of rail line abandonment, received approximately \$800 million for 546 or 547 kilometres that were abandoned. Even considering that it was a main line that was abandoned,

we have over 1,000 kilometres of rail line that has been abandoned and we have no compensation.

In Manitoba, we are trying to take the initiative in terms of dealing with rail line abandonment, to make sure that all consideration or all parties that are affected by it are going to be given consideration. In fact, just in the last week, I brought forward information to Cabinet to deal with the aspect of concern that has to be expressed in terms of, you know, compensation that should be coming forward. We feel to the farmers, to the municipalities and to the provincial Government, as we move on towards more rail line abandonment, the impact is going to be more dramatic on the province.

In air transportation, Mr. Chairman, we have issues that are coming forward that we are trying to deal with. It is also a matter of concern to make sure that people in Winnipeg get serviced properly. I had the occasion just last week to meet with people from Denver who are considering the possibility of putting in another carrier into the province here. Hopefully, we can come to some agreement there.

Then I would like to deal with the aspects of the trucking transportation, the carrier transportation. There are things that have been in the mill and I from time to time have given the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohan) a few shots about his involvement in some of the activity that has taken place. But I have to indicate that we are continuing on the same track in terms of what was initiated, basically the National Safety Code that has been adopted. I think it is a very positive thing in terms of making sure that the National Safety Code has been adopted. We are implementing it.

Part of that is being addressed by The Highways Act that is being presented before the Legislature, and the other aspect is the deregulation end of it in the trucking industry. That has created a lot of concern for myself in terms of exactly the full impact that it will have on the Province of Manitoba when you consider that Manitoba is one of the major transportation centres where nine out of 15 national carriers are headquartered here.

Exactly what the deregulation impact will have on Manitoba is something that I am not quite sure exactly when you consider the concerns that I have. How do we deal with it? I think provision was made under the legislation to do a gradual—what is the term I am looking for?—deregulation. I think provision has been made that we should be totally deregulated by January 1, 1993. However, when you consider that some of the provinces like Ontario and Alberta actually are almost totally deregulated already and the federal Government is pushing for escalation of the deregulation program, since the deregulation aspect of it came forward, there have been a lot of applications in our province from carriers to look for expanded licence throughout the province. As a result, the Motor Transport Board is trying to deal with the applications as expeditiously as possible but it does create some problems for us. Somewhere along the line, I guess, decisions will have to be made in terms of how fast do we continue on the road of deregulation.

Initially, I felt that the slower movement of that would possibly be the most advantageous. Depending on

which trucker you talk to, that varies from time to time. Some feel that deregulation should be coming immediately and it is a good thing. Others have more reservations about it.

I made reference the The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. Under that Act, what we have done, we have proclaimed The Off-Roads Vehicle Act as of October 1. Just prior to the implementation, we made some exemptions on that Act to make provision for individuals who will use off-road vehicles only on their own private property. We also made exemptions for registered trappers and commercial fishermen.

It is interesting what has happened over a period of time with the Department of Highways and Transportation. I feel that it has sort of been the scapegoat of some of the restraints that Government has put on spending while other departments, rightfully or not, have been able to escalate their spending dramatically. When you consider that approximately 10 years ago only 60 percent of the money expended was raised by revenues from highway and traffic-related incomes, where at the present time I think we have almost come to the point where the Department of Highways is almost a revenue-bearing department. When you consider that, at least in my mind and I am probably more cognizant of it now at this stage of the game, being the Minister, I think we are losing the battle.

Transportation is a very vital part of people's lives—I used to say, especially in rural areas, but that is not the case, the city as well. I think the impact of the transportation industry into Manitoba, for example, I believe—I forget the exact numbers now and I will try and maybe get them later on. I think the economic impact is something like \$750 million. The employee—I had that number and I do not have it handy with me right now. It has a dramatic impact on the economy in the province. I think we have to rethink in terms of the amount of expenditures that we want to put into our transportation system.

Just one other thing that I would like to indicate, staff has been very actively working. I made reference to the fact that we do not have cost sharing from the federal Government in our highways system. Reference is very often made to the American system where they have seemingly better roads than we have. I would like to indicate that roads like I-29, which we are probably more familiar with, was paid for by the national system in the States instead by the individual states. We have been promoting the idea of cost sharing in some of the more national roads that we have in our province. We have not had too much success.

However, I would like to indicate that the staff has taken the initiative. My deputy is very actively involved along with other Members of his department in terms of developing a national highway system or a national highway route. In fact, I just had the opportunity to once again view on a screen exactly the system that has been established. A tremendous amount of time has been spent on developing this scheme. When I had the pleasure to be involved at the RTAC meeting, the Minister's meeting at Halifax, the first presentation was made to the federal Minister in terms of a national system.

I think one of the most positive things to date happened when we were not turned down but got encouragement to proceed along that line. Extensive work has gone into that. Surprising enough, it is very hard when you have 10 provinces that all agree on a certain highway system. Manitoba would be one of those that would probably benefit least because of the way our province is situated, because the criteria that is being used in that case is the major cities, the access to the States. So, for example, from Winnipeg, we would have two routes, one would be the Trans-Canada, the other one would be the Highway 60 into Saskatoon, Regina, Highway 75 and No. 1 East.

* (1440)

I think this a very positive move and I am encouraging my Deputy, along with his staff, to continue to work in that direction and we do have a green light to go with that and, hopefully, somewhere along the line we will be able to have the federal Government consider participation financially in the road structures, at least under their major systems within the province.

We have some concern in terms of the amount of revenue that the federal Government is generating from the highways and transportation system, and how much they are putting back into the system. I am not necessarily fighting with any particular federal Government when they state this. I am just trying to raise concerns that have been there for a long time with many Governments, so we certainly intend to proceed along that line.

Mr. Chairman, I have to indicate that I enjoy very much the position of the Minister of Highways and Transportation and find it very challenging. I feel I have very capable staff in view of the difficult year when we had an election in the spring and, when we finally took Government, half the construction season was almost over. In order to expedite things and keep the construction industry happy, we had to move very fast as best we could so staff has had a difficult time of it, plus trying to train a new Minister, and they have been very patient. I want to express my appreciation for the way things have been working.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to hear the remarks of the Opposition critics and deal with the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: We will now have the customary reply by the critic of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Ed. Mandrake (Assiniboia): Mr. Chairman, before we commence Estimates, I would appreciate the opportunity to address this committee on a very important issue. I have sat through Estimates ever since they started and I have repeatedly heard sly remarks about the previous Government, bad remarks about the present Government. I would like to put it into record what the previous Government did or did not do. There is nothing we can do about it today, that was theirs. Let us forget about it, let us go on towards a better tomorrow. So let us stop this headbashing and go through Highways Estimates with speed, civility and respect for all Honourable Members in this committee.

Mr. Chairman, I have listened to the Honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger). I am very impressed with his initiatives that he has taken. He has injected some millions of dollars for Capital; he has taken initiatives in other areas and, as I have previously made mention of this, if he continues doing that, he is going to get 100 percent of my support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: We will now hear from the critic of the Second Opposition Party.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to just comment briefly on the comments made by the critic from the Official Opposition. It is very hard to break old habits and of course the Member was not here when we, on many occasions over a four- or five-year period, as a matter of fact, had some rather heated debates with the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) and others. It was not always a gigantic love-in, I will tell you, so it is a little difficult to just go into that now when I am in the Opposition and say that it is all going to be fun and nice-guy kind of approach.

But that is essentially the kind of position I would like to take in any event, although there will be some criticism in some areas. Certainly, criticism is legitimate and should be there and so should suggestions, positive criticism, constructive criticism. I think there is room for it. I really have not felt that there has been a lot of innuendo in this department in the House or whatever over the time that we have been sitting in the House in this Session compared to what we have seen in other instances in the past.

So I will indicate at this time that with the limited time that we have, we will not be able to get into the kinds of debates and the amount of issues that we would really want to, because an enormous amount of time has been spent on some other departments. I, for one, want to indicate to the Minister's staff that it should in no way reflect, although they would not be saddened by the fact that we will not take as much time perhaps as in other years, it should not reflect on the importance placed on this department in any way by the Legislature. But there are now only about 70 hours remaining out of the 240 that is allocated for Estimates. Therefore, we are going to do three or four hours total probably on this department.

I, therefore, will not be able to spend enormous amounts of time with my colleagues and the limited number, although we have several in the North and a couple in rural areas of the province, to go over a line-by-line comparison of projects that we would have liked to have seen done in construction as opposed to what was put into the program. There will not be time for that, although in previous Estimates, rural Members spent a great deal of time asking specific questions about the status of one project or another in various areas of the province. I see this being somewhat different, although some of my colleagues may ask a few questions on that. But I can see us dealing with more of the policy issues in discussing the kinds of initiatives and the relative importance placed on those, an activity placed on those by this Minister as relative

to what we might think should be taking place. In some areas, we will feel that he is accomplishing a great deal and in others there should be more done.

So I think I could say at the outset that transportation is very important to this province. It is one thing that I came to realize and understand then, having spent four years as Minister. I believe over 30,000 Manitobans are employed in transportation industries. It is very significant. We want to question the Minister on some of the areas that will deal with the weights and dimensions impact on our highway system, that was something I was very concerned about, the increased weights and the impact it would have on our highway system. We want to talk about, in that context, federal funding and progress that is being made there, as the Minister mentioned, very important. I think we have been getting the short end of the stick on it in western Canada, Manitoba in particular, as far as I am concerned, being a province that is not as wealthy. Some of the other western provinces have suffered a great deal, while provinces like Quebec and the Atlantic provinces—Atlantic provinces surely need it—have been getting much more in the area of highway infrastructure. We just see, of course, the \$800 million that is going as compensation for the closure of the Newfoundland railway for infrastructure. I think that establishes a principle that is going to be a precedent, one that we can use to our advantage in western Canada.

I am hopeful that the Minister will be doing that when we are dealing with the whole issue of rail line abandonment and compensation from the federal Government for the various losers in the system as a result of rail line abandonment. We will want to discuss the status of the National Safety Code and, related to that, deregulation. As a result of what we called deregulation, we have ironically greater regulation. This is what I have always found rather ironic because in fact the National Safety Code is a rather extensive regulation of the motor carrier industry in this country, but it is a different kind of regulation. Rather than regulating who gets into the system and who will have the opportunity to supply that kind of service, we are dealing with conditions after they are in. It is an extensive—and we see that by the amendments coming in. I do not know if that is all of them. I have not had a chance to look in detail, but there will probably be more even to implement the National Safety Code over the next while. It is ironic then, that there is greater regulation in some areas.

We want to talk about the impacts of deregulation, free trade as it applies to the particular trucking, the way it is being done in Manitoba versus other provinces. In fact, we do not have standardization because I believe we have it, an entry test, a realistic one in this province, as we always envisaged when we went to the table to negotiate these things, whereas other provinces like the Minister mentioned, Alberta and Ontario, perhaps never felt that they were going to have any type of reverse onus. They were going right to deregulation insofar as entry with the certificate being issued almost by asking.

* (1450)

We will want to talk a bit about Churchill, and certainly the difficulty here that is taking place there, and where we are going to go in the future. We might want to talk a bit about the Handi-Van Service and the deregulation and regulation again of the handicapped transportation system in the City of Winnipeg, and also the Mobility Disadvantage Program in rural areas.

I was at a health conference just recently for rural Manitoba, and one of the issues that was raised in the workshop by a number of different individuals, people involved in the health delivery system in rural areas, was the need for transportation for those who did not have it, to reach the medical services that are available. There is just not a good enough transportation system.

I guess those are the major areas that we will discuss, so I would like us to get in. I do not know whether the Minister intends to go line by line or whether he wants to deal with a more overview kind of approach, but I am prepared to go either way.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. I would remind Members of the committee that debate of the Minister's Salary is deferred until all the other items of the department are passed.

At this time, we would invite the Minister's staff to take their place at the table by the Minister.

Mr. Albert Driedger: The two of us can handle it pretty good, no problem.

Mr. Chairman: Just in terms of procedure, we have to proceed line by line.

Item No. 1. Administration and Finance, (b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries, \$343,600, shall the item pass?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to belabour this. I just want to indicate and based on the comments made by both critics that seeing we are seemingly operating on a bit of a short time frame aspect of it, that if they or some of their colleagues have concerns and want an update on specific roads, rather than waste time here, they can do it by way of communicating with myself or my staff and we will get that information to them forthwith so that they know where they are at and they do not have to necessarily belabour the time if they do not want to in here.

Mr. Chairman: Item (b)(1) Salaries then, shall the item pass?

Mr. Plohman: Yes, I just wanted to ask, Mr. Chairman, do you have a permanent procedure—

Mr. Chairman: The Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Yes, Mr. Chairperson, how do you want us to do that, Mr. Minister? How do you want us to submit those? I have a concern about a specific highway. Do you want me to send you a note?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, if I might just suggest, and the critics can also make, and the other

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members may be aware of it, just a straight memo to myself, to my office, and we will address it as fast as we can in terms of -(Interjection)- You can do it here or you can do it right after to my office, and we will update at whatever condition the highway is at, whether it is in terms of survey design acquisition, right of way, grade gravel, or where it says high rise, okay.

Mr. Plohman: Just to ask the Minister, he has nine staff in this area, the same as the previous year. However, he is sharing two departments. Is the S.A. and E.A. paid out of the Highways budget or Government Services? Has there been a drop in the support in that department?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Highways are the fortunate ones that are paying for the E.A. and S.A.

Mr. Plohman: I was just going to say I thought that that would have been split between the two departments. There are no further questions.

Mr. Chairman: Item (b)(1)—pass; item (b)(2) Other Expenditures, \$81,900—pass.

Item (c) Administrative Services: (1) Salaries, \$528,400—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Just to clarify further to the information in the Supplementary Estimates, the Minister now is operating with one communications officer instead of one and an assistant?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is right; that is correct.

Mr. Plohman: And all other staff have remained the same in that section?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is correct.

Mr. Mandrake: I would like to ask just one question. How many communication officers are there presently in staff?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Just one.

Mr. Mandrake: But you have reduced. In other words, you had two.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes. To clarify that, there used to be two positions. They were actually both vacant, or one was vacant. At the time that we took office, both were vacant and we replaced one.

Mr. Chairman: Item 1.(c)(1)—pass; item 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures, \$56,100—pass; item 1.(d) Financial Services: (1) Salaries, \$584,100—pass; item 1.(d)(2) Other Expenditures, \$70,900—pass.

Item 1.(e) Personnel Services: (1) Salaries, \$677,400—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: On your Activities Identification, you have a department which coordinates affirmative action policies and programs within the department. Could the Minister please table how this is done within the

department and there is no necessity going through it, if he would table the report for the two critics and who does it?

Mr. Albert Driedger: My staff tells me that we could table that criteria and make it available.

Mr. Plohman: Just on that, Mr. Chairman, I had written a letter to the Minister recently about the two positions that were—I believe labour positions in Rorketon and Dauphin—indicated as affirmative action. Yet I was told that the people who were submitted from the Dauphin Pathfinders, people from Native organizations who had submitted qualified candidates' names, were not interviewed or considered for that position. I would just ask the Minister if he has some comments on that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) that one position was filled by a Native. The second position is still being investigated at the present time.

Mr. Plohman: One position has not yet been filled.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I understand that the position has been filled, but it has not been filled by a Native at this stage of the game and that is what we are looking into. But the position was filled and we are just investigating to make sure that proper procedures were used in terms of the hiring.

Mr. Plohman: So you are following up on the information that I brought to your attention. Is that correct, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate that, yes, based on the information that the Member sent forward, we initiated the investigations.

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): On that same subject, Mr. Chairperson, some reference has been made here to the Native people. These people who are being hired are going to have the proper qualifications. They are not going to be hired just because they are Natives, are they? I hope not.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that they have to meet the selection criteria that is set out.

Mr. Plohman: Just on that Mr. Chairman, clearly I was advised that these people who were submitted were at least of the minimum qualifications that were required for the position. We would not ask for hiring if they did not meet those minimum qualifications.

Mr. Chairman: Item 1. Administration and Finance, (e) Personnel Services: (1) Salaries—pass.

Item 1.(e)(2) Other Expenditures \$88,600—the Member for Dauphin.

* (1500)

Mr. Plohman: Could I just ask very quickly if the Minister could provide us with information on the

number of positions currently in process of being filled in the department and what the vacancy rate is? Is there a set vacancy rate being established in this department that is being maintained as a policy?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate that the objective within the department is to try and have a vacancy rate of 5 percent. I think at the present time, we are in the area of 6.1 percent vacancy rate. As far as hiring is concerned, I think the Members knows that, depending on the type of season, there is always a certain amount of movement taking place. The positions, by and large, we are working on at the present time on a 6.1 percent vacancy rate.

Mr. Plohman: Is there a backlog in personnel right now, or is this vacancy rate because of other reasons, seasonal or whatever?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Part of it is because of the time. There is a turnover all of the time. It takes a certain amount of time to fill these positions. This is an ongoing thing. That probably has a bearing on the vacancy as well.

Mr. Plohman: So there is no backlog that has developed in the department in personnel?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told, not really, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Plohman: Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Item 1.(e) Personnel Services: (2) Other Expenditures—pass.

Item 1.(f) Computer Services: (1) Salaries \$906,700—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: One question, Mr. Chairperson, on the bottom here in the footnote, "(1) increase of two staff years for construction management systems." Could the Minister please explain as to what these people do, etc.? Sorry, I am new, so I have to ask these questions.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that these are programmers who develop our construction system.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Mr. Plohman: I think that answer does not quite deal with the question, although the Member may be satisfied. I wonder if the Minister could explain exactly, just very briefly, what the system is going to accomplish when we talk about construction management?

Mr. Albert Driedger: As indicated in there, design, like the whole program that is being developed in terms of survey design, is all being computerized. We are escalating that program. We are gradually expanding on that in terms of having everything on the computer. I can try and be more specific. I am trying to find out how to be more specific right now.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, would that also involve, of necessity in a plan like that, long-term projections

planning of highway construction, rather than year by year? Is the Minister involved in the longer-term program development?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that is not necessarily included in this at this stage of the game, the long-term planning. This is basically on an ongoing basis in a year's construction.

Mr. Plohman: And this is separate from the automated design systems that the—I forget the name of it—department is working in conjunction with American highways organizations to develop for automated designs, computer designs, assisted designs systems. Is this part of it or is this a separate thing in terms of management versus the automated?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that this is separate from that. The roadway system, as the other one is called, is a different system yet.

Mr. Plohman: And that is covered under a different area?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that is under the design portion of the Estimates, the roadway system. I will just check and see where that would be.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, it is under a different section. I am not sure what number.

Mr. Albert Driedger: No. 3, Planning and Design.

Mr. Plohman: If you can identify it—the Minister can identify it later.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Mr. Angus: If I may be permitted, just on this section, can I get an explanation as to what computer hardware rentals you are participating in and what \$61,000 in data communication rentals is all about?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that is for the rental costs that we pay for the computers and the hardware that they use within the department, and they have some pretty sophisticated equipment in there, I might say.

Mr. Chairman, I could probably try and itemize it. I had the privilege of going through the department. They use it where they design the bridges, for example, the roads, they can do it all on computer. They just sit there and push their buttons and away they click and they can indicate exactly the terrain, the elevations and the type of road that is required on it. I would just like to indicate that there are many of them. I found it a great experience to go through there and just see how they can actually, on paper, design a total road, the bridge structure, the whole flow. I do not know how else to explain it. I can get a list of the things that we have, but I would invite any Member really, maybe when they have an opportunity, to go and look exactly how the operation works. I am very impressed.

Mr. Angus: I appreciate computer-aided design work and models that will give you street layouts and estimate

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projections and costs and things of that nature. My concerns are in relation to the investment of taxpayers' dollars and the expenditures of money and the repetitiveness of \$130,000 of renting equipment over a long term, when you may be able to buy computers and have them and pay for them once and be done with it. That is the first question.

The second question is, what on earth do we spend \$60,000 in Datapac charges communicating around this province for computer information when we have things like faxes and different things. I am not challenging the competence or the ingenuity or the creativity or the benefit of computers. I would just like a little further explanation as to a policy that has you renting as opposed to buying.

Mr. Albert Driedger: The Member definitely has an advantage over me because I look at these computers and I am lost in the whole thing, but I have to indicate that—

An Honourable Member: We should take a tour then, I guess.

Mr. Albert Driedger: The staff knows what they are doing. I would indicate to the Member that we have between 40 and 50 computer units that we own. This rent is for major units, that those are being rented apparently. I would dare say the cost factor is being considered in the rental of this, that this is the most economical way to do it. If it is not, if the Member has information that he can indicate that who should do it differently, I am prepared to have staff look at that.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, I do not necessarily have information at my fingertips that would defeat the intent of the professional administration and/or show them a better way of doing it. Unfortunately, I do not have the information as to what they want to do with it or what they have. I do not have an awful lot of confidence from the Minister that this is a good investment, and I would ask you to ask if they have done a ratio of buy versus rent and whether the administration might be able to project some long-term savings in expenditures of money within the department, both through the rental of communication systems which I suspect is Datapac line charges, and the rental of hardware to run the software programs you obviously have.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that before we get into any new equipment at all or consider any expansion of this that a cost benefit study is done to evaluate whether it would be better to buy or to rent. All these things by our computer experts are being worked on in terms of which is the most economical. That is the best I could come up with.

* (1510)

Mr. Angus: I will leave this issue right away, Mr. Chairperson. I would just like to make it clear that it has been my experience that administration, when they recognize the total benefits of a computer-rated system, find themselves because of budgetary constraints and/

or restraints investing in these on a partial basis. That is renting them because the people who control the purse strings will not release sufficient money for them to be able to make a better investment, that is buying the equipment and perhaps spending a little bit more up front than repeatedly spending on a rental basis. It is an argument that I suspect is going to be difficult to change at this level.

I am certainly not about to suggest that we cut any monies from this area of expenditure, because I am sure it is justified and I am sure it is well required. I would encourage the Minister to sit down with his executive assistants and his Deputy Ministers and the people who are there, and get a good understanding of the totality of the investment, the direction that they are taking. He may find in fact that over a course of two or three years, by spending a little bit more money now, we can avoid repetitive investments in the future. With that, Mr. Chairperson, I will pass.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would just like to indicate, Mr. Chairman, that much of this computer equipment is actually obsolete in five years. You have to figure out between lease and buying of this equipment when it gets to be obsolete. The other aspect of course is that our finance people are very actively involved in terms of looking at which is the most economical over a period of long range. I appreciate the comments and I would certainly hope that between all the safeguards that we have in terms of which is most economical, I think between the department and all the people involved there is close scrutiny as to which would be the most beneficial financially.

Mr. Plohman: Just briefly to add to that, Mr. Chairman, the Minister did mention the control mechanism that is there in the Department of Finance where they scrutinize all departments' automation programs to ensure that they are cost effective. I think there is a good system there. It is not just left to the individual departments not indicating that they would not indeed make the right decisions, but there is a double scrutiny of these decisions.

Mr. Chairman: Item No. 1.(f)(1)—pass; 1.(f)(2) Other Expenditures \$509,200—pass.

Item 2. Operations and Maintenance. Provides program management and specialized functional support services in tendering, bridge design and engineering to the department's maintenance, assistance and construction programs. Provides for the maintenance of Manitoban's primary and secondary road system and winter roads. (a) Maintenance Program \$53,013,800—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Several questions in this section, please, Mr. Chairperson, the first question is that I am very upset about our sign coming into Winnipeg. Any other city, we have a ring road identifying the by-pass. What do we have in Winnipeg? By-pass Winnipeg. Would this Minister please look at that sign and see whether or not we could put something different on it as opposed to By-pass Winnipeg? We are trying to attract tourists, not chase them away. The other question is, how many

school bus signs are there presently on our provincial trunk roads and our highways?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, first of all, we will take note of the first comment that the Member made. I wonder if he could clarify his second question though. How many—

Mr. Mandrake: How many school bus signs, where it says the "School Bus with Flashing Light, Please Slow Down"?

Mr. Albert Driedger: You mean across the province?

Mr. Mandrake: Yes, approximately. You do not have to give it to me today, you can give it to me later on.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member that we do not have that information right here. We will try and get it at least as close as possible. We will try and get that information.

Mr. Mandrake: Under the Maintenance, in my travels throughout Manitoba in all the years, ever since 1968, I have been simply appalled at the tree base that you have got, particularly on No. 1 Highway. We are constantly replacing them. I am sure that the cost is almost getting prohibitive. Can we not do something about it? They are constantly dying. If they are dying, just—I do not know.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate that the soil conditions are a bit of a problem where we do the planting. I do not know whether the Member is promoting the idea of not planting anything there or leaving it. I think they are planted for a purpose, really. I do not know why they are dying all the time.

I understand that part of the rationale for that is to stop the snow drifting, soil drifting and things of this nature. There is a purpose for having these, we will call them shelters, I guess. The reason why they are dying, I do not know. Obviously, if the intention is to have them there, we will have to replace them.

Mr. Mandrake: The reason why I brought that up is that I am quite confident that there must be some kind of a bush, some type of a tree, that will be able to sustain itself in that type of an environment. If we do not find anything that will sustain itself in that environment, why go out and plant something that looks like—I mean, there is a twig sitting in the centre of the medium and it looks like the dickens. I do not know about other people, but I find it very offensive.

Mr. Albert Driedger: We will have a look. We will try and figure out something that is going to grow the way we want it to. It should make the Member happy.

Mr. Mandrake: Okay, the other question is that I noticed here on the footnote (1), underneath Total Expenditures, a reduction of 20 staff years in number of temporary maintenance personnel due to the repriorization of several maintenance activities. Could this Minister please explain this a little bit more in greater depth?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that basically the change in standards to some degree, the change of type of equipment we have been using, was part of the reason for the reduction of the temporary maintenance and that actually a good portion of them have been replaced already. So it is just something that fluctuates, based on the kind of maintenance that is taking place and the kind of equipment that we use. I think it varies from year to year a little bit, depending specifically what we undertake.

Mr. Plohman: I just wanted to, rather than raise additional issues—you know, there is \$53 million, we could probably spend a lot of time discussing the whole realm of maintenance but, because of the limited time, I just want to reflect on a few of the comments that were made and maybe focus it a bit on the school bus policy signs that were implemented a number of years ago at the request of many school divisions. With a limited budget, I believe that what we did was to determine that we would have those signs installed on PTHs exiting and entering communities over a certain size. I think it was 5,000 people. I am not sure if that was it, I think it was.

So it is not a matter of counting the signs, but the communities in rural Manitoba that fit the criteria had those placed. But they were not placed in all of the other roads, and I wonder whether the Minister could indicate whether he is prepared to allocate additional funds to expanding that program. I think it has been very successful. As a matter of fact, I have heard from a number of school divisions who are very pleased and urging us to do more in that regard. I would ask the Minister to consider expanding the criteria for that program so that additional signs could be put up if in fact that is not happening already. So on that, if the Minister can get some information on that, I would urge him to expand that program.

* (1520)

Insofar as the signs generally, I noticed as well and I did as Minister, but there are so many things to get around to that you never can get all of them, that there are a lot of checkered signs, a lot of green—I am talking about regular highway signs—either identifying the community or travel information, that are weathered, checkered from weathering, and deteriorating. I see that in quite a few areas, and I am wondering if the Minister could take a look at that and perhaps put greater emphasis on having staff just travel through the province and identify those signs that need replacing on a systematic basis and have them done. It may be that surveillance has been reduced somewhat.

The third point that I want to make, and I might as well do it all at once, Mr. Chairman, dealing with the issue of trees, I felt that what we really should have are some major shelterbelts, particularly along Highway No. 1 between Winnipeg and Portage, as an example, where it is blowing snow, drifting there, even if it is calm in the rest of the province. It is always blowing, it is always a blizzard and visibility is terrible in the wintertime. I think if the Ministers of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) and Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) could get together and actually have a shelterbelt planted

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there that in 20 years from now could leave us with a beautiful highway with shelter along the whole area. I think that would be a tremendous legacy to leave to our kids.

I was indicating to my staff in Natural Resources just prior to the election that I wanted to make that a priority to work on that stretch of highway, just that one stretch of highway because there is so much, there are so many trees you can put in. I remember we had a Kids and Trees Program we wanted to put in place. It did get off with a number of trees planted, but then there was difficulty in maintaining them and a lot of them died subsequently. I imagine some of them have continued to live and that they will bear fruit, so to speak, but that is an area that we can all do more, I think, in the area of tree planting along our highways, both for—and the sides—environmental reasons, aesthetic reasons, beautify our—and safety reasons. There is such a big need there and I would urge the Minister to really try to develop a program there, especially using that one section of highway. He may have others that he may think are higher priority but certainly that is a high priority in my mind.

Mr. Albert Driedger: First of all, I would like to address the school bus signs. I will try and get the information to see whether the Member is urging expansion of the program and I have no difficulty with looking at the possible expansion. A new sign has been developed. A large, good visual impact, a total of 61 placed across the province done over two years, 1986-87, in most highways outside the major cities and in particular in problem areas. So the program is in place and we will continue to work on that.

The second question was?

Mr. Plohman: Signs checkered.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Oh, yes. I am told that our staff in the districts are continually patrolling and watching for these and there is a continual upgrading taking place. I know that even down the highway that I drive home, 59, I was concerned about the same thing. All of a sudden, you see these beautiful signs and you know they are paint checked and stuff like that. You have to eventually get around to replacing them. I do not know whether there is an escalated program doing that, an ongoing program anyway.

I would like to indicate that the Member mentioned shelterbelts, especially on that stretch from I guess where the White Horse is to Portage which is, I think, the worst stretch of highway in terms of blowing with the amount of traffic that is on there. The department has been in touch with the Department of Agriculture to ask them to investigate the possibility of establishing shelterbelts. It is the Department of Agriculture, I believe, that we have been in touch with.

I would just like to make a few more comments because this is a big item, the maintenance program, that this year because of the drought situation that we delayed the mowing of roadsides and encouraged farmers to try and mow where they could get feed from it. As a result of that, it was rather late before we ever

got a mowing program going. We escalated it dramatically once we felt that there was no more further mowing taking place by the farmers. So these are all things that come under the maintenance aspect of it. We plan to have a look at it possibility in a different sense and maybe put a higher priority on it for next year.

The one other thing that I would like to make reference to under this department is that we have a program that was initiated. I think this is the second year when we had the 4-H Litter Pick-up Program. It came under that and I personally am very supportive of that. I think it is beneficial to the 4-H Clubs as well as certainly to the Highways Department. Unfortunately this year, when they picked it up, it was on a long weekend and the staff could not get around to picking up the bags of it and some of it was blown around. But I think it is very beneficial, certainly from the point of cleaning up. I think the 4-H'ers are to be commended, and I certainly look forward to continuing that kind of a program.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one quick question, please, Mr. Chairperson, sealcoat, which is being used rather extensively in this province, I noticed that between Headingley and the Perimeter, you have used sealcoat.

Mr. Albert Driedger: There are two reasons why we use that. One is for skid resistance to some degree. The other is to just maintain the road by sealcoating of that nature, maintains the life of the road a little longer. That is a tough stretch anyway. You are talking about Headingley to the Perimeter, right?

Mr. Mandrake: That is right.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes.

Mr. Mandrake: Is there anything, or is there any program within the present or future expenditures that you are going to put heavy bituminous pavement on that particular stretch of road?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We had some concern just a little while ago when they were talking of a major residential development taking place there. There are long-term plans that have been worked on that are in place in terms of rerouting the Trans-Canada on a different route altogether—I think the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) probably is aware of it. Staff and consultants have been working on it. There is a plan in place of taking and using a different access. As we have more commercial development taking place here, we run into more difficulty and that is one of the reasons why it is a restricted speed zone in that area. We have that option, if it continues this way, if funding is available, that we will use a different route.

* (1530)

Mr. Plohman: Very briefly, I just want to mention one more time to the Minister regarding the signs. I know that there is a regular patrol by the districts, but I do not think that in some cases it is being done as diligently as it could be done, unless these things just happen

overnight. Or is it because our budget is limited that we cannot replace all those that really are in bad shape and, if that is the case, then we should look at that. It seems to me there could be some directive or suggestion with the engineers' meeting that they just take another look at that.

If I marked down every time I came to a community that had one of these, I guess I could make a better case for it, but I know that there are many out there that are quite unsightly really. When you get them that checked, it makes it very, very unsightly to visitors I think.

One other thing about the 4-H Program, I am happy the Minister mentioned it and said he is looking forward to continuing that program because it is something that was started—actually the idea came from Alberta to us, where they have an extensive program. I think it can certainly increase the awareness of children through the 4-H Program of keeping their environment clean and at the same time accomplishing something for the Highways Department at relatively low cost. So I think it is a good thing.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member that the aspect of the sign changing, we will take that as notice and review that to make sure that the program is ongoing, maybe escalated. The other thing is that from the time a sign is identified, it takes a little while until we get the sign people to paint up the sign and replace it, but I take as notice the comments of the Member.

Mr. Angus: I too ask the Minister with my newness to the committee and the whole procedure as to whether or not this is the area that I would ask this type of question. If it is not, put me into the right area.

The question has to do with dangerous goods routes. In a lot of major Canadian cities, as you enter the cities on the highways, there are posted signs that clearly indicate to those transport carriers which routes they should take that will eliminate and/or drastically reduce the negative impact on citizens and on structures and on the city. I wonder, do we have a policy of dangerous goods routes. Have we set aside any money as to specific areas where they should be transporting these dangerous goods? Do we have a list of dangerous goods that are identified so that these transport carriers are aware, etc.?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that we can discuss that aspect of transportation of dangerous goods right at this point. That is fair enough.

Now I would like to indicate that the transportation of dangerous goods—first of all, we have the environmental people involved, but we also from the safety aspect of it, through the Department of Highways, have inspectors who do the inspections for transportation of dangerous goods. I guess we are just coming of age to some degree in that department, because many of our inspectors have not really felt that comfortable in terms of how do you assess when it is dangerous or not dangerous. We are upgrading

their experience, their skills and knowledge in this so that they feel more comfortable with it because, in discussing it with the inspectors, this is an area that seemingly has been a bit of a gray area where they do not really know fully when is it dangerous to move certain goods or not, and so that is being addressed right now. It is a matter of concern and so we are starting to feel that we are addressing that at the present time.

Mr. Angus: I appreciate and I am encouraged by the fact that the Minister is going to get his inspectors to be able to identify which are dangerous goods and which are not. Let us assume for a moment that we recognize that the transportation of dynamite is a dangerous good. Is there a designated route through the City of Winnipeg that is posted, it can be posted? Are the transportation carriers aware that in the transportation of those dangerous good that we know are dangerous goods, that they go a particular route? Then correspondingly, are the Manitoba safety networks, the fire, the police, the ambulances, etc., aware of this dangerous transportation route?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that, by and large, when somebody is hauling dangerous goods that they have to make—and our inspectors become aware of it or they have to let us know about it, that our staff identifies the route that they should be travelling which is considered to be the most safe route. So our people get involved and indicate this is a route that could be used and this is a route that should not be used, to take that into consideration.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, I recognize that there is a price tag for everything, but sometimes the price tag of not taking preventative action is more expensive than the initial investment of some sort of a preventative maintenance program. I would encourage him to give consideration to posting in and around the City of Winnipeg some mechanism for advising both the travelling motoring public and the transportation drivers that they should be taking a specific route in transporting dangerous goods. I think that it is a precaution that is fair, reasonable and would be relatively inexpensive.

I would also encourage the Minister in his consultations that he discusses with the City of Winnipeg Streets and Transportation Department and the City of Winnipeg Emergency Measures coordination groups, the best routes to be taken. He might also discuss it with the Truckers' Association and transportation people. It is not something that I realize will not happen immediately, but I think it is a step in the right direction of public awareness and safety measures. I would encourage you to consider it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would just like to indicate that I do not know whether the designation of special routes would suffice because, depending where these units come from, from the manufacturing, where they go to. But our inspectors, I am told, go and check when we have, for example, dynamite to make sure that they have properly signed and properly routed. So we are

more cognizant of the fact of the safety aspects in terms of this transportation. We will continue to try and upgrade the whole system so that we can do it. If it means designated routes, I have no difficulty with that, but we will try and develop an ongoing safer way of transporting the dangerous goods.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, I appreciate that any new initiatives are not without certain complications, but those complications can very quickly and efficiently be overcome if we have a single-mindedness of purpose in relation to providing absolute safety, both to the transporters and to the people through where the goods are being transported. You may use as a guiding post or a starting system the City of Edmonton and/or other cities in Canada that already have established these, find out what model they are using, run it through those very expensive computers that you have and find out how we can do it.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass? (Agreed)

2.(b) Winter Roads: (1) 100 percent Provincial, \$103,000—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one quick question, Mr. Chairman, for the Minister, there is a winter road being constructed by Hydro to Lac Brochet. My question to the Minister is, why cannot the Department of Highways place this winter road under their jurisdiction and maintain this road because apparently what I have been under the impression is that once the season is over they plough that road over and nobody can use it.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that Hydro does certain limited winter roads which they use for their own use specifically, and I do not know whether there is anybody else who would have any use for those kind of roads.

Mr. Mandrake: Absolutely so, Mr. Chairperson. From Brochet to Lac Brochet, there is no means of communication other than air transportation. Now if this winter road was in place, a lot of the townspeople would be able to use this road.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that Hydro does that. It is a one-shot deal basically to take their fuel in. If the cost of maintaining some of these winter roads is very expensive, and Hydro does this to get their fuel in, then they move out, and then they do not maintain it any further and that is the reason. Nobody has really made any approach that I am aware of that Highways should take over that as a winter road, and I do not know whether we want to, you know, take over any more winter roads.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, would the Minister consider—I am not saying they will be spending extra millions and millions of dollars—because this road is being built every year for the transportation of fuel into that area, maintaining that road and charging Hydro for the use of that road for the transportation of diesel?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told this is a very long extensive road, that it is more economical to do it this

way. But I am prepared to discuss this further with staff to see whether there is an advantage to the community and at what cost. I mean we will have to rationalize it on that basis. I will have a look at that and discuss it further.

Mr. Mandrake: Just for the record, Mr. Chairperson, I am happy that this Minister is at least going to look at it. Thank you.

* (1540)

Mr. Plohman: Just on the issue of winter roads, in the past, there have been examples, not under this program but where communities have asked to have a specific winter road that was put in for another purpose. For example, if there was a school under construction and Indian Affairs would put a road in or the contractor would put a road in, say to Shamattawa, I believe, a couple of years ago what we did in that case—I think there were two years running and they needed one. I know in one year for certain the chief and band came to us and asked us if we would consider funding the maintenance of that road for a couple of extra weeks so that they could get all of their supplies in, not just for the construction of the school but for the community. We said, if they would match the dollars so that the federal Government, as this program has done now, would be paying their share.

Of course, many of these bands now have the authority to decide where the money is going to be spent for capital, that perhaps we could match it and we did match it in that case. It could be done on an ad hoc basis if funds can be found, perhaps not up to the standards that we have put on for ours but there are ways perhaps to get around those standards. There are insurance problems that have to be considered and trucks coming in. At the same time, there are ways to do that in some instances. With the Minister going to review that, certainly it is I think a positive step.

Mr. Chairman: Item No. 2.(b)(1)—pass; 2.(b)(2) Shareable with Canada, \$2,577,000—pass; item No. 2.(c) Operations and Contracts: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$1,594,000—pass; 2.(c)(2) Other Expenditures, \$340,000—pass; 2.(d) Bridges and Structures: (1) Salaries, \$1,679,600—pass; 2.(d)(2) Other Expenditures, \$95,100—pass; 2.(d)(3) Bridge Maintenance, \$820,000—pass.

2.(e) Transport Compliance: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$1,635,700—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, in reviewing this, I—and again I am going to refer back to my honourable friend from Dauphin—cannot find in reading in this Transport Compliance, or is it an oversight or am I not reading it right? You have omitted one particular item and that is to provide uniform vehicle inspection at permanent weight sites, and conduct in-depth regional inspections at selected locations. Now that is the one I cannot find in here or anywhere else within the Estimates. Could the Minister be so kind as to tell me where this is being addressed?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that based on some of the changes that are taking place under

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the National Safety Code that we do inspections a little differently now. In fact, under the Act that is coming forward now, if the Member maybe has had a look at that, there are changes in terms of how it will be done. We used to have a recall system or a call-up system for inspections. We have teams that are doing mechanical inspections in the field right now, that do spot checks, stop a truck and check and see whether we have for safety reasons.

Mr. Mandrake: I am not worried—I should not say I am not worried, but I was not referring to that new law that is coming out on the National Safety Code. What I am talking about is to see vehicle inspections of private motor vehicles. Where is that being addressed?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I should maybe clarify my statements. There are two types of inspections, one that is being conducted through our department and the private motor vehicle inspection is conducted by MPIC. Then we have the on-highway inspection which is taking place, where we check for certain critical inspections that take place, whether the guy's headlights are working, whether he is dragging stuff or whatever the case may be. But the private motor vehicle inspection, that is done by MPIC.

Mr. Mandrake: I will let my honourable friend from Dauphin ask some questions now.

Mr. Plohman: I just wanted to add one comment that I did not make with regard to the winter roads. We do have one of the most extensive winter road systems in Canada of any province. It has been highlighted a number of times in television programs, in journals. I invite either of the other two, the Minister and the critic, to review that. In other provinces, it is one that is a model for all provinces and one that we can be very proud of in the winter road system.

Insofar as the inspections, I just wanted to mention perhaps the Minister also could comment on the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Program that involves something more than just the spot checks on the highways and the private motor vehicles. This is a compulsory commercial vehicle inspection program that went in a couple of years ago, I believe, which requires trucks, tractors to be inspected, I think, every six months and the trailers every year. But I am not certain. Is that program meeting with acceptance in the industry? Are there any problems that have developed with it?

In addition, in the interest of time, Mr. Chairman, I want to just deal with another question at the same time. I do not know if it is easier for the Minister or maybe not. I will wait till he gets the answer.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate for commercial vehicles, we have an inspection system right now where the tractors have to be inspected every six months and the trailers get inspected once a year. We have approximately over 200 private certified garages where they can take these units, where they can go and have their inspection done. Is this what the Member was referring to? We have just started that earlier this year.

Mr. Plohman: Just in relation to the whole area of the safety with the weights and dimensions, changes in the National Safety Code, particularly the National Safety Code, I guess, I would have expected that there may be an increase in staff to implement the National Safety Code. I do not see it here. As well, I only see \$41,000 being recovered from Canada. I believe this is the second year. The agreement was signed in '87. Actually '88, '89 is really the second year or the first full year, but the second year of implementation I believe of the Safety Code, the work being done, and we were I believe eligible for up to \$150,000 a year or something like that. All we are getting is \$41,000.00. Are we missing out on federal funding here because we are not implementing as fast as we could have?

Mr. Albert Driedger: First of all, I would have to indicate that portion where the Member is looking for additional staff is under the Driver and Vehicle Licensing aspect of it. We can cover it now or we can cover it later. Then we can deal with the question about cost, all development costs and \$250,000 per year for doing the inspections, for operating costs, but we can deal with that again.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, if we could just briefly under here, if the Minister would not mind. He is saying that the development costs for the first five years were budgeted at \$250,000 a year or was it total \$250,000.00?

* (1550)

Mr. Albert Driedger: My understanding is, it is total, \$250,000 for development. That is it.

Mr. Plohman: Over the five-year period?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Over the five-year period, yes.

Mr. Plohman: I thought initially, Mr. Chairman, we were eligible for 50 percent of the funding to a maximum. Could the Minister explain what the formula is and how much we could be eligible for each year? Is the \$41,000 the maximum that we could be eligible for, for each given year from the federal Government? If it is, it is much lower development costs than originally was envisaged for the National Safety Code development.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I understand that they are paying the total cost of the development, the development costs and they are paying up to \$250,000 a year for five years for the operating costs. Does that sound a little better?

Mr. Plohman: Then I just want to point out, first of all, in the Supplementary Information we do deal with the National Safety Code in the booklet, so that it would seem appropriate to discuss it under Transport Compliance. So you are telling me that the staff and the money though is in Driver and Vehicle Licensing as opposed to in here, so that is why we do not see any additional staff.

Can the Minister indicate then that the \$41,000 is for the development costs which the federal

Government is paying the full amount, or is this for the operating costs, or is this Recoverable from Canada have nothing to do with the National Safety Code in this budget?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Some of the costs are in here. The majority of it is under Driver and Vehicle Licensing, and the staff I believe are under Driver and Vehicle Licensing, but some of the costs are in this portion here and that is the recoverable portion from this part of it. It is not that definitive because part of it is under this section and part of it is under Driver and Vehicle Licensing, and I hope the Member does not ask me why.

Mr. Plohan: I am not going to ask why, because I can understand there has always been discussion in the department about where this should be housed. I see under Driver and Vehicle Licensing, Recoverable from Canada under Management Services \$37,000, under Licensing \$64,000, under Safety \$78,000.00. Which of the above are the other costs that are associated with the National Safety Code from Canada, or all of them?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told all of them.

Mr. Plohan: So, if we were to add all the \$41,000 plus all of those figures, we would get the total amount that we are recovering from Canada for the development. How much of that is for operating funding of which we have a maximum of \$250,000 per year as stated by the Minister?—(Interjection)—Yes, maybe that would help, if the Minister could just give us the information on the sheet of paper.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, what I would like to do then maybe is have a copy for each critic so that they can look because it is all written down, unless you want me to read it all into the record. Maybe they would have a better understanding if we get a copy for them. Would that be acceptable?

Mr. Plohan: Yes, that would be excellent. The question I would have on this then, because it is such a major new area, the National Safety Code, is could the Minister supply us as well with an updated timetable for implementation of all aspects? I believe there are some 21 or so aspects of the National Safety Code that have to be worked on and implemented. Some have already perhaps been implemented. Others, the legislation the Minister is bringing into the House right at the present time, others may be with legislation next year. I would like to get a revised timetable of the implementation of the Safety Code in Manitoba. Could the Minister indicate whether we are ahead or behind most other provinces?

Mr. Albert Driedger: First of all, I believe we are holding our own or maybe even a little bit ahead. I just had the occasion a little while ago to go through all the various aspects of it. We have the four sheets here. For example, the single-driver-licence concept is implemented, knowledge performance test implemented, Driver-Examiner Training Program

implemented, but maybe what I should do—what the heck. We will run paper. If it is agreeable, we can do that because I am just trying to see whether there are any areas which are not totally implemented.

An Honourable Member: Yes, we have ours.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, there are some, but we have dates of implementation. For example, there are some on February 1, 1989, but because of the—we have it all written out here, some as far back as October 1, 1990. So what I will do, I will make copies of this and have critics look at it, unless we want to get more specific on it.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Chairman, I would really appreciate getting that information. As well, I just wanted to ask the Minister whether he expects the costs that Manitoba will have to pay above the \$250,000, what they will be above the \$250,000 that we are committed to getting from the federal Government for the first five years of operation? Are we assessing the trucking industry for those costs? Will we be assessing those costs, passing them through registration fee increases, or is that being taken from General Revenue?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The \$57,000 involved under the implementation of the National Safety Code has been passed on to the trucking industry this year. The rest of it is all between the federal participation and the provincial participation, which is reflected in the sheet that I will be submitting to him, but the \$57,000 is not reflected on here.

Mr. Plohan: If the Minister has those projections for the period of five years, if he could throw that in with the information that he has as well, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I have indicated that that is—

Mr. Plohan: That is part of it. Okay.

Mr. Chairman: Item 2.(e)(2) Other Expenditures \$370,300—pass; item 2.(f) District Offices: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$8,028,000—pass; item 2.(f)(2) Other Expenditures, \$909,500—pass; item 2.(g) Other Jurisdictions: (1) Gross Expenditures, \$5,690,000—pass; 2.(g)(2) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$3,665,000—pass.

Resolution No. 86: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$73,191,000 for Highways and Transportation, Operations and Maintenance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

Item 3. Planning and Design and Land Surveys. Establishes design criteria and plans for the development of a primary and secondary road system. (a) Planning and Design: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$1,748,500—the Member for Dauphin.

* (1600)

Mr. Plohan: Just one question, could this be the area that will be serviced by the new automated construction

management program? Is this area that we will be working with that program?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Partially here and partially in construction.

Mr. Chairman: Item 3.(a)(1)—pass; item 3.(a)(2) Other Expenditures, \$316,500—pass; item 3.(b) Land Surveys: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$875,600—pass; item 3.(b)(2) Other Expenditures, \$166,500—pass.

Resolution No. 87: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,107,100 for Highways and Transportation, Planning and Design and Land Surveys, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

Item 4. Engineering and Technical Services. Provides program management and specialized functional support services to departmental programs. Provides for the operation and maintenance of northern airports and a ferry service in northern Manitoba for freight, passenger and vehicle service. Operates the Manitoba Government Air Service, installs and maintains communications systems for Government departments and agencies. (a) Management Services: (1) Salaries, \$117,200—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Is this the appropriate section to be asking questions about the airports, for example, in Swan River?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that we will come under Northern Airports.

Mr. Mandrake: Fine, I will defer my questions till then, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I want to correct something here. Okay, Mr. Chairman, sorry for the delay, I just want to try and establish for the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) specifically, so that we can deal with it. It comes under Transportation Policy and Research under item 5., Manitoba Airport Assistance Program. That is where we could deal with the Swan River one. That is on page 102 of your book there.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(a)(1)—pass; 4.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$18,700—pass; 4.(b) Mechanical Equipment Services: (1) Salaries and Wages \$8,100,000—pass.

Item 4.(b)(2) Other Expenditures, \$10,857,600.00.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate the status of the new garage for the Mechanical Services Division?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is in Operation and we have moved in completely.

Mr. Plohman: So, Mr. Chairman, all of the code requirements and all of the upgrading that was required has all been completed now?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, everything has been completed and in operation.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, that was an old Westeel Building. Could the Minister indicate what the total cost of that project was for the information of the committee? Can he indicate as well just whether that is going to serve the needs of the Mechanical Division there for foreseeable future, whether they see an expansion required?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, my other hat built that building or that comes under Government Services, and I do not have the precise figures here, but we will get that figure to the Member.

I would just like to indicate one thing. I said everything is finished and operational. I think we have to build a wash rack yet. But I will get the figure of the precise cost of the buildings.

Mr. Plohman: The other question was about the needs for the foreseeable expansion, as required.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told yes, it certainly does.

Mr. Plohman: Does the department feel that at this point—and I am just fishing here, I do not know—that it has been completed, whether it was a good efficient expenditure or whether indeed a new building would have been better after the whole thing has been taken into account?

Mr. Albert Driedger: First of all, I would have to say to the Member that—the Member is asking me and I am asking staff, and the staff are the ones who are promoting it, so it behooves them to say it was not working well. But I am told seriously that we have been saving millions of dollars, several millions of dollars using this approach. So I think it is a positive.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Chairman, that is exactly what we hoped would be the case at the time it was undertaken, but there were costs that were really not fully anticipated when the building was purchased, although it came to light very soon after. I just wondered, keeping in mind those additional costs, whether they still felt it was cost effective. I expected the answer would be, yes, because replacement costs for a new building were substantial, I recall. Those are all the questions that I have on that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I just want to indicate that I think what the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is asking is for a little pat on the back, having initiated this.

Mr. Plohman: No, no, far from it.

Mr. Albert Driedger: We will say it was a good move.

Mr. Plohman: Well, okay.

An Honourable Member: See, he is happy already.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, I am unsure again of the procedure, Mr. Minister, as to whether this is a planning

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item or a construction item. I conferred with my colleague and the item that I am going to ask you about is not in Construction, so I assume that if it is anywhere it might be in Future Planning. With leave of the committee and perhaps the Minister, I could just ask a question about the planning of a future development.

* (1610)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Darren Praznik, in the Chair.)

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairperson, through you to the Minister, I have a problem developing at Waverley and the Perimeter Highway in my area which is creating a dangerous corner, a dangerous intersection. The city has recently hard surfaced Waverley Street from the University of Manitoba through to the Perimeter Highway. The traffic is increasing, and I would like to know what plans you have in relation to addressing some form of traffic control and/or interchange improvements in that area?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that a study has taken place. I think we are looking at a relocation of the road to some degree and ultimately we are looking at an overpass at that intersection. Staff have been working with that. I think maybe I have even seen the final plans and the long-range plans for the Perimeter. If the Member would want to see specifically what it is, I would ask him to drop in. We could make arrangements and have him look at the plan. We have a plan that is already developed. Am I correct? I thought I saw one.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I will not delay the committee's time any further. Given that the Minister has this in the foreseeable future, if he would undertake to have the administration within the guidelines of political approval at least indicate some form of a time frame and what their plans are as of today and forward that to me, I would be appreciative. I have had a number of inquiries from constituents who use that interchange and would like to know what is happening. I recognize, Mr. Minister, that politics being what it is that anything that is planned for right now is not necessarily a certainty, but I would be appreciative of any time frame and eventual plans that you are considering.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I guess the most appropriate answer would be, soon. That is the one that when you are not sure you say, soon, and that hides it. I want to indicate, and I am not making fun, staff is working together in conjunction with the city on this. I am not taking it lightly but I cannot be definitive in terms of when that would be on the program itself. Certainly the Member, as well as others, have the opportunity to submit and pressure their concerns to be considered in terms of the financial priorities that come up.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I come from an environment whereby we were required by law to create

five-year capital development plans. We would see the potential investment. Those were not set in stone or cast in stone. The question that I am asking is, would the Minister undertake to have his staff prepare some form of a communication to me, giving some indication as to whether they anticipate addressing this problem in the next three years or five years or ten years and what type of things that they are doing, so that I can at least communicate knowledgeable information based on today's circumstances to my constituents?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to try and even do better than that. First of all, I would like to, as I indicated before, have the Member come forward and meet with my staff and look specifically at the plan that is there. Then we will try and draft a letter outlining exactly the position where we are at so that the Member can go back to his people and say, well, this is where it is at. We could indicate in that letter as well the hoops that we have to go through to get to the point where it would be construction.

Unfortunately, we have been working on a year-to-year basis in terms of our program, almost on a year-to-year basis. We are looking at developing a long-range program so that people have a better idea when a program will come on stream. We have not had much time. We have just barely finished developing last year's program and now we are into working the Estimates for next year's program. We are trying to maybe look at where we come forward with a longer-range program so that there is a bit of a better idea when people can expect certain improvements to take place. So we will try and do that. We will try and work something out.

Mr. Angus: My final question, I applaud the good management in terms of definitive plans and the decision making that goes with identifying those plans based on some form of criteria.

I can save the Minister's staff some time. I believe the plans that they would be showing me would be plans that they have already discussed with the community committee, when I was a City Councillor at that time, when we looked at those interchanges. What I am really interested in is the process of getting this type of development on the books to be built so that we can alleviate a problem. Thank you, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Mr. Plozman: Just, with leave, one point on the same, it relates to what the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) was asking about and that is his plan and long-term plan. He talked about a five-year requirement with the City of Winnipeg. We had been working on the concept of a three-year highway plan. It was not carved in stone. It was not formally approved as such, but it was a guide. I would ask the Minister whether he is continuing with that and whether he is indeed developing a new three-year plan reflecting the priorities of his Government?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We are trying to develop, let us say, a two-year program at least. Not necessarily three, at this stage of the game, but a two-year program so that where we have projects in the middle that we have

an idea. Actually some of it is three year. For example, the cloverleaf at 7 and 101 is a three-year project. We are trying to be a bit more definitive in terms of outlining because, as the Member indicates, nothing is cast in stone. First of all, we do not know on a year-to-year basis how much money would be available. We have an idea of the things that we want to go through. I personally would like to see a three-year program. At this present stage of the game, I would be happy if we would come forward with a two-year program and get approval. I am not averse to working towards a two.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Item 4.(b)(2)—pass; 4.(b)(3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$21,723,600—pass; 4.(c) Warehouse Stores: (1) Salaries and Wages \$438,900—pass; 4.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$138,900—pass.

4.(c)(3) Purchases \$7,500,000—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, this is a large amount, \$7.5 million; last year, \$7.9 million. Can the Minister indicate whether their drop is due to a more efficient purchasing system and less inventory, therefore, or due to automation? That is what comes from good management plans that have been put in place over the last number of years to automate the purchasing system. I just wonder whether in fact that is now taking place and bearing fruit.

Mr. Albert Driedger: If there is an improvement, it must be because of the new Government.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Shall the item pass?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Order, order. No, I have to indicate that it is because of the automated system that is in place that has improved that aspect of it.

Mr. Plohman: So what we have then is a drop of \$400,000 in total inventory that is on hand because you have a more sensitive system that can respond in a shorter time period to the needs.

Can you tell me as well, can the Minister indicate whether this is now fully automated or whether we are still in the process of automation?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The system is fully automated.

* (1620)

Mr. Plohman: At all locations? How many do we have again, warehousing centres, Dauphin, Brandon, Winnipeg? How many are there altogether? Are they all now implemented?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We have seven warehouses and they are all automated.

Mr. Plohman: Okay, thank you.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): 4.(c)(3)—pass; item 4.(c)(4) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$7,500,000—pass.

Item 4.(d) Northern Airports: (1) Salaries and Wages \$2,731,100—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Just a question on the Gods Lake Airport, the one that used to be owned by Mr. Ruminski and which was the subject of a great deal of attention a year ago about, as the approach freezes up and the whole community came into Winnipeg, because they said they did not feel that safe because it was not an airport. At that time, it was operational. Due to a number of circumstances, a lot of things took place after that. I believe it has been resolved, but I have not had an updated report. Can the Minister provide us with a report or is there any expenditure liability in this section or are we in the wrong section for any dollars? Would it be in the construction budget or has there been no money spent or committed?

Mr. Albert Driedger: There is no money in this budget for the Gods River Airport at this stage of the game. Except for liability insurance, I believe, I have to indicate to the Member that one of the reasons why my deputy was not sure was because there was a meeting taking place this afternoon with the Gods River Band about trying to resolve some of the concerns. I unfortunately will not be able to—so we are in negotiations with the band on that airport. I can give the Member a report later on once I know exactly where we are at, which I do not know right now because the meeting is taking place this afternoon.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, I do not know whether the process was started all over again. I guess the Minister can answer that one. I believe that we were at the stage where there was an offer between the federal and provincial Governments to purchase the airport and upgrade it to certain standards. I thought that had been accepted by the band last March. Now if the process started over again, I would like to know something about that. The Minister could obviously give us a progress report up to this meeting today. He obviously cannot report on the meeting that is taking place right at this time, but I would like to know exactly what is the subject of discussion.

Is it the matter of whether the airport is going to be operated by the province or by the band? Does it involve the lodge yet? Is there any purchase agreement at all? Can the Minister shed some light on that status?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, just on the information that I basically have, the information indicated that the Government of Manitoba had the option of picking up the airport for \$1 at whenever they chose to, and that is part of the negotiations.

The other aspect of it was also in terms of, at that stage of the game, maintenance involved, as we have been in fact scrambling in the last week in terms of getting information that we were not aware of beforehand in terms of some of the negotiations that took place, and which creates some concern for us in terms of that this information never came forward through the Department of Northern Affairs or through the Department of Highways. So that is where part of the meeting, when it was taking place today, was to clear the air in a lot of the concerns that were involved.

My understanding was that the federal Government had some involvement with the lodge, and that the provincial Government would be having involvement with the airport and the maintenance of it.

I cannot be much more specific until I know exactly the tenor of discussion that is taking place this afternoon, but I am not trying to hold back anything on that. I am prepared to, once I have had a chance to discuss it with staff, come and discuss it with the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). I have no qualms about that. In fact, there might be some interesting discussions that come out of this thing.

I wish I could be more specific. I think it is not fair for myself or for anybody before I have a chance to get back to staff. That is why I indicated initially and had this meeting lined up. We had two times where we had to change our meetings and I did not want to change it today, and that is why the Deputy Minister and some of my colleagues met with the band to discuss that aspect of it. I did not want to cancel out again because they were in town.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairman, it has been nearly seven or eight months since the election, and Chief Okemow was in on a number of occasions to see us and of course the matter was being coordinated through the Deputy Minister of Highways, with the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, and the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, and representation from the Attorney-General's Department all on the committee to ensure that there was that coordination.

Now, I do not know when all this fell apart that the Minister refers to. But it was a difficult issue obviously, but it was one where there was coordination at least attempted through the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister of Highways at that time on this committee to pull all of the options together.

Now, is the Minister indicating that there was lack of communication since the election and since he has been assumed his ministerial responsibilities, or was this a lack of coordination that he was talking about before? Because if he is saying it was before, I do not think it is fair to say that, because there was every attempt made to ensure that everyone was plugged into the system, including the federal departments, to come to a very difficult period of negotiation.

I just wanted to clarify that from my point of view and ask the Minister if he can substantiate what I am saying. If not, then I would like to know more about why he is saying there was not communication during at least the time that we were involved. If that is not what he is saying, then of course—

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, I would like to indicate that, from the Member for Dauphin's point of view, everybody might have been plugged in, but that is certainly not the impression that I received in terms of the correspondence that has been moving around. But possibly, under the circumstances, I can perhaps ask the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) to—as I say, I am at a disadvantage because the Minister attended the meeting. I have not been

there and I am sort of at a disadvantage, so if the Minister of Northern Affairs can shed some light on it tentatively and, if he cannot, then I am prepared to give that information at a later time to the Member for Dauphin. I am not trying to hide anything.

Mr. Mandrake: One question for the Minister, the airport at Churchill, does this come under your jurisdiction or not?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairman, the airport at Churchill is a federal responsibility. That does not come under this department, although almost everything else does but that one does not.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Just a brief comment on the subject which is being dealt with and the question asked by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), I will try and assist just to give a quick update. As the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) has been indicating, there was a meeting which took place very recently which he was unable to attend. As the Member for Dauphin should be aware, the responsibility was given to the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) by Order-in-Council some time in March. He, being a Member of the former administration, should be aware of that. He indicates he was not aware of it. I think it would be prudent for the Minister of Highways to have an update from his Deputy and his staff as to the outcome of this meeting. I am sure the information which he will have available would be helpful, but I do believe that to press on this now would be unproductive. The Minister, I am sure, can give forward some helpful information.

I may add one thing, I will try and be as kind as possible to the MLA for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). I think there was a sincere attempt by the former administration to try and resolve what was a difficult situation. But one of the points that was raised today by the group that I met with—it is unfortunate that the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) had not been given more of a responsibility and allowed to participate in the activities and decision making. That was one of the concerns that I want to bring to this committee. But I realize the Members were under a difficult situation.

Mr. Plohman: I do not want to prolong this nor am I pressing this. I am sincerely trying to get information. Seven months have passed since the discussions took place. It may be that right toward the end of the discussions that the Deputy Minister's committee was disbanded, and it was felt that the matter was essentially resolved. The Minister of Northern Affairs at that time, the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), took over the finalization of the agreement. I think that is consistent with what the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is saying at this particular time, the Order-in-Council that he refers to. But there has been a lot of innuendo back and forth about who responded to who and who did not act and so on. I do not even want to get into that, although I think every particular argument that could be made on one side can be defended on the other side because it was so difficult.

* (1630)

There were allegations thrown around by the consultant to the band who complicated matters a great deal, and then we dealt with the chief. We did not know who we were dealing with sometimes because a consultant was representing the chief in many cases, and yet the positions were not the same. So it was very difficult. But I am surprised, frankly, because I was not aware. I asked this question completely trying to get information that this had not been finalized yet, and that it had essentially sat for a seven-month period. Now with this meeting, things are on again and I am happy to hear that. I would like to get from the Minister at some point soon, some information, without threatening. I will ask questions, perhaps in the House, but I would prefer that we can get some information before that so that we can just get an update.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I want to indicate to the Member that we will sincerely try and get the concerns resolved and I will keep him updated as to where we are at, as soon as I have had a briefing from my staff and from my deputy.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): 4.(d)(1)—pass; 4.(d)(2)—pass; item 4.(e)(1)—pass; 4.(e)(2)—pass.

Item 4.(f) Materials and Research: (1) Salaries and Wages—pass; item 4.(f)(2) Other Expenditures.

Mr. Plohan: Could I back up just one, not the whole area but just in dealing with Salaries, there a drop of 2.5 staff there and it talks about attrition and efficiencies in providing geotechnical services. Can the Minister satisfy the—is he satisfied and can he indicate to this committee that there is not a reduction in services there, or is there a reduction as a result of these cutbacks of 2.5 staff?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told that there is a reorganization. There is no reduction of services but it is just a matter of reorganizing and we are still providing the same kind of service there.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one question, Mr. Acting Chairperson, to the Minister, under Activities Identification: Provides an inventory and acquisition of gravel/rock sources, etc., for reconstruction and maintenance programs. In my travels throughout Manitoba, I have found constantly trucks being used to transport gravel from X number of miles. Is there not gravel near the proposed project whereby that gravel could be used within a short proximity of the project?

Mr. Albert Driedger: This Government is so darn busy building roads we have to haul it from all over the place. Seriously though, when you have certain areas where we do not have the aggregate or the gravel—take Red River Valley for example—the quality of material that we need in many cases is just not available. I think the contractors, when bidding on these jobs, are as keen as Government is in terms of trying to get the aggregate as close to the project as possible. I know for example in my country where I live, my portion

of the province, that there is a lot of gravel around that area and wherever there is an acre that is not claimed I would like to see it because every contractor in the world is spinning around there trying to tie up the aggregate. The gravel is not being hauled just for the cost or the fun of it. It is because it is not available in certain places.

Mr. Mandrake: I appreciate what the Minister is saying, but I know and I will talk to him later—I just want this on record—that there are areas in the province that could be used, gravel could be used, and out of this just the inspection of that should make sure it meets the standards and it could be utilized instead of transporting X number of miles. I will talk to the Minister later on. There is no use dwelling on this any further.

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is fine.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Shall the item pass?

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Just one small question, I note that Other Expenditures, including transportation, supplies and other materials, experienced in fact no growth in projected cash outlays from the one fiscal year to the next. Does that mean, Mr. Acting Chairman, that the Minister's department is experiencing no impact from inflation, or in fact that activities are being reduced in the area covered by the Other Expenditures item?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I wonder if the Member could indicate specifically where we are talking about.

Mr. Kozak: Specifically, total Other Expenditures are listed for the previous fiscal year as \$145,000 and for the projected fiscal year as \$143,900.00. That suggests either that there is no inflation experience projected or that in fact the activities of this area of the Government's concern are being wound down at least to some extent.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member that at the bottom line there, it said 2.26 reduction in staff. So with two staff less, there is lost cost under Other Expenditures, travel expenditures, etc., etc., and that is where it is reflected in, a portion of it.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Item 4.(f)(2)—pass; item 4.(g) Traffic Operations: (1) Salaries and Wages, \$658,800—pass; item 4.(g)(2) Other Expenditures, \$4,423,000—pass; item 4.(g)(3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$950,000—pass.

Item 4.(h) Government Air and Radio Services: (1) Salaries, \$3,658,200—the Member for Dauphin.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

Mr. Plohan: We are moving right along here. I wanted to just ask the Minister to comment on the plan to amalgamate Government Air and Radio Services. At least it was a proposal that was considered by the

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former Government prior to receiving a major presentation from Radio Services staff, indicating that in fact it would not be prudent or efficient for the Government to in fact get into that. I thought that was an excellent brief, which I have a copy of from the staff, subsequent to the consideration that we had for, I believe, considering turning this over to Government Services or something like that.

Can the Minister just shed some light on what happened with that proposal and does he foresee any revival of that kind of concept, or does he see this remaining insofar as the foreseeable future with the Department of Highways and to about the extent it is now?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The proposal came forward and it was looked at and rejected and I do not think that it will be coming forward again.

* (1640)

Mr. Plohan: Could the Minister indicate then whether in fact the senior staff would agree with the staff who put forward the presentations on this, that in fact it would not be efficient to remove it, never mind the fact that there might be dislocation of staff, but that it is a very efficient operation that is needed and, therefore, should not be considered in the future?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate that I, as well as senior staff, feel that it would not be efficient to do that at this stage of the game.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Chairman, I take it from the Minister's answers that he has had an opportunity to personally review that proposal and the staff's counterproposal to it?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I had the opportunity to be involved personally with it and I agree against not accepting the proposal.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask the Minister whether he has reviewed the requirement for space changes at Dauphin for the radio services? There has been a proposal for a number of years, frankly, that has been put forward, and I believe it was getting to the stage where it was critical, where there would have to be some changes made in the accommodation.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that we are planning to move them into the Bridge office space after January 1 in Dauphin.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Chairman, I would take it that was the space that was vacated when the branch office was reduced to only Beausejour, I guess, and that Dauphin no longer has a Bridge office?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, that is correct.

Mr. Plohan: One other question, Mr. Chairman, just to clarify, we have now five 215 water bombers. The last one has been delivered and fully staffed at the present time. Is that correct?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is correct.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, I just have one question of the Minister on the footnote, No. (1) "increase to two staff years for the additional water bombers." Does this account for that \$323,200 increase over the previous adjusted vote?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is part of it, Mr. Chairman, but it also includes the general increases for all the other staff who are involved.

While I have the floor, Mr. Chairman, I would like to just indicate that I have the greatest admiration for the pilots of our water bombers. I think they are the gutsiest, best pilots that you have ever seen in terms of flying those things. I think I would be remiss if I did not mention that.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairperson, to the Minister, he does not have to tell me how admirable these people are. I flew with the people who fought in Korea so I know how important it is to drive 50 feet above the ground. My question to the Minister is, these two staff years, are they permanent or are they temporary?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, they are permanent.

Mr. Mandrake: Permanent staff years, Mr. Chairman, for these water bombers? During the wintertime, they cannot fly. What do they do?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, they are permanent positions and we feel fortunate that we can have them on a permanent basis. My understanding is that they put in enough hours during the summer, especially a summer like we had this year where half of Manitoba was burning at times, that they sort of banked hours and it almost evens out during the course of the winter in terms of them being on staff permanently.

Mr. Mandrake: I can appreciate that, but would it not be far more economical to hire the people, pay them maybe a little bit of extra money as opposed to keeping them on permanent staff? Next year, we might have a very wet year and we are going to have two staffpeople on staff and they may not put in very many hours flying.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am told and I agree with the fact that these are very special people who we hire for that. When we have a fire situation developing, it is not something that you phone up and call them off the street. These are very unique individuals who have the ability to fly these water bombers and we feel comfortable that to have them on permanent staff is advantageous and economically advantageous to the province by having them available, so whether they necessarily put in their regular hours all the time, I think they move around enough to accumulate that kind of—so it is justified, right?

Mr. Mandrake: I am not going to dwell on this any further because personally I have my opinion and I will talk to the Minister, but I want it on record that I am

a bit concerned because next year could be a very wet year and we are going to be paying these water bombers to be sitting around. I think we could employ them flying other aircraft.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(h)(1)—pass.

4.(h)(2) Other Expenditures, \$4,308,300—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: The amount that we recover, is that mostly from Natural Resources, from firefighting and that is where these pilots are paid?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The recoveries are from Natural Resources and from Health Services for the air ambulance.

Mr. Plohman: Just to point out to the committee that I believe both these services are fully recoverable. In other words, there is no net cost to the Department of Highways and Transportation for either the air ambulance or the firefighting services?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is correct. In both cases, there is full recovery.

Mr. Chairman: Item 4.(h)(2)—pass; item 4.(h)(3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$5,781,000—pass.

Resolution No. 88: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,616,900 for Highways and Transportation, Engineering and Technical Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

Item 5. Transportation Policy and Research: Provides research and analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of various transportation modes within the province. Provides grants under the Southern Manitoba Airport Assistance Program and Transportation for the Mobility Disadvantaged in Rural Manitoba Program. Responsible for the administration and implementation of the Canada-Manitoba Churchill and Transportation Development Agreements.

(a) Transportation Policy and Research (1) Salaries, \$765,400—the Member for Assiniboia.

* (1650)

Mr. Mandrake: As I had alluded to earlier, this is the section where I can discuss Swan River—excellent. Mr. Chairperson, I was at Swan River. This airport is located near a lagoon not more than 100 yards away from the main runway. The runway runs at a, I would say, north-northeast parallel. At the north end of the runway, there is a ditch that was well over six feet deep at the beginning of the runway. Safety in my opinion is paramount, and here we have—I have pictorial evidence of what is happening in that airport.

I would hope that the Minister would look at that airport. I will gladly share my evidence with him on this airport. They were excavating it, the runway was right near the airport, the planes are coming down. If we

want to lose people, that is a beautiful way of doing it, Mr. Minister. Would he be willing to look into this and maybe discuss this? I want to bring it up now, but I would like to discuss it with him later on if he would be willing to do that.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be most appropriate to have one minute of silence for the people in Swan River with their airport. They have had nothing but grief there with that thing. They had the tower at one end there, they have been in court, it has been approved. It has been disallowed and was put up again. They have had nothing but—in fact, I have had the opportunity to work together with the Member for Swan River (Mr. Burrell) in terms of a delegation that came in. They have been overridden with tax problems, the consortium or the organization. I think there are five or six municipalities involved. They have problems with the tax end of it. They have problems with legal cost. We have been trying to work with them to see whether we can help resolve some of the financial problems that they are faced with.

Now the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) tells me we have another problem which is a ditch at one end. I am not saying this lightly. I can indicate to him that we have been working with the people from that area and we will see whether we can resolve it.

The other thing is that when we talk of assistance for the Southern Airport Assistance Program, I feel that program in my mind is actually a very chintzy type of program. When we talk of \$600 for some of the airports, \$1,200, I think the airport at Swan River is the one that gets the maximum of \$2,400, which is unique. Others get less than that. So I am hoping that possibly if I can convince the further expenditure of monies, that all airports should be possibly addressed in a different way financially, because \$600 does not do very much to keep one of these southern airports operational.

Mr. Mandrake: To the Minister, I do not think money is going to solve this problem. We are going to lose somebody because of careless behaviour at that airport. I was down there in October. Flocks of geese were coming in, planes were settling down, were coming down, landing, taking off at that airport. Do we have to wait before we lose a whole aircraft full of people before we do something?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, first of all, the provincial Government does not pick the locations of these airports. The municipalities basically pick them. We also are not responsible for the maintenance of it. The Member is telling me there is a ditch. There are federal regulations that basically are in place and regulate some of these things. We have very little jurisdiction on that aspect of it. Our only role provincially is to assist financially to some degree, but it is federal regulations that are involved with the local organization that has basically chosen the site and operating it.

Mr. Mandrake: I can appreciate that. But would he undertake the opportunity to speak to the federal Minister with regard to this airport. As I said, I will share

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my pictorial evidence of what is happening here and I think it is a very serious concern. Although I could appreciate what the Minister has said, it is not within his jurisdiction, but I am sure that he should take it upon his ministerial responsibility and talk to the federal Minister of Transport and say look, we have a problem in Swan River and maybe we should reallocate that airport in a far more safe location before we do lose people.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that we are prepared to check with the federal department in terms of making sure that they are complying with the federal regulations, and I would also like to indicate that we are doing everything we can to help the Swan River Airport in terms of some of their other difficulties that they are having.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Minister, I appreciate your answer and this is the reason why I probably will continue working toward a better Manitoba because you have got an open mind and you certainly do work in an open fashion.

I have another question for the Minister. Under Transportation Grants for Mobility Disabled in rural Manitoba, approximately how much money is being spent under that program?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, approximately \$450,000 is spent for the Rural Transportation in terms of grants for the Mobility Disadvantaged. They have a very excellent program there that we will continue to promote and that municipalities are continuing to take advantage of.

Mr. Chairman: We seem to be moving down the page there. On (a)(1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask some questions there before we got to the Rural Transportation Grants for Mobility Disadvantaged, which is the next item. If we could—we only have a few minutes left. I want to just indicate though, first of all, with regard to that airport at Swan River, that the province had provided technical engineering services for the reconstruction and upgrading of that airport. It was a federal grant that provided the funding for it, but the province assisted with the engineering work. So if there is a problem with the design and so on, then we do have some responsibility there since it was provincial engineering that did the work. That is my assessment of it.

Now, I just wanted to ask the Minister, because we only have a few minutes left, about some of the policy areas in Policy and Research, the rail line abandonment policies or saving the railways policies by this Government. The Minister indicated in the House last week, I believe, when we asked him some questions about this that in fact he had taken some leadership role in ensuring that there is a fair system of determining the most efficient transportation system and ensuring that there would be compensation for those who are affected in a negative way. We see the example of Newfoundland, \$800 million.

We have never got the federal Government to really buy this approach, that there was a responsibility that they had when lines were abandoned, to the provinces, to the municipalities, to the producers, to the communities, those who lose as a result of abandonment and, as well, a consideration that all costs should be considered, the costs of road, the cost of short-line operations, increased maintenance costs and so on, costs to municipalities and communities, before decisions are made, not just the railway costs, but all of the costs associated with the various alternatives. That was the position put forward by the Province of Manitoba. That was the position that was supported by other western provinces, but it was not supported by the federal Government. They tossed it around all over the place.

Can the Minister indicate if there has been progress made, whether in fact he has endorsed that and has aggressively pursued that because there is so much at stake for Manitoba insofar as future abandonment? We know the railways want to lay off or at least reduce their work force by a tremendous amount over the next number of years. They say they have to do it to be competitive. Free trade enters into that issue; deregulation enters into that issue. So the Minister has a great responsibility as a supporter of deregulation, as a supporter of free trade, of ensuring that there is some protection in that area, and I ask the Minister whether he has continued to pursue that as strongly.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I can indicate to the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) that nothing has changed except we have maybe escalated it a bit more from the time that he was Minister. I think we are getting more concerned and more sincere about it, not saying that he was not, but there was no—we are moving full speed ahead on that. I would like to indicate, together with our western colleagues, we have almost agreed in terms of our position and that the federal Minister has agreed to review the rail abandonment, so we are on track, working as hard as we can. We might have differences in some things but in this particular case we are on the same track as the Member was previously and we are giving her all we have.

Mr. Plohman: Just a short comment, Mr. Chairman, the fact is that we had put that forward in '87 before there was a Cabinet shuffle and, for the last eight months of our Government, I was not involved in Highways and Transportation, so I cannot speak for the kind of aggressive approach that might have been taken during that period. But I can tell you that we did pursue it aggressively, and there was that agreement even before 1987 with that proposal so, if he feels that he has achieved something in getting agreement, that was already achieved. The only thing is the federal Government was the one that was not buying the proposal and, if the Minister can indicate that he has made some progress there, then I think we have made some real progress on this issue.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would just like to indicate that my understanding is that agreement was not achieved, that Alberta and B.C. were basically moving just on economic issues and not taking all the social issues

into consideration. They might have talked about it, but there was not agreement on that because they were going more on strictly economic factors. We have indicated in our position, which was the position that was brought forward before. We have strengthened that position, saying that all aspects of this should be considered. I just want to correct the Member that there was not total agreement on that before and we are trying to resolve that.

* (1700)

Mr. Plohman: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, it was signed by all provinces. That is why I said there was agreement.

Mr. Chairman: A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

The hour being five o'clock, it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

SUPPLY—HEALTH

* (1440)

Mr. Chairman, Mark Minenko: I call this section of the Committee of Supply to order. We are continuing to consider the Estimates of the Department of Health.

We are presently considering item 2.(g) Continuing Care (1) Salaries. The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, because of the shortage of time, and we have a crisis today in Mental Health care, we have a crisis in terms of the Selkirk Mental Health Centre because of the two people who are seeking early retirement and also one person resigned last week, so there will be only two-and-a-half psychiatrists practising as of next month. I have discussed the situation with the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) and we wish to go to the Mental Health area directly. We want to divert that issue and discuss the various options.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I would be more than pleased to discuss Mental Health issues but I am not prepared to skip and jump at the whim and the will of my honourable friend for Kildonan. If you wish to get to Mental Health, we can get there through the process of passing the Estimates of the Department of Health.

Mr. Cheema: Considering the time, as I have said earlier, and the importance of all the matters in the Health Estimates, we have lots of questions in each and every area but this area today, we may not get a chance maybe tomorrow. We want to discuss the Mental Health System. To start with, we have to discuss what is happening at Selkirk, what is happening at Brandon and what is going to be happening at Selkirk. If there is a wish from the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), we will pass these items and go directly to Mental Health care.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): I am prepared to agree to that process. I just want to make the point though

that I am somewhat concerned about the inflexible attitude of the Minister with respect to reviewing the Estimates. If in fact he is inflexible, then we are prepared to pass through the items in order to get to that section to discuss it at this time.

Mr. Orchard: I just want to remind my honourable friends that we are now approaching 30 hours, I believe, in the Department of Health. We have passed all of about a dozen resolutions.

Two weeks ago, I made the announcement. My honourable friend obviously had reasonably close communication with the psychiatric community in Selkirk. If it was an urgent matter and if he knew last week, as he said that a psychiatrist resigned in Selkirk, why is it that we are not in Mental Health right now? My honourable friend yesterday, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), said, let us move to Continuing Care at five o'clock and we will skip over two items, namely, Hearing Conservation and Gerontology. I agreed to that, but his own Deputy Critic took the time from five o'clock till 5:40 on Health Promotion—not me, but his own colleague. When you cannot get your act together on that side of the House to plan the Estimates, I feel no obligation after this issue has been discussed in Question Period, and the opportunity is here to debate it today, tomorrow—not tomorrow, pardon me, unless we finish the Bills early—but Thursday.

The following Monday, if we so wish, we can debate Mental Health to my honourable friend's content, but in the meantime I will be inflexible because I tried being flexible yesterday and my honourable friend's colleague, the Member for Kildonan's colleague, was the one who caused it not to happen yesterday. So if my honourable friend wants to move to Mental Health to deal with the issues there, the avenue is before him. We can simply pass the Estimates, he can ask the questions, we can be there in less than one hour's time with appropriate questions asked on each of the intervening areas.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, with all due respect to the Minister, maybe in his view there is no crisis. In our view there is a crisis. The crisis has to be dealt with today and right now. We could have gone the other way as a Matter of Urgent Public Importance but we thought the Health Estimates are going and we should discuss that issue today and now.

We could go to Mental Health and then, if we have time left, we could come back to continue clearing other areas of concern, if that is the wish of the other Members of this House.

Mr. Orchard: We can debate this for the next hour if my honourable friend wishes. I have told him what I will do. We will answer your questions in the next hour on Continuing Care, Medical Equipment and Supplies, Dental Health, Environmental Health, Health Information Resources, Northern Health, Regional Services, and we will get to Mental Health this afternoon, if my honourable friend is truly serious about "in view of the time." In his words, "There is short time; we have to speed up the Estimates process."

I am willing to get there this afternoon, but I am not willing to jump a notch and dodge around the Estimates.

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We tried that yesterday. Your own colleague would not cooperate and now you are asking me to cooperate on a whim for you? You are wrong. The Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), if he knew there was a resignation coming last week, information that I only got at two o'clock today, then why was he not speeding the Estimates process along so today, on the day he brings up the resignations in Selkirk, my honourable friend could have been at Mental Health?

Do not give me this story about being in emergency today if you had all of that knowledge last week. Why were you hiding it? Why were you sitting on it? Why were you not passing the Estimates? Because last week we accomplished nothing in terms of passage of the Estimates. If you wish to get to Mental Health, I will accommodate you. I will have staff here to answer questions on the intervening appropriations and we will get there this afternoon.

Mr. Cheema: I would like to correct the record. When this person, who has resigned last week, was number six, that was a different situation. We are talking about two different requests for early retirement. That is a different issue. If the Minister is going to confuse that, that is his way of doing it. What we are saying is the crisis is today. We came to know about the situation this morning. That is why we brought up the question in Question Period. That was our leading question and we would like to discuss that issue today and right now.

Mr. Orchard: Now my honourable friend is changing his story about a crisis. That a resignation that he heard about last week of a psychiatrist at Selkirk is not a crisis, but the resignation today is a crisis when one of the resignation letters came in at mid-morning this morning, or late this morning, and the other one has not come in yet, but yet he and his friends know about it in the Liberal Party? I mean, where is the crisis? If you knew about a resignation last week, why were you not up on your feet asking me? Why were you hiding it from the people of Manitoba? Because I want to tell my honourable friend, he knows of a resignation last week that we still do not know about in this department and in the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

How does my honourable friend have such information when no such sixth resignation, or however he described it, has been communicated to the management of the department? How does my honourable friend have that information?

* (1450)

Mr. Cheema: The Minister is again twisting the words here. I was told there was a resignation dated November 6 or 7 last week. These two people who are seeking early retirement is a different situation. It is a difficult situation, it is a crisis, and we have to discuss that issue right now.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, let me be absolutely clear as to what my honourable friend's story is now. Are you saying that on the 6th or 7th of November there was a resignation from the Selkirk Mental Health

Centre? Is that what you are saying of the psychiatrists? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Cheema: We are not going to waste time on when the—you will find it out from those people who are seeking early retirement and this is information that you will have. I think you have it.

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend from time to time has put information on the record that I have disproved upon occasion in this House. My honourable friend, five minutes ago, said on the 6th or 7th of this month, he was made aware of a resignation at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. Will my honourable friend identify the individual who resigned on the 6th or 7th, as he has put on the record, or will he admit that he was not telling us straight facts?

Mr. Cheema: Without putting somebody's name into the problem, you have—let me make myself very clear here. The resignation, number 6th or 7th resignation from the individual, you have the name of that individual. That person is planning to come to Winnipeg.

These two other individuals we discussed, we asked in Question Period, they are seeking early retirement and these people will be leaving next month. So there is a crisis; there is a problem. That problem is going to get worse. That is why you have to discuss it now and find the solution. That is what I am requesting the Minister and the Minister is trying to get his own way.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, now we have story No. 15 from the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). Are you now saying that there was no resignation on the 6th or 7th of November? Is that what you are saying now, contrary to what you said five minutes ago? When are you going to start giving us straight facts in this House?

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member for Transcona, on a point of order.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Is the Minister now acknowledging, Mr. Chairman, that he would like in fact to discuss the Mental Health Estimates? Is this a departure from what he said a few minutes ago?

Mr. Orchard: I notice my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), is staying in his seat where he should have stayed in the first place because he has misled this House in information he has put on the record, because there was no resignation last week and he made the allegation, he made the stated fact there was a resignation last week plus two today.

Now my honourable friend can take this opportunity to stand up and correct the record that he erred in his statement to the House that there was a resignation last week followed by two resignations today. I give him that opportunity right now to clarify his statements for the record.

Mr. Cheema: I repeat what I said for the Minister's clarification. These two individuals have requested early

retirement. That was the question from my Deputy Leader, that is what I am saying that these two individuals are asking for, an early retirement. These individuals—but both of them were supposed to go to Brandon. There was one individual who has resigned last week, according to him. This individual is planning to come to Winnipeg. The Minister should check from his office.

Mr. Orchard: Again my honourable friend has indicated there was a resignation other than the two individuals last week. Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend, unless I misunderstood him, said there was two individuals who have resigned, took early retirement today. And he said there was an individual resigned last week as a psychiatrist at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. Is that not what you just said?

Mr. Cheema: I will again clarify for the Minister. If he is trying to get something out of this, that is his way. But I said that two individuals who are seeking early retirement, they have put the request in this morning. One individual has, according to that individual, resigned last week. That is what I am saying, but these two individuals have a different reason for early retirement. The individual who has resigned last week or put a letter for resignation, that individual is moving to Winnipeg for different reasons. That is what I said; that is what I am saying. If there is still a language barrier, then I can write for the Minister.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend knows that the individual has resigned as of last week and that is an official resignation. Is that what my honourable friend is saying?

Mr. Cheema: That is my information, that one individual has resigned last week.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, can I ask my honourable friend from whence he got that information?

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, for clarification for the Minister, I had the information from some sources. I am not going to name those sources. The Minister should have the information in his office. Maybe he will be able to clarify that.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, that is exactly what I am saying, that I have not received that information. What I regret, and I will make this statement and I am only going to make it once, we have a problem in Brandon Mental Health Centre. We have 300 chronic patients in the facility at Brandon. We have 2,000 outpatients who are in need of psychiatric services in Brandon. Because our designated psychiatrist did not return from holiday as expected to Brandon, we were left with the impossible situation of one psychiatrist providing services for as little as two days per week.

That stimulated my announcement on Monday two weeks ago in an attempt, in a short period of time, some 90 days, to ask professionals, employees of Government, to assist for up to 90 days to relieve the crisis in Brandon for those 2,300 Manitobans. From

square one, Mr. Chairman, and I say this with regret, my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), chose to protect the professionals rather than the 2,300 individuals who need care in Brandon, Manitoba, and he is still doing it today because he is putting on the record conversations that obviously go back to the professionals in case that—where else would he get his information from?

I suggest to my honourable friend if he wanted to see something and he wanted to participate positively, he ought to not just talk to the professionals in Selkirk, the psychiatrists in Selkirk. He ought to take a trip to Brandon and find out what conditions are like in Brandon. He ought to tour Brandon. He would find it to be a very pleasant community, a very nice community to live in, not like Siberia as if we are sending and banishing people to Siberia. I wish my honourable friend in the Liberal Party, the Health critic, would get on side with the patients, 2,300 of them who need treatment.

My honourable friends in the New Democratic Party recognize the problem in Brandon because they wrestled with it as we are wrestling with it. I appreciate the support offered by the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer). He could have stood up and played the same games of protecting the psychiatrists that my honourable friend from Kildonan has been playing the last two weeks and turned it over to his Deputy Leader because the heat was too high for him, and he could not handle it today. Mr. Chairman, at some point in time the Liberal Party is going to have to make up their mind, are you wanting to protect the professionals or do you want to help the citizens that need psychiatric care?

I want to tell my honourable friend that the entire goal of this Government and myself as Minister is to assist 2,300 Manitobans in Brandon who need psychiatric care. I want to tell my honourable friend from Kildonan that we will do it without his help. I believe the New Democratic Party, the most recent individuals in Government, know and understand the problem and know that it has to be dealt with in a crisis situation and has to be dealt with immediately. I appreciate their support and I do not often give them credit, but I do in this case because they understand the situation and they are not protecting professionals as my honourable friend from Kildonan is doing.

* (1500)

Mr. Cheema: We on this side of the House, since we have come to this House, we have advocated for the patients more than has come from this side or from other sources. Hansard and the record shows that. We are the ones who have been pressing them to do something for Brandon and now all of a sudden the decision was made which is not going to have beneficial effects either for Brandon or for Selkirk. Now we have a problem for Selkirk. We love and respect the community of Brandon the same way as the Minister does. We have toured that place. We know the plight of the patients. We know their problems. That is why we are advocating to have some rational approach, and I resent the Minister's remark that I am working for any MMA or any association. I am working for the

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people of Manitoba and that is my prime objective. I am working for the patients.

As the Opposition, if at times we have to be tough making decisions, I am not going to let my constituents or the people of Manitoba down because the Minister is trying to make use of his twelve years of experience of wording and try to get some different answer. I stand by my statement. I am saying we have a crisis for Selkirk. We have a crisis for Brandon, but let us have a rational approach.- (Interjection)-

The Minister from Portage (Mr. Connery) is saying keep on doing that. We will keep on doing the good work that we are doing. I think we are proud of that, we are doing the good work. We have tried to be very, very positive. We have very positive criticism. We have gone, we have accommodated this Minister at each and every angle. Wherever he has done a good work, we have applauded him; but when the approach is wrong, we are not going to take that. That is what we are saying.

Today we have a problem. We have a problem of two people leaving who have served Manitoba very well. We have a problem of those people asking for early retirement. What a coincidence the same individuals were supposed to go to Brandon! So what have we solved? We have not solved anything, and I would request the Minister to table the discussion he had with those two individuals or the other members of the staff, how the decision was made, and what are his plans to rectify the situation? What is he going to do at Selkirk, what are the plans for Brandon, and how is he going to satisfy the patients both at Brandon and Selkirk, and the potential danger to lose other people?

Once you put a stress on the remaining, whatever, two-and-a-half or three psychiatrists possibly at Selkirk, their workload is going to increase and then we will have another disaster. So we are cautioning the Minister. We are requesting him to take the right step at the right time, and if that means that we have to argue with him in a different way, so be it.

Mr. Orchard: I would be fully prepared to lay out those plans, answer those questions when we get to the Mental Health Estimates, but before we do, I want to correct a statement by my honourable friend for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) and I am going to read from him on Tuesday, November 1.

His questions in the House, Page 2658, I read these back to my honourable friend for Kildonan because he said, we have advocated on behalf of the patients more than anybody else. What was my honourable friend's question on Tuesday, November 1, ". . . given the fact that the doctors are threatening legal action against this Government because of the Minister's desire to violate the Manitoba Medical Association's collective agreement . . ." Is that advocating for the patients? It is the collective agreement of the professionals of the MMA. That was one question on Tuesday, November 1.

Another question, Tuesday, November 1, "Given that the Minister is setting a new tone of violating collective agreements, whether it is for the MMA or potentially

others . . ." Does that protect the patients, Mr. Chairman? I think that protects the bargaining agent.

Now let us go. Maybe my honourable friend changed his tone on Wednesday, November 2. Let us read a couple of his questions. "I ask the Minister of Health, were the two psychiatrists consulted as to their secondment or was the decision made unilaterally by this Minister?" Where is the advocacy for the patients on the 2nd of November? He mentions the two psychiatrists.

A further question, "The action was taken unilaterally and those two psychiatrists are furious at this Minister's decision." Where is the patient advocacy on the 2nd of November, or is he advocating on behalf of the psychiatrists?

My honourable friend has been advocating on behalf of the professionals. He has forgotten about the patients. That is the difficulty we face, is providing care for the patients. My honourable friend is wrong, wrong, wrong when he says that he has tried to defend the patients in this House, because I can read him more questions where it has been the collective agreement, the doctors' union, the individual psychiatrist. Seldom has this man ever mentioned care of the patients unless he was forced into it by myself in response to his questions of vested interest.

Mr. Cheema: Let the Minister not mislead the record.- (Interjection)- The Honourable Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) is saying he read the record. The Minister has failed miserably to mention that the work we are doing for the patients in this House, for the general public, to provide any care for the patients, you need the services of the people. You cannot just go one way. That seems to be the Minister's approach. That is his latest approach. That has resulted in a problem, that will result in problems. Our objective still is the same.

The Minister's approach is different, our approach is different. According to him, his approach is right. According to us, our approach is right. But the time and the public of Manitoba will tell. People of Selkirk will tell tomorrow when they wake up and find out that these two individuals are leaving. Then where will be the Minister? What kind of answer will he answer to those patients at the Selkirk Mental Hospital? What is he going to do for the families? How is he going to explain to someone who has been seeing a psychiatrist for 27 years? What kind of answer does he have for them tomorrow, next week and then afterwards? What kind of service does he have? That is what we are asking the Minister. This is your time to tell them what kind of program you have, what kind of service you are going to provide to them. Are we going to continue the same trend? Are we going to continue losing psychiatrists?

My remarks are going to continue even if the Minister does not want to hear. The truth sometimes is something the people do not want to hear. Our method is going to still be the same for the patients advocacy. Patients are the prime objective. Patient and trust is the first. Family and trust is the first and then anyone else. Then comes the interest of the political Parties. The political

will has to be there. This Minister, when we are questioning him, that let us go to the Mental Health area and discuss this issue, we have spent already 40 minutes on the same. Why could we not go directly and ask some specific questions? Is there something of benefit that is going to come out of that political circle? I think the patients will know who has been advocating.

The Liberal Party from Day One has been advocating for the patients and for the welfare of their families, for years of neglect for the Mental Health Care. Under this administration, they have heard the few statements. There were statements on Monday, that was two weeks ago. We are going to have these two people, we have solved the problem. The problem has not solved. That is what we told you on the same day that this is not going to be helpful and that is what is clear today. That is clear that we could have gone the other way and have taken the time from the House. We thought we are in Estimates, let us go to the rational approach. The Minister does not agree with the rational approach. That is his way of dealing with things.

My specific question is who made the decision? What kind of plans do you have for tomorrow and for next week? What kind of plans are available to deal with the Selkirk Mental Hospital? Yesterday, we heard rumours about closing the Selkirk School of Nursing. What kind of message is going to go to the Selkirk people? Is this the political decision? I have a good record from all of the remarks the Minister made in 1985. There was interesting remarks in the Winnipeg Free Press.

* (1510)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Health, on a point of order.

Mr. Orchard: I believe my honourable friend wants to discuss Mental Health. I have told him how we could do it. I told him 45 minutes ago that we could sit here and argue about advancing the process. In the meantime, we could ask questions, get answers passed, Continuing Care, Medical Equipment and Supplies and get legitimately to the item we are debating. My honourable friend is out of order. If he wants to debate Mental Health, there is a process by which he can do it, if he indeed wants to debate Mental Health. Obviously he does not because he is not willing to pass the items and get to Mental Health this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member for Transcona, on the same point of order.

Mr. Kozak: Yes. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has implicitly recognized the validity of this debate by participating in it. Therefore I propose, and the Liberal Party proposes, that it continue as it is.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their advice.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I did not participate in a debate on the Mental Health Estimates. I corrected

wrong statements by your Health critic that could not be left on the record misrepresenting the facts in this House. That is why I had to get up and correct the incompetent answers and questions he was posing.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their advice and I would like to direct the attention of Members to the Rules of the House where it advises that the speeches must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion.

We are presently considering item 2.(g)(1) Continuing Care: Salaries—the Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: The importance of asking for a debate, or requesting a debate, or the other way of putting it; just a simple request was there and the Minister has failed to comply with that request. We have always accommodated him. It is an important issue. I think it is the most important issue for today. It is going to be the most important issue for tomorrow again. In Health Estimates we could have gone right away to Mental Health and come back, so that we could all put our ideas, our questions, our feelings for the patients and their families and not give it just a chance to go through some of the Minister's own ideas of how Mental Health should be dealt with. I am sure all the Members from this side of the House would like to have some input and this is the right time because we have a crisis created by the inefficiency and the unilateral action of this Minister.

I would give the opportunity for the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) to put his thoughts on the crisis for the Mental Health Centre in Selkirk.

Mr. Cowan: I appreciate the opportunity given by the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). I want to first talk about the process that we are involved in here and I am going to try to be relevant to the item which is in front of us. That is, they are actually relevant to a number of items which are in front of us. I believe that if we had a bit of cooperation from the Minister, we could probably go directly into Mental Health and then come back to these items if there were time.

I know that we are operating under a bit of a constraint with respect to time and it may not even be possible to get back to these items because I believe my friend, the Member for Kildonan, has a fair number of questions to ask on Mental Health and so do we. We do have some time constraints as to how much time we can spend in this particular set of Estimates. So I would ask the Minister first if, knowing that, it might not be possible to accede to the request by the Member for Kildonan, move to Mental Health, spend the time that we have to spend in Mental Health and then if there is time remaining, we will come back to these particular items and run through them in the order in which they appear.

So I think that might be the best way to sort this problem out and we can get on to the issue. If not, I will want to say a couple of things about the matters before us.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, for 30 hours we have sat in here. My Honourable Friend, the Member for Kildonan

(Mr. Cheema), has told us of this crisis that he was aware of last week, the week before, and he diddled and he dallied and he doddered, and we are not at Mental Health where he wants to be today. Well, I am sorry. This committee does not operate on his whim. This committee deals with the Estimates in an orderly fashion.

My Honourable friend, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), is in a bit of a quandary. He wants to be on the side of Liberals, so he can be against us, but he knows full well that this suggested process that I am putting forward, that we pass the items, get to Mental Health post-haste, is the proper way to do it, is the way that I would ask we proceed. We could have been there already if we had not wasted the last three-quarters of an hour, and if my honourable friends do not want to do it that way, fine.

I am sorry, I am not going to accommodate them. I want to tell my honourable friend for Kildonan, when he asked for accommodation yesterday—and do not tell me about not cooperating with the Opposition—the specific request came to me to deal with Hearing Conservation, Gerontology after six o'clock, sometime after eight o'clock in the evening and to move immediately to Continuing Care at five o'clock.

I agreed to do that with my honourable friend for Kildonan, and who did not comply with the agreement my honourable friend for Kildonan and I made? His own deputy critic, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) who carried on, on Health Promotion at five o'clock, contrary to the agreement my honourable friend for Kildonan wanted. So do not tell me that I have not tried to cooperate in this House.

If my honourable friend had not wasted significant amounts of time, we would be at Mental Health today and he could have his debate. I am not going to break the order of Estimates to accommodate my honourable friend's whim today. We can be there this afternoon with discussion of these Estimates and passage of them, and if we are not there today we can certainly be there tomorrow. If my honourable friend is seriously concerned about the patients and the crisis they face, that is an adequate time to debate Mental Health on Thursday, after we have given the full debate to the items in front of it.

We can argue back and forth about advancing them all afternoon and get nothing accomplished. I do not want to do that. I want to answer questions on Continuing Care and I want to do it right now, and Mr. Chairman, I would ask you to call the item or pass it.

Mr. Chairman: In order to move to Item No. 4, would require the unanimous consent of this committee. I do not believe that unanimous consent has been granted. Guided by the rules of the House and the will of committee, the item we are currently on is Item No. 2.(g) Continuing Care. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

* (1520)

Mr. Cowan: I have a number of questions on Continuing Care but I am going to forego them because there will

be other opportunities to debate the particular issue, so that we can move along to Mental Health, not because I want to be on the side of the Liberals. Even the Honourable Minister who is prone to suggest things are not exactly as they are from time to time would not make that suggestion without at least a bit of tongue in cheek.

No, it is not because I want to be on the side of the Liberals, but it is because I believe that the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) has an honest and sincere interest in this particular issue, as I believe the Minister has, as I know the New Democratic Party has, and he believes that it is necessary to discuss it immediately. Instead of putting questions on Continuing Care, we are going to move along, as I understand it, relatively quickly to Mental Health, but I want that not to be mistaken or misinterpreted or the suggestion to be made by any that is not because all Members of this House do not have a particular concern and interest in Continuing Care and the items that are going to come between now and the Mental Health section. We do, but we want to make this committee work.

In speaking to that particular issue, the Minister has said this committee does not operate on the whim of the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). No, it does not operate on the whim of any Member. It does not operate on the whim of the Minister when he says notwithstanding the practices of this House for the past six or seven years that we should sit past ten o'clock last night and then try to force a vote to make that happen. That was his whim and, as he found out, the committee does not operate on the whim of any particular individual.

How does the committee operate? The committee operates as does the House. It operates on the basis of negotiation. It operates on the basis of cooperation. It operates on the basis of trying to understand the needs and the aspirations, each of the other, and trying to, within the framework of the rules, make the House move along.

That is not to say that we are not going to disagree from time to time. That is not to say that we are not going to use the rules to our advantage from time to time. That is not to say that we are not going to have, with respect to procedures in this House, some very violent disagreements as to how the House should proceed. I can tell you I have been House Leader in the Government, I have been House Leader in the Second Opposition. I have watched probably as many House Leaders operate in this House as has anyone else, outside of my colleagues, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) and the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). I have watched with some particular care and I have seen this House operate best when there was ongoing negotiation, when there was ongoing cooperation. I have seen this House operate best when, although there were differences of opinion that created criticism, that created a situation where the House wobbled for a bit of time, people came together in the end and tried to sort things out each by giving a bit. That is how the House has to operate. When one particular party or one general group in this House decides that it is

not going to give a bit, that it is going to have things their way and their way only and becomes inflexible, as we have seen the Minister become last night and on a number of occasions, and we see it again today, it does a disservice to the effective functioning of the House.

I believe that he would be far better off to try to find a solution which we can all agree to, but if he wants to force the issue in the way in which he wants to he will find that we will accede to the way in which he wants to operate the committee this afternoon. That means that we will not be able to ask questions on Continuing Care to the extent that we would like to. That means that we will not be able to ask questions on environmental health to the extent that we would want to. That means we will not be able to ask questions on northern health to the extent that we would want to. That has happened already in this committee because we are faced with some time constraints. Many a time I have stood in my place and said I would have more questions on a particular issue, but I am not going to ask him at this time because I believe we have to deal with other issues during the limited time that is allocated to us for the review of the Department of Health Estimates.

So there is nothing unusual in what is going to happen. What is unusual is that the Minister has set a tone, which I believe will reverberate. For example, yesterday the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) came to the two Opposition House Leaders and said, can we finish up Government Services even although it is not in the order? One would need unanimous consent for that to happen. If there was not unanimous consent, it would not happen. As a matter of fact, on a number of occasions, the Government House Leader has come to Opposition House Leaders and said, can we change the sequence of Estimates generally so that we can accommodate - (Interjection)- I want to address what the Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) is saying. He says we did that before. That is exactly the point I am making. We did do that before and we did it out of cooperation, and we have before as even this Minister did yesterday to his credit.

We have before changed the sequence of the ordering of the individual items in the Estimates by unanimous consent, so that a Member could bring forward something at a particular time because there was an urgency in that Member's mind about that particular item. It may be an urgency that is shared by others or it may not. But the fact is one has to respect the fact that a Member himself or herself thought it to be an urgent matter. So, yes, we have done it before and I hope that we will do it again.

But I am telling you that the type of inflexibility that we saw last night, and the type of inflexibility that we are seeing again today mitigates against the cooperative environment, which is required to ensure that those things are accommodated to the extent possible, will not be able to do it in every instance, absolutely not. But we should be able to do it in most instances. So when the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) comes back to us again and says can we reorder the sequence of events because a Minister is sick, a Minister

has to attend a meeting, a Minister has to be out of town for some reason, we will say to that Government House Leader, let us talk about it in the context of what happened in this House in the afternoon sitting of November 15, because we believe that you receive back what you give with respect to cooperation in this House. I am not saying that we will not do it, I am just saying that what happens here today is going to, in some way, impact upon our decision-making - (Interjection)- No, it is not a threat.

You see, that is the way the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) operates and so he assumes that everyone operates that way. He goes in and threatens to fire people. He goes in and threatens to give them pink slips. That is his modus operandi and because that is something that he does, sometimes in a joking way, he says, but I can tell him it is not always received as a joke, that he expects that everyone does that. No, we are not threatening. We are trying to say that this House operates best when people can be flexible and cooperate together. For example, yesterday, and I will tell you it was a suggestion of myself, as New Democratic Party House Leader, and it was agreed to by my colleague, the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock) for the Liberal Party, that we not have Private Members' Hour so that we could continue on with Estimates.

Mr. Kozak: Not today.

Mr. Cowan: No, that was yesterday, for the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak). That was something that we suggested because they had come to us. He had come to us on a number of occasions and said can we dispense with Private Members' Hour? On one occasion we had said, no, we cannot. We said, on the basis of principle, we are not going to dispense with Private Members' Hour when we deal with Public Bills and Private Bills, or Public Bills by private Members, because we believe that the Government is not speaking to those Bills and not moving them along the way in which they should. So we are not going to give them the opportunity not to have a Private Members' Hour where that issue is discussed. We told the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) that as a matter of principle.

We also said that on a day-by-day basis we would discuss with him, when resolutions were before the House, the dispensing of Private Members' Hour. Some days we would and some days we would not. But at least on some occasions we would. That was based on his first request to us, which was turned down in the first instance by us and the second instance by the Liberals, and then agreed to in the third instance. He wanted to cooperate. We wanted to cooperate. They have asked for certain Bills to be expedited. We have agreed to expedite certain Bills. We have agreed not to expedite other Bills because they require cooperation to do it. If they did not have cooperation, it would not be done.

It is interesting because the House has been wobbling a bit recently. So I went back and looked over the history of this House through Hansard, on a number of occasions. I came across a lot of questions about Continuing Care when I did that, but I also came across

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a number of other issues. It seems that whenever this House started to break apart and to wobble, it was because the Government thought and I looked to my friend, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), because he has been through some of these from the receiving end, and he has been through some of these from the giving end. He has been not only a good receiver but I can tell you that on occasion, he has been a good giver as well. When the House starts to wobble because someone is giving the gears, it is because some particular group, it is either the Opposition or the Government of the House is trying to force their way onto the other Party and to use the rules to do that in an inflexible manner. It does not work. It has not worked in the past. It will not work in the future.

* (1530)

The Opposition can grind the business of this House to a halt. The Members opposite proved it beyond the shadow of a doubt. They used every trick in the Rules Book. They used every nuance out of Beauchesne. I think they may have even gone beyond themselves and gone back to Erskine May and Maingot and a few of the others to get the precedents that they required. They did a good job of grinding the House to a halt because they thought the Government was trying to impose upon the Opposition, and through that, the people of this province an inflexible attitude. I can tell you, notwithstanding the chuckles from the second bench on the Government side, that we, when we were in Opposition in '77, were also able to grind certain Bills to a halt. They had to be withdrawn, they could not be proceeded with. We were able to grind certain aspects of the operation of the House to a halt, they were not able to proceed with. Then once we did that, people had to come together and negotiate their way out of the impasse.

What I am trying to do today is to say that we are moving towards that impasse. We need not be moving towards that impasse. We need only to be more flexible and more cooperative, use the rules to our advantage, yes, protect what we think is important, the rights of the Government to act and the rights of the Opposition to oppose. Yes, do all of that, but also understand that if we dig our trenches far apart from each other, and we are not able to reach out from time to time and say we have, as a collective, a responsibility to sort out a particular problem to move this House along, then we are going to extend the sitting of this House beyond what anyone in this Chamber wants it to go. I say that with all honesty and sincerity, beyond what any individual Member of this House wants that Session to extend. That is not a threat, to answer the heckling from Members opposite. No, because I do not want it to happen, because quite frankly, I want to be out of here for Christmas as well. I think the reason that we may be here beyond Christmas, even although I want to be out of here for Christmas, is because Ministers like the Minister who is before us today in Estimates, who is inflexible in his approach, supported by his inflexible colleagues in the second row there, they are going to create the type of impasse which extends the business of this House in an unproductive fashion rather than—

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, on a point of order.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): A point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) just clearly . . . in terms of being inflexible during the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism. I could not have been more flexible in dealing with those Estimates, which the Member for Churchill will admit, because on a number of occasions we were very flexible in dealing with his issues, and I would ask him to retract that statement.

Mr. Cowan: Mr. Chairperson, I will retract that statement with respect to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) because he indeed was flexible. I believe that the Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) will be flexible and I am not so certain about some of the others.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cowan: I believe that they should all be given the opportunity—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, on a point of order.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Can I speak from here?

Mr. Cowan: No, she cannot, but it is okay.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) for being cooperative in indicating I could speak from any microphone. I just want to make clear the point that I consider that I will be quite flexible during the Estimates process of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation. I do not like the motives that have been impugned by the Member for Churchill and I would like him to withdraw them.

Mr. Cowan: Time will tell as to whether or not the Member will be flexible; however, I think if you read the—

Mr. Chairman: On the point of order.

Mr. Cowan: Yes, on the point of order. I believe time will tell as to whether or not any Member in this House will be flexible. If the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) takes offence to those words, then I will withdraw those words, but I will watch carefully to ensure that withdrawal has not been in vain and that in fact she is flexible. So what I understand—

Mr. Chairman: I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) for withdrawing the comments with respect to the points of order raised by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) and the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Mr. Cowan: What it boils down to is they have all said they are going to be flexible, but what we have seen is a classic example of inflexibility on the part of one of those Members here last night and today. We are prepared to let the items pass. We will ask a few questions on each of them to get to Mental Health, but that is only because we are trying to avoid the type of impasse which we believe is being created by the inflexible attitude on the part of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). For that reason, on Continuing Care, we will use other forums to ask the questions which should be asked. We will not put those questions aside entirely. We are putting them aside for the purposes of the debate here today.

Mr. Chairperson, I would just ask, given my comments, if the Minister might not reconsider what I thought was a very reasonable request by the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), and a request which has been acceded to by other Ministers who have stood in their place today, such as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) on a number of other occasions, to allow a bit of flexibility during the Estimates to accommodate the needs of all the Members. Would he not accede to that particular request so that we can move to Mental Health, and then in the time remaining after we have had that discussion, come back to the issues that are before us in the items that are between now and the discussion of Mental Health?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I want to make several points in the House because my honourable friends have now taken one full hour of wasted time in which questions could have been placed on Continuing Care. That is what I said in my very first remarks an hour ago, that if we wanted to debate this back and forth we would simply waste time, have no questions posed on Continuing Care, and we have done exactly that.

Let me remind my honourable friends, particularly my honourable friend from Kildonan, who wishes to debate Mental Health because there is a crisis. My honourable friend should recognize that nothing has changed today, nothing has changed tomorrow, nothing will have changed by Thursday, nothing will have changed by Friday of this week, indeed, nothing will have changed by December 1, because I want to remind my honourable friend the crisis he wants to debate, if I understand him correctly, is the resignation, early retirement, whichever you wish to call it, of two psychiatrists at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. If they resigned today and were gone today, I would say, yes, there is a crisis. But when is their resignation effective? December 9. When is December 9? Well, let us see now, there are 30 days in October, so this is the 15th, that is 24 days from now.—(Interjection)— Oh well, I hope you are impressed because you should count yourselves.

What you want to do is debate a crisis that does not exist, to play games in the House, because we are now at over 30 hours in the Department of Health and we have passed—and I will read them out to my honourable friends—Executive Support, Health Advisory Network, Research and Planning, and that took about 12 hours on its own in which we discussed

Mental Health and a variety of issues. We discussed Communications, we have passed Administration and Financial Services, Human Resource Management, Internal Audit, and then in Community Health Services, we have passed six appropriations, in 30 hours.

Yesterday, I made the accommodation at the request of my honourable friend for Kildonan to put aside two appropriations, namely, Hearing Conservation and Gerontology, so that at five o'clock we could advance to Continuing Care so that his colleague, or someone over there, could debate Continuing Care and we would come back to Hearing Conservation and Gerontology at eight o'clock. I agreed to that. And who put the fly in the ointment? Was it me, Minister of Health? This uncooperative person that my honourable friends are clamoring about? No, it was the Deputy Health critic of the Liberal Party who got up and took from five o'clock to 5:40 p.m. to discuss not Continuing Care as I agreed to with my honourable friend, the Liberal Health critic, but Health Promotion, which was under discussion for some six hours prior to that.

Now my honourable friends want to talk about cooperation. I am fully willing to cooperate. I will debate Mental Health any amount of time my honourable friends want. But do not tell me that we have to advance the Estimates to suit your peculiar agenda, as the critic for Health for the Liberal Party, of a crisis today which does not exist, because the information my honourable friend's colleague, because he did not bring it forward as the Health critic, it was his colleague brought it forward to the House today, has nothing to do with the crisis that exists today in Selkirk because nothing has changed and nothing will change tomorrow and nothing will change Thursday because the two individual psychiatrists are going to provide service until December 9th. Where the crisis is, is in Brandon, where we have 2,300 Manitobans without professional psychiatric care on a full-time basis, and that is how the whole problem started.

* (1540)

But there is no crisis today that needs to be debated today, to flaunt the rules of the House, and I simply will debate to any length of time my honourable friends wish the Mental Health initiatives of this Government and myself, as Minister, and I will do that in the order presented in Estimates, because we have taken over 30 hours to get here.

If my honourable friend thinks the sacrifice of two hours of debate this afternoon on Continuing Care and the other related areas of Health Delivery in this province are not important enough to debate, to put Mental Health into Thursday or indeed later on this afternoon, then my honourable friend is barking up the wrong tree, he is howling at the moon, because there is no crisis today. The resignations are not effective till December the 9th. We could debate this in full on Thursday of next week, Monday, this week, Monday of next week, Tuesday of next week, Thursday of next week, and we still would not have a single change in the status of mental health delivery in the Province of Manitoba because those resignations have not been effective until December 9. Does my honourable friend not understand that?

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What we are doing is we are wanting to advance for his peculiar motivation today the debate on Mental Health. There is no crisis today, Mr. Chairman. The debate could carry on from 4 till 5 and we could have had all these items passed in the last hour and 10 minutes, if my honourable friends had not decided to waste the time. We have accomplished exactly nothing in the last hour and 10 minutes, either in Continuing Care, Dental Health, Environmental Health, Health Information Resources, Northern Health or Regional Services, absolutely nothing, because my honourable friend has chosen to waste the time, not me.

I made the suggestion immediately upon my honourable friend's first question, that we could debate these items for an hour and be in Mental Health right now, but my honourable friends chose not to take that advice and they have wasted time instead. There is no crisis. We can debate Mental Health Thursday. We can debate it at 4:30 p.m., and in three-quarters of an hour we can pass the rest of the Estimates. That is not being unreasonable. That is being very cooperative. That is following the rules of this House.

When my honourable friend, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), says that yes, we had a little problem last night at ten o'clock, I want to tell my honourable friends where the problem came from, because in discussions I had with my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), I asked him—because I asked him after Monday of last week. Monday of last week, I asked that we sit beyond ten o'clock, but the Member for Churchill called "committee rise." My honourable friends in the Liberal Party believed that the committee could not sit, because this is what several of them told me: at ten o'clock, last Monday, that the committee could not sit without leave of the House. One Member, namely the Member for Churchill, not wanting to sit past ten o'clock would stall it. I said that is not right.

An Honourable Member: Who told you that?

Mr. Orchard: I do not know. You all look alike—a couple of Liberals.

An Honourable Member: The problem is we understand the rules more than you do, sir.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, now we have the six-month expert on rules speaking from the front row seat of the House Leader. I mean, they make quite a pair.

My honourable friends decided last Monday night that they did not want to sit past ten o'clock, which is fine. I made the suggestion then, to my honourable friend, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), that why do we not sit past ten o'clock? I said you do not have to have your leave of the House and unanimous consent, you simply have to have the will of the majority. And that is correct. When I talked to my honourable friend, afternoon Monday, it was to ask him to consider sitting past ten o'clock. I thought that would be a reasonable approach. But my honourable friend is correct and I will give him credit. I am not trying to paint him into a corner. Because we sat from 5 to 6, that was in lieu of after ten o'clock. The difficulty is I thought we could do both. I was wrong. I was in error.

We had 10 Members in this House, on our side of the House last night, and there was one New Democrat and four Liberals in the House.—(Interjection)—Four Liberals. There were five all in total. My honourable friend, I do not know whether he is missing a finger, but there were only four Liberals in the House last night. When the chairman of the committee asked the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) if he had any support, he leapt to his feet and said yes, I do, and was standing alone and naked in the House. He looked around and he ordered the Members of the Liberal Party to stand up. They bounced up and down for a couple of times. Then finally, they all leaped to their feet like little puppets of the Member for Churchill, the Liberals and the New Democrats cooperating again—nice, cozy, kissy-face, huggy-bear relationship.

What were we trying to do Mr. Chairman? We were trying to discuss the Estimates of Continuing Care, something that my honourable friends have wanted to do for weeks and weeks and weeks. We have the opportunity to do it today, because we do not have to debate Mental Health Estimates this afternoon, we can debate them Thursday. We can debate them on the following Monday and Tuesday and Thursday. We can debate them until we run out of hours. I would be glad to, because we have done more in six months in terms of the service potential and delivery structure in Mental Health than has happened in six years, 16 years, 26 years. I am willing to debate that to my honourable friend's hearts content.

But we do not have to change the rules to do it because there is no emergency situation in Selkirk. Psychiatrists are going to be on staff until December 9, as they were Friday of last week when there was not a crisis, as they were Monday of this week, when there was not a crisis. Now that a resignation or early retirement letter is received, those same psychiatrists are working but, all of a sudden, there is a crisis that we have to debate today. The crisis exists in Brandon where I would appreciate some support from my honourable friends in the Liberal Party to resolve that problem, not the kind of protection that my honourable friend was providing to everyone but the patients in his questions, on November 1 and 2, that I read back to him out of the record, which he said was not—how did he put it?—that it was not the right information that I was putting on the record. Well again, it was a direct quotation of his questions, the Member for Kildonan's questions, that I put on the record. He stood up and protested that you are not saying the right things.

You bet I was not saying the right things because I was quoting his words back to him which were not the right things. They were the wrong approach at the wrong time for the wrong people. He forgot that his Government was here to provide services to people in need.

My honourable friend wants to debate Continuing Care. Let us debate Continuing Care. We do not need to pass Continuing Care this afternoon simply to get to Mental Health Estimates. We do not need to do that. We can debate Mental Health Estimates on Thursday, Monday of next week, Tuesday of next week, if my honourable friend desires, and we do not have to rush

through these Estimates and then have my honourable friend say we were forced to do it, because there is no crisis in Selkirk today, there is no crisis in Selkirk tomorrow, there is no crisis in Selkirk on Thursday.

That is why my honourable friends would do well to take the advice I gave an hour and fifteen minutes ago and start debating Continuing Care. We could pass them in the orderly fashion that it is deemed to do in this House without having changed a single rule, without having to have the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) get up and, in his skillful language, leave the message that if we do not do as he wishes and as the Liberals wish, this House can be obstructed, things do not happen, the rules can be drawn out and this House will never close.

We do not need those kind of threats on this side of the House because we have attempted to cooperate with Liberals and New Democrats alike. Unfortunately, from time to time, when the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) gives the little gesture, he gets lots of people following him from the Liberal Party knowing not what they do. That example was most recently visited upon us last night when the Member for Churchill hollered at four Liberals in attendance in the House, "Stand up!" and they stood up for the New Democratic Party.

* (1550)

Mr. Cowan: I think we should move on with the Estimates, but not before making a couple of comments. No. 1, the Minister on last Monday night, when we suggested that committee rise, got to his feet and said, let the record be clear that the only person who wanted the committee to rise was the Member for Churchill, the only person who wanted just to leave was the Member for Churchill.

I asked the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) if that was the case, because that was not my perception. I asked the Member for Kildonan if that was the case because I know—and the Minister chuckles that sort of devious little laugh from his seat, which is so unbecoming but so illustrative of that man, and that is why he has lost whatever respect he had of many Members of this House, and he did not have a lot of respect to start with.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): He had some to start with.

Mr. Cowan: The Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), the Liberal House Leader, says that he had some to start with. Okay, let us give that he had some, but it is indeed the past tense, and that is unfortunate because he does need the cooperation of all Members of the House to put in place the reforms that he wants to put in place.

We have told him that we will support him when we believe that the action which he is taking, his Government is taking, is the right action, and we will criticize him when we believe that the action is the wrong action, but his attitude, his inflammatory, provocative attitude in this House makes it very difficult for us to do that. We are going to look past his snideness, his cynicism, his pettiness, his attempts to

bully Members of this House, and we are going to attempt to cooperate on the issues with him when that is required, but I can tell you, Mr. Chairperson, that he makes it difficult.

He attempted to distort the record on Monday night. I talked to the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). I said it was my understanding that we all wanted to rise at ten o'clock and the Member for Kildonan said yes, that was the case. Now they may make light of that because they do not know how to deal with honesty. They do not know how to deal with the, I think, responsible approach that the Member for Kildonan has put forward when he said yes, the record was wrongly put into the record by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) who—

Mr. Orchard: I want Gulzar to stand up and say that.

Mr. Cowan: He says he wants the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) to stand up and say that. He was not listening when the Member for Kildonan stood up on Thursday last week and said, Mr. Chairperson, I just want to correct the record that on Monday night the Member for Churchill was not the only person who wanted to end committee that night. I just want to make the correction on the record.

That was an honourable thing to do and I know they will laugh at it, they will make light at it, they will attempt to suggest that that shows that the Liberals are in our pocket or we are in the Liberal's pocket, but the fact is that is that what it does show is that some people in this Chamber respond honourably to distortions on the record.

Last night, they are making a point about how, when I was asked if we had support, it was necessary to ask Members of the Liberal Party to stand up. The fact is that they did stand in their place because they understand the rules -(Interjection)- There is nothing wrong in asking people to, and they can say no if they do not want to. By the way, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) just a moment ago made reference to the number of Members in the House at that time. I just want to note now that there are four Conservative Members in the House and there are three NDP and there are seven Liberal Members in the House. So let him not suggest that a snapshot in time shows that any one Party is not doing their job in this House.

They are the only Party that has been caught in a quorum call of the sort we had the other day in 100 years' history of this House. They are still somewhat embarrassed by it because they tried to have quorum calls all the time when they were in Opposition and never succeeded. Yet, when in Government, they are the ones who in fact cannot keep enough of their Members here, when they only had three Members here, to keep the House operational. But that is another point. Just let the record be clear.

Last night there was support from the Liberals because the Opposition was opposed to the way in which the Minister was trying to ram his Estimates through. He says he was mistaken, but even although he was mistaken he still tried to when he knew that

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Members on this side did not want to sit past ten o'clock because that has been the established practice of this House for the past seven years.

He still tried to ram a vote through. So I do not find his explanation very satisfactory. I do not find the way in which he attempts to describe events and distort the way in which things happen in this House very satisfactory, and I do believe that they will lead to a deterioration in the working relationship in this House. That is not a threat. Actually, that is more of a plea to Members opposite than a threat. It is asking them to please take a look at how the House operates and try to make it work better. Knowing that from time to time they are going to want to force votes—and they should. From time to time, they are going to want to use the rules against us and to their advantage, and they should. We are going to do the same and the Liberals are going to do the same. That is part of the process of the House. But the most important part of the process of this House is cooperation, negotiation, and an attempt to deal sincerely with each other. We have seen a tremendous lack of that desire or ability, it may be both, on the part of this Minister.

So with those comments, we will be asking questions on Continuing Care in other forums. We will be asking questions on other issues in other forums. I do not believe that this has been a waste of the time of the House, because I believe that any effort on the part of any Member to make this House work better and more effectively over a period of time is not a waste but is productivity. That is something that the Minister does not understand.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to pass item 2.(g)(1)? The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: I just want to put a few comments on the record. As the Minister has clearly indicated, the crisis does not exist today, he said it will not exist tomorrow, and he said it will not exist until maybe next month. I think the people of Selkirk will be shocked, and the mental health patients will be shocked to know that approach is being taken. In my view, definitely the crisis is today. It is going to get worse until we deal with it, until we have some plans, and the Minister has failed to indicate the plans. We have requested him to go that way, but he has never complied with that request. That is his way of dealing with it.

So far in this House, I have gone along with the Minister most of the time, but today I would like to show my disappointment, that I am disappointed and discouraged that the Minister's approach is sometimes very, very different. I think I have to be careful how much I believe of what the Minister says off the record or on the record. So we have lots of questions on Continuing Care. We have no choice then because of the time. As the Minister said, there is a waste of time.

Maybe that is the way he thinks, but I think there are a lot of things have become very clear today—how the business of this House has to be conducted, and if there is a reasonable request from the Opposition, if that request is not met, I think it just leaves some of the feelings which are not probably best for

democracy. I think we do have a role here; we have a positive role to play here. We have a crisis. We had a problem, we have a problem, and the Minister does not want to discuss it now so we will continue with Continuing Care, just a few questions and pass it and then go to the next items. I am disappointed today.

* (1600)

Mr. Orchard: Let my honourable friend not leave the record about the crisis in Selkirk. My honourable friend says that two psychiatrists have tendered their resignation/early retirement today and that constitutes a crisis, losing two psychiatrists in a centre staffed with six plus part-time help. Now, if my honourable friend says that is a crisis in Selkirk, where was my honourable friend two weeks ago Monday when I pointed out that there was only one psychiatrist as little as two days a week serving all of the patients of Brandon Mental Health Centre? If his description of a crisis is the early resignation of two out of a complement of six plus in Selkirk, then what in the world is the situation in Brandon?

It is an unacceptable circumstance in Brandon. Who did my honourable friend question me on behalf of? On behalf of first of all the MMA, then the professionals, but never the patients. As I say to my honourable friend, I am not downplaying the difficulties that will occur in Selkirk with the early retirement/resignation of those two individuals. I am simply pointing out to my honourable friend that those circumstances are not going to change the level of service delivery in Selkirk until after the 9th of December.

What my honourable friend is doing is using that as an excuse to try to go to Mental Health without dealing with the other issues. I find that acceptable. If you do not want to ask any more questions in Continuing Care, fine. I have the staff here who can assist me in answering them if you want to pose them. We can get to Mental Health Thursday of this week, or Monday of next week. We do not have rush headlong into it. We do not have to have my honourable friend say a week from now, two weeks from now, a month from now, my honourable friend from Kildonan saying, if only we had not been forced to go through Continuing Care quickly, we would have had these questions. I am telling you, you have the opportunity right now this afternoon. We can spend the rest of today, the next hour on Continuing Care. We can spend all of Thursday of this week on Continuing Care and it will not change the circumstance in Selkirk one iota, not one iota. So my honourable friend's description of a crisis, Mr. Chairman, is, quite frankly, phony as a three-dollar bill.

If he does not want to debate Continuing Care, I accept that. I accept that completely. It does not bother me a bit. I do have staff here who can offer answers to questions he may pose. I accept he does not want to ask those questions today, and he wants to move for some unknown reason to Mental Health. Fine, that is his choice, but do not come back later and say, well if only we were not forced to do this, we could have asked questions on Continuing Care because I am telling you right now you have the full and open opportunity to question Continuing Care and every other

line between here and Mental Health today and tomorrow because nothing changes in Selkirk between today, tomorrow, Thursday, Monday next week, Tuesday next week. You have the opportunity. Do not use the lame excuse that you have to move along for some perceived crisis that does not exist between now and the ninth of December.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, we are not convinced with the Minister's approach. We have spent, as he said, one-and-a-half hours. Out of that time, I think the Minister has spent most of the time defending his approach which is not acceptable at least on this side of the House. So we will pass the Continuing Care and we have questions but if there is another opportunity in other areas we will discuss it there.

Mr. Chairman: 2.(g)(1) Continuing Care: Salaries—pass; 2.(g)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 2.(g)(3) Home Care Assistance—pass; 2.(g)(4) External Agencies—pass; 2.(h)(1) Medical Equipment and Supplies: Salaries—pass; 2.(h)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 2.(h)(3) External Agencies—pass; 2.(j)(1) Dental Health: Salaries—pass; 2.(j)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 2.(j)(3) External Agencies—pass; 2.(k)(1) Environmental Health: Salaries—pass; 2.(k)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 2.(n)(1) Health Information Resources: Salaries—pass; 2.(n)(2) Other Expenditures—pass.

2.(q) Northern Health—the Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: On Northern Health, it is an issue of some importance. I understand, from my reading of the Estimates previously, that the department is carrying on the activities as much as were anticipated in the past. I think it is an area that deserves a great deal of attention from the department and from the Minister. It is an area where we have some very serious health problems, and one which we need to pay particular attention to because of the many circumstances that face northern residents.

I want to make the point that we will be watching this area very carefully, to ensure that the programs that were in place continue to function well and we will, as well, from time to time offer constructive criticism to the Minister where we think there are problem areas, and offer suggestions to the Minister where we think there are gaps that maybe could be better dealt with by the department, but we do want to encourage their activities in this particular area.

Mr. Orchard: I appreciate my honourable friend's advice, but I will tell you what I am troubled with and have been troubled with from Day One in terms of separating out this appropriation on Northern Health.

All of the services are delivered via staff of Regional Services which is the next appropriation. What I believe we will do, in terms of the presentation of format, is to include the Northern Health next year under Regional Services because that is where it is being delivered anyway. You will note we have no staffing complement, but yet we are delivering \$48,000 worth of primary care services. That is because the staff of Regional Services are carrying out these programs.

Under Other Expenditures, although it would not show a certain emphasis on Northern Health programs, the \$48,000 under Northern Health could just as well be part of the Other Expenditures on \$3,464,000 because that money would still be there, would make the format of Estimates much cleaner, the same staff would be delivering it. I believe that as we approach Estimates next year, that we may well move Northern Health into the Regional Services in terms of its proper accounting in the flow of the Estimates.

I do not want my honourable friend next next, when he sees it gone as a separate appropriation, to say we do not care about Northern Health because it serves no useful purpose to be here other than to identify \$48,000 of service, but that is not the total value of service that we provide to northern Manitobans by a long shot. The Northern Patient Transportation Program alone, and fee for service involved in it when those individuals reach southern Manitoba, is a multitude of probably a hundred to a thousand times the \$48,000 that is in here.

So I just tell my honourable friend, I appreciate his comment but I believe next year you will see Northern Health as a part of Regional Services in terms of the Estimates breakout.

Mr. Cowan: I regret the approach that is being taken by the Minister of Health. I believe there are some very valuable reasons for continuing a separate focus on Northern Health. I can tell him now I will be using other opportunities to address this issue with him personally. I hope that I can persuade him to change his mind over a period of time but I do not believe I can do so today. I think it is going to be a bit of a longer process than that, and my only comment at this juncture is to say that I hope that he is wrong, that next year we do not see this item removed.

I am going to commit myself to spending the time personally with him and with whatever vehicle I have available to me to try to convince him that he is wrong over the next little while, and try to ensure that the department maintains this particular section, which I believe provides an important focus on Northern Health issues, but I do not expect him to answer at this point in time. I do not expect to change his mind at this point in time.

I just want to make the record clear that we have a difference of opinion in this regard, and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss it with him over the next little while.- (Interjection)-

Mr. Chairman: Order, please.

* (1610)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, that is exactly what I knew my honourable friend's reaction would be, that he is going to say by showing it differently in the Estimates that we are going to want to downplay Northern Health. My honourable friend surely does not want Manitobans to believe that all we spend in delivering Northern Health programs is \$48,000, because that would be truly the most misleading information to Manitobans because

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we spend literally millions on Northern Health—literally millions. I simply say to my honourable friend that this Northern Health item appeared in Estimates approximately three years ago or four cycles ago.

If I can be so blunt to my honourable friend, it was simply an attempt to make it look like the previous Government was doing something. The programs were being delivered by the same staff in Norman Region or Thompson as they always were. It was an attempt to tell Northerners, hey, the NDP as a Party cares for you. It was not necessarily a complete and honest statement. When it started out it was something like \$24,000 or \$30,000.00. We could take and we could move \$200,000 to it, and simply pull the money out of Other Expenditures in Community Services. But my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), said that would be flimflam to do that, but yet he was part of a Government that did exactly that. They pulled the programming, put it into Northern Health, gave it another name to say, in a flimflam way, not my words but the New Democratic Party Leader's words—flimflam—to put flimflam into the Estimates.

If it makes my honourable friend feel any better, we may make Northern Health as a subsection under Regional Services starting out with (1) Salaries, (2) Other Expenditures, (3) Northern Health, and put in \$48,000.00. That could be what we could do to help him out. It would have an identification. Because my honourable friend cannot deny the fact that every one of these programs is delivered by regional staff, that is being paid for in the Salary line of Regional Services. It would be cleaner, simpler and more honest to have it appear as part of Regional Services.

Mr. Chairman: 2.(q)—the Honourable Member for Kildonan.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I have a few comments on this. We are spending \$48,000 to provide a variety of services ranging from prevention to the treatment. Can the Minister tell us exactly the cost per patient in northern Manitoba as compared to southern and the Winnipeg and Brandon communities?

Mr. Orchard: Let me give you some of the areas in which the \$48,000 is expended. First of all, if my honourable friend follows through in page 64 of the supplement, you will find that Transportation, Supplies and Services, small Capital items, Other Operating expenses make up the \$48,000 budget. But here is what those salaries, transportation and educational assistance costs go towards.

First of all, first-responder training for community health workers, 10 days of training, tuition, accommodation for four staff. There is another area of expenditure: trauma management training for nursing station nurses, a two-and-a-half day course; meals, accommodation, travel and tuition for 12 staff; equipment and books for nursing stations—that is under the Capital line. The printing of nine northern health fact sheets and another one, the proposed contract with the University of Brandon School of Nursing to provide a community health nursing course

for nurses underfilling in the Public Health and Continuing Care positions. That is what the money is being used for, to deliver those kinds of programs in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Cheema: My question still remains the same. We are spending \$48,000 on the whole range of services starting from prenatal to the communicable diseases. What is the cost per person in northern communities versus the money being spent for the southern areas as well as the Brandon and Winnipeg areas?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend has just made the point that I made that the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) just disagreed with. My honourable friend, the Liberal critic, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), is under the impression that \$48,000 delivers prenatal health care for mothers and newborns, and all of the range of services that are involved. That is simply not the case. All of those services are provided through Regional Services, through the myriad of programs we have just passed. This is an issue which is very narrow, which can be incorporated in Regional Services as part of, and would not cause that kind of confusion that we are only spending \$48,000 on northern health, because my honourable friend as critic, as an elected MLA, is confused by this representation. That is the point I made with my honourable friend from Churchill.

Mr. Chairman: 2.(q) Northern Health—pass.

Resolution No. 79: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$65,607,800 for Health, Community Health Services (Programs), for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1989—pass.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, yesterday, I believe it was the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) asked a question about the numbers of the speech language pathologists in comparison with other provinces that we have in the Province of Manitoba.

I just want to indicate to him that we have, with the additional SYs approved for the Health Sciences Centre, 126 speech language pathologists on staff in the province. Now I caution my honourable friend in that the majority of those are, indeed, in the school system. I cannot give him that breakdown. That leaves us with a population ratio to specialists of 1 to 8,500 in Manitoba. That compares in about the, I suppose, better end of the range, I find.

There is only one province which has a better ratio than us now in terms of speech pathologists per 1,000 population. British Columbia has 334 but their ratio is 1 to 186 individuals. Alberta has the best ratio in Canada with 303 on staff, which is a ratio of one speech language pathologist to 7,839 individuals. Saskatchewan has 81 on staff for a ratio of 1 to 12,595. Manitoba, as I said, the ratio was 1 to 8,500 with the new hirings at Health Sciences Centre. Quebec has audiologists and speech language pathologists in the number of 505 for a ratio of 1 to 12,951. Their ratio would be higher if you just dealt with speech language pathologists. New Brunswick has 79 on staff for a ratio of 1 to 11,100. Nova Scotia, 77 for a ratio of 1 to 11,464. Prince Edward Island has

10 for a ratio of 1 to 12,670. Newfoundland has 41 with a ratio of 1 to—that figure is not right—it should be 11,861. The Northwest Territories has 1 speech language pathologist for 52,200 people.

* (1620)

Mr. Chairman: 3.(a) Community Health Services (Operations)(a) Regional Services: (1) Salaries—pass; 3.(a)(2) Other Expenditures—pass.

Resolution No. 80: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$29,301,700 for Health, Community Health Services (Operations), for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1989—pass.

I direct Members' attention to appropriation No. 4. Mental Health Services (a) Program and Management Support: (1) Salaries—the Member for Kildonan.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Parker Burrell, in the Chair.)

Mr. Cheema: Mental Health Services is a very important issue for our Party. We know that the system has problems and continues to have problems. We have seen an example of this problem today. Because of that problem of crisis at Selkirk, I still repeat, there is a crisis at Selkirk which has resulted in a one-and-a-half hour of so-called debate which we did not achieve what we wanted to. We wanted to come to the item right away. Now we are at this item.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has acknowledged this many times when we have asked questions regarding his short-term or band-aid approach to solve the inherent and also the growing problem of the system. However, from time to time, this administration has failed to reach a conclusive approach, alienating the people who support the services. Also we have the example of Selkirk which is going to have a problem because we will be short of at least two, possibly three psychiatrists as of next month. Planning has to be done now.

We strongly feel that Manitoba's Mental Health System needs a change. I feel it is very important for the people of Manitoba to hear about my Party's concern for the development of a better system which must be taken into account. The Minister of Health, as he had indicated, is trying to revamp the system or trying to modify the system. He has indicated that he is going to bring a statement in a few days time. I believe that this administration must include some of the functions, which we think are very important, to have a better mental health care system in Manitoba. Let me be very clear that these are all priorities and are not limited in their importance.

We must have a very strong identification and outreach capacity in the mental health care system. There must be appropriate treatment and a crisis board. There must be ongoing consultation throughout the system. There must be good coordination between the local and provincial levels. There must be a quality residential support function in place. There must exist a case coordination and case management function which is strong. We must have a system which has a

strong social support complement to this plan. The development of a vocational support must be in place at the very beginning of this plan of mental health care in Manitoba. Self-help and peer support processes must be understood and developed to the fullest extent by this new health plan.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, ultimately advocacy groups must be an integral part of this new system. These functions are only the beginning of my Party's belief on the proper development and coordination for a better mental health system for all Manitobans.

I want to make it very clear that principles must be articulated to guide the development of this new mental health system. The system must be accessible, must be accountable, flexible, comprehensive, coordinated and functionally equivalent, individualized and mandated to share the responsibilities within communities and Government, focused in the community levels and utilize the natural and informal support systems. At this point it is compulsory with no variation that the system must be culturally and geographically relevant.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, we believe that the mental health system will and should ensure that all Manitobans have full access to the mental health services as close as possible to their own communities. The system must place a high priority of supporting individuals and their families when they are in crisis. The system must recognize the multidimensional nature of the division and many Manitoba health problems, and there must be a balance between institutions and community sectors.

Organization of a mental health system is to enhance the quality of life as well as the quality of care maintaining the people in their communities, and to ultimately provide access to adequate income through meaningful and important work.

The Minister, in the past six months, has failed to meet any of these principles and goals for a proper mental health system in Manitoba. Let us go through some of the failures: chronic lack of psychiatrists; failure to attract new ones; alienating the present ones; failure to provide crisis shelters; waiting period for hospital placements remains same, Mr. Acting Chairperson, waiting period for patients in need remains sometimes at 9 days, some patients sometimes wait for 9 days in the emergency rooms. At times in Winnipeg we do not have acute beds, the last example was No. 4 to No. 6. I believe on No. 6 there was not even a single acute care bed available to place a patient in Winnipeg, and that problem can continue to happen.

We had some good work done by various organizations, various advocacy groups and good work by the Department of Mental Health. They are trying to do a lot of good things but we have to have a political will to reform the system, and there is definitely a problem with manpower and now it is becoming more and more. It is evident from two days result of the action from . . . to deal with the problem at Selkirk, as well as at Brandon.

We are failing to address the problems, or this administration has failed to address the problem for

seniors also. We have, on this side of the House, asked questions on mental health for the elderly population. We have not heard any statement from this Minister so far on the development of a psychogeriatric program and their expansion in Manitoba. We believe that the process of making the system more efficient must continue and there must be input from all of the resources, and we will encourage the Minister to go ahead with his program and we are looking forward to having those recommendations, whatever plans he has. Could he table those plans today in the House?

* (1630)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairman, I cannot table those plans in the House today as my honourable friend would wish. I told him that some time ago that we have them 90 percent completed and I am hopeful that within a short period of time we have the finishing touches put to the reorganization plan.

I am not trying to avoid the debate because I would dearly love to have that announcement ready to make and get on with it and debate it right here and now. But unfortunately you know, I accept fault that in six months and six days, I am only 90 percent complete on the reorganization in the delivery of Mental Health that has been needed for many, many years.

Let me give to my honourable friend some basic background so that he understands where we are coming from. When I became Minister of Health in May of this year one of the very first issues that was put on my desk was the scheduled closure of the McEwen Building. That was 56 beds used in Crisis Intervention for acutely mentally ill Manitobans. Those 57 beds were coming out of the system—56 beds, sorry, and we were faced with a dilemma, a major dilemma. There was no other way to do that. The building had to be renovated. Previous administration had scheduled that renovation; it had to be done. There was no way you could do it half and half and keep some of the beds. You just had to take your lumps.

I recognized there was a problem coming with that closure. So I called a meeting of my senior staff to the Deputy Minister's office to try and focus the best information and the best opinion and the best advice on how we get by this crisis because I wanted to ask the support of the community hospital psychiatrist, the Selkirk Mental Health Centre psychiatrist and others in the system to get us over this temporary closure for renovation that was going to take 56 beds out of the system.

The meeting was called—it was a meeting I believe to start at 7:30 or eight o'clock in the morning. The evening before, on another unrelated matter, I phoned my Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health and discussed the issue that was on the agenda and in my closing—when I was signing off on the telephone, I said I will see you tomorrow morning, and he said, I beg your pardon. I said for the meeting, the meeting in my office to try and resolve the problem with the closure of the McEwen Building. He said, I did not know there was a meeting coming on.

Mr. Acting Chairman, that was my Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health Services, was not coming to

a meeting to resolve and pull together the resources of Government to resolve a problem with the closure at the McEwen Building. Do you want to know why? Because the McEwen Building is funded through the Manitoba Health Services Commission under the Hospital line. Therefore, the only people invited to this meeting were out of the commission. And I said to myself, this is bizarre that an Assistant Deputy Minister of Mental Health is not even invited to a meeting to resolve a potential crisis in Mental Health Services in Winnipeg, and I had invited him.

What I am trying to point out to my honourable friend is that in the delivery of Mental Health Services in the Department of Health under the \$1.454 billion we spent, there are four separate streams of funding. We go to Regional Services which we have just passed, and in the Regional Services we have mental health workers who deliver service in the community. We move to this page where we have the Mental Health Services and the various disciplines and the various specialties that we have laid out here, including our two long-term care facilities at Brandon and Selkirk. So that is the second flow of funding, because remember, Regional Services is under the Assistant Deputy Minister of Regional Services, Assistant Deputy Minister of Program. So that is one ADM with responsibility. This ADM is responsible for the Chief Provincial Psychiatrist, etc., etc., in the two mental health centres.

Then I take my honourable friend to the next page of the Estimates under the Manitoba Health Services Commission and we actually have three streams of funding there, but for ease of comparison, I will use only two. We have psychiatrists paid under the Medical Program, fee for service, and then under the Hospital Program we fund the McEwen Building, we fund the Grace Hospital, Victoria Hospital, Misericordia Hospital, Seven Oaks Hospital community programs, the community hospital programs, as well as Health Sciences Centre and the tertiary care hospitals.

Four streams of funding reporting to two different Assistant Deputy Ministers and one executive director of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and if you want to add a fifth flow of funding, the Eden Mental Health Centre is not over here along with the Brandon Mental Health Centre and the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. It is funded under the commission.

Can my honourable friend appreciate the fragmentation that there is in the delivery of Mental Health Services when we have that kind of a funding policy and reporting structure in place where two separate ADMs and the executive director of the Manitoba Health Services Commission are responsible for funding flows and policy?

What the reorganization is doing in broad general terms, Mr. Acting Chairman, is to bring those services under one stream of authority, one line of authority, one Assistant Deputy Minister.

That has not been arrived at in isolation. That has been discussed in some substantive amount with various individuals who provide service, with various departments, with the hospitals, with various organizations in the community, to get their input and

so they are comfortable with the direction we are moving in.

I want to tell my honourable friend that I am so pleased today with the kind of cooperation we had from the mental health community, from psychiatrists to workers on the street to regional staff in the Department of Health to my Assistant Deputy Ministers and to others who have helped to put this program together, and we have had a lot of outside help and cooperation, and if we did not have it we could not be where we are today with a plan 90 percent complete.

I want to tell my honourable friend, and I will tell him right off the top, that I believe this is one of the most innovative approaches to mental health that is presently under way in Canada. That is the magnitude of the reorganization that we are doing. I want to tell my honourable friend also that it is not going to be without its implementation problems. We are going to have growing pains in this.

* (1640)

I have listened very intently to my honourable friend and I presume that he is speaking on behalf of the Liberal Opposition. When those growing pains come up and there are problems and he has maybe the odd professional bending his ear and saying to him this is going wrong or that is going wrong, I ask his indulgence to check first before he runs to this House with the problem on behalf of that individual, that there is a much bigger plan in place.

It is going to require the work and cooperation of all political Parties in this House to make it happen. I will not tell you who made the comment, but an individual in the staff of the Department of Health indicated to me three months ago, and I said this is what we are going to do. He said it is a big task. It can be done but there has never been a Minister of Health to date with the guts to try to do it.

I said that has changed because I have advocated for this kind of change when I was a Member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. I advocated for those changes because I believed they were appropriate and I intended to deliver those kinds of changes for the betterment of the delivery of mental health in the Province of Manitoba, not so that I or individuals in the department or individual professionals can take credit for changing the system, but I am changing the system because it needs to be changed for those people who need to access the mental health system from time to time, through no fault of their own.

We have not been providing for them a system that is coordinated and effectively delivers service. We have many good resources in the department and in the commission that are working very effectively in their own right, in their own narrow niche, but their positive experience needs to be shared within the department in a coordinated and collective way that will effectively deliver that kind of innovative programming to the whole of the province. It is the first time that some of those people who have the ideas, who are working on the innovation, who are doing the programs individually and almost on their own, have ever been called upon

for advice. They have never sat in the Minister's office to provide that kind of advice, as they have sat in my office to provide me with that kind of advice.

They have good ideas and those ideas have been incorporated in the reorganization plan. Mr. Acting Chairman, this plan of reorganization is not the end-all and the be-all. It is a framework under which we believe professionals of various discipline, from psychiatrist right through to Mental Health workers, can find their place in the system for service delivery, know their path, know their goals, know their objectives, and know they are backed up by Government to carry them out. That has not existed before.

This reorganization within the department does not resolve the difficulty and the problem that we face at the Faculty of Psychiatry. We have had, for some 18 months, an acting head of Psychiatry doing a very excellent job but recruitment efforts have been ongoing for some time to attempt to bring in a full-time head, a permanent head of the Faculty of Psychiatry. Those discussions have been ongoing since I became Minister. Again, one of the first things I did was meet very early in my tenure as Minister of Health, as my predecessor did with a candidate who those in the system, in the psychiatric system, believe would be a good individual to bring in as head of the faculty. Those discussions are ongoing.

I hope that those discussions lead to a positive result, the recruitment of the individual as head of Psychiatry, because I think that will provide new life, new blood, new thrust, new innovation at the Faculty of Psychiatry.

I want to just take one small aside so that my honourable friend can get on with some questions. During the election campaign, all political Parties were invited down to the Faculty of Psychiatry to present their respective Parties' platform on Mental Health. I was honoured to be there as the Health critic for the Progressive Conservative Party to represent our Party.

I went in with what I thought was just exactly what the undergraduates and the faculty members who were there would want to hear in terms of our direction for the Mental Health Services system in Manitoba. I said that we had this idea, this vision, that over time we wanted to expand the availability of mental health services throughout the province because it was too much centered in the City of Winnipeg and in our two major mental health centres of Brandon and Selkirk, and that I wanted more regional and more community-based services.

I thought I was going in with a tremendous plan that would light a few fires in the Faculty of Psychiatry amongst the undergraduates. You know what I was told in cold and in certain terms? This shocked me; this is why we did not make this as an election commitment. Because I had no idea of the reparation, the repairs we had to do to the Faculty of Medicine in the whole system until I met with those students for they told me in no uncertain terms that is a laudable goal, but you have to realize the problems there are right here on this campus with the Faculty of Psychiatry, and those problems are immense. Until you resolve those problems, your efforts at revamping, renewing and

changing the mental health delivery system may not meet with success. They did not say "would not"; they said "may not."

It was at that point in time that I came to the real, true realization of how difficult a challenge we were going to inherit in Government. But I do not shirk from challenges; I never have. I think in the six months I have been here, with cooperation from a lot of people, a lot of professional people, we have put a direction on the mental health services that I think is positive that will work in the future. It requires cooperation from the Opposition, because I say to you openly and honestly, you can kill the momentum for innovation if you come here with the whispered problems from individuals who may be disenchanting as has happened from time to time in this House. In case my honourable friend from Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) does not realize it has happened, it has.

I want to say to my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party that they recognized the problem, they wrestled with it. They may well have taken some of the initiatives that I am taking over the next couple of years. I will not say that they will not, but they have been recently in Government, they understand and appreciate the difficulties we face.

I hearken back to two weeks ago Monday when I made my statement on the circumstance in Brandon and what the proposed resolution was. My honourable friend from Kildonan got up and made a very critical statement that I was doing nothing, that the Government was inactive, that the Government was not doing this, was not doing that, when for the first time in many years the Government was finally doing something proactively to resolve the problem. I do not give my honourable friend from Kildonan too much credit for his stand on that.

* (1650)

But I have to say and I do not do this very often, so let me assure you it is a compliment of one of the highest orders I can give, if that is any kind of an endorsement, but I appreciated the understanding that the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) showed in his reply. I recommend his reply to my honourable friend from Kildonan because his reply reflected a knowledge and an understanding of the enormous problem that we face. Part of it is financial, part of it is organizational, part of it is a lack of focus and will to change. I give my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), credit in that instance for recognizing the problem and proffering his and his Party's support to resolve the problem.

My honourable friend in the Liberal Party now, the critic, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema), is now sort of bailing out of his position from two weeks ago saying, oh, no, no, no, we are concerned about the patient and we are changing horses now after the race has started. Now we are on the patients' side and we are not really defending anybody but the patient. I simply ask him to read his statement and to read his questions and to read his Party's position as put on the record

by himself on the issue of trying to resolve the problem at Brandon. He will see—and I know it is difficult to admit you made a mistake—that the position taken by the New Democratic Party was the reasoned, responsible and knowledgeable position, and his was somewhat off course, to put it bluntly.

I indicate to my honourable friend that I truly look forward to suggestions he will make on behalf of the Official Opposition, the Liberal Party, because I recall at one time the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) saying they were not going to play the games in Opposition that had been played before. They were going to offer positive and concrete suggestions. They were going to work with the Government when the Government was on the right track and had a good idea. They were not going to be an obstructionist Opposition. Mr. Acting Chairman, I look forward to my honourable friend's comments and his reaction to and his criticism of and his support for the initiatives that we are undertaking in Mental Health, because that will truly tell us whether the Liberal Party is genuinely living up to the stated goals and objectives after the election on April 26 of being a cooperative Opposition, or whether they have slipped into the carping mold of a typical Opposition. We will see and I look forward to the debate.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am not here defend anything other than our Party's objective. Our Party's objective has been always and will be to help and have positive criticism for the reorganization of any system and, more importantly so, of the mental health care system. We have been pushing this. We will be watching that and whenever the Minister does anything good we will encourage him. But whenever the Minister's approach is not right, the approach which has resulted in the crisis in Selkirk and Brandon, that approach will be criticized and some of the suggestions will be coming forward.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) has a few minutes to say it, but before he does that, we have questions on Community Health also. I just want to correct the record that we will be discussing that at Minister's Salary. I will let the Member for Churchill have a few words before we have more questions.

Mr. Cowan: I just want to reiterate the fact that we did pass over a number of items. We would not prefer to do it that way, but that was the way the Minister wanted to proceed, in light of the sense of urgency on the part of the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) with respect to this problem, we agreed to that as being an appropriate way to get to this issue, which was not able to be gotten to by any other means because of that inflexibility. But just so the Minister knows and he can be prepared, there is an opportunity under Minister's Salary to discuss any issue, and those issues will be discussed so that we do not lose the opportunity to at least ask the Minister as to what his philosophical approach is, and also the opportunity for us to put on the record what our philosophical approach is, and then try to find some common ground—if common ground does exist—and at the same time to try to

convince each other of the soundness of our own arguments where a common ground does not exist.

So that process is still available to us. I did not want there to be any misconception that in our desire to move to this item today we had relinquished that ability. So we want to give the Minister some opportunity to think about his responses during that particular debate, and that would probably be one of our primary focuses.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

With respect to what the Minister is doing with the Mental Health Centres, I appreciate the fact that the Minister is confronted with a very serious problem. It is a problem not of any particular Government's making, certainly not his Government's making. I do not believe it is a problem that the previous administration's making alone either. I think it is a problem that is as a result of long-standing problems in the system, because of the lack of knowledge that was available to us collectively. That is not a reflection on individuals, but it is a statement that this is a field where the approach is changing and the methodology is changing over a period of time, and Governments are slow to react by their very nature to those changes.

I think we can look to some other jurisdictions and see where they have taken action faster than we have and probably done a better job. I think we can look to other jurisdictions where they have taken action slower than we have and probably done a worse job. I do not think we are, as a Government, so perfect that we should not admit to mistakes when they were made, but I think we should put those mistakes in the proper context.

I had indicated earlier that I wish we had done more in the area of Mental Health. I wish the Minister every success in this particular area. I think it is going to take, on his part, some innovative actions and I think it is going to take, on his part, some willingness to take risk. He should know that when he is successful with those innovations we will be right there beside him. When he takes those risks and succeeds, we will encourage him. When he takes those risks and fails, we will be critical of him. I do not think that is any different than the role he played or said he played when he was Opposition critic.

So I appreciate the need for him to take some quick action with respect to the situation at Brandon, because when you have a situation where there are some strong needs and gaps, you have to act decisively to fill those needs and gaps. But I am going to be critical of the process and the Minister can correct me if I am wrong. But I can tell him I have had discussion with one of the psychiatrists, and that I learned today that psychiatrist had given notice of resignation. One of the things that she said to me, which identifies which one it was, was that she felt the process had been wrong. On the basis of what she has told me, I believe that the Minister failed with respect to the process. I think in his haste to try to deal with one crisis, he is making another crisis that should not need to have to exist. There are two psychiatrists involved. I have only talked to one but I understand that they both have resigned, they are both of the same opinion.

Let me tell you why I think the Minister failed and where he went wrong and why he should retrace his steps and try to set this right if he can. This psychiatrist told me that she learned of her mandatory secondment to Brandon after it had been announced in this House. The Minister talks about cooperation, he talks about consultation, and yet in this particular instance I am informed that in that consultation, that cooperation did not exist. I am informed that this psychiatrist has some very strong personal reasons for not wanting to move to Selkirk. I am not going to put those reasons on the record but I would ask the Minister if he would call her directly to hear from her himself what those reasons are. I think he may have a change of heart with respect to the action he took.

I do not believe what I am doing when I say this, and I do not believe that this is what the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) was doing. I would suggest that the Minister rethink this accusation. I do not believe we are protecting the psychiatrists or that we are protecting the professionals. I believe that we are protecting the process. There is a due process. That due process applies when dealing with a janitor; that due process applies when dealing with staff in this Chamber; that due process applies when dealing with Opposition MLAs; that due process applies when dealing with psychiatrists.

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

That due process would suggest that you would at first consult the individual and you would ask the individual if they were prepared to move. If they were not prepared to move, and I will tell you that I have said this to that individual as well, the psychiatrist who phoned me, if they are not prepared to move, you say, well, what is another option? Give me some ideas of how we can deal with this problem. I found, in my tenure as Minister, that quite often worked. If you can solve the problem that way, that is true consultation and true cooperation.

I also found that in some instances it did not work. When it does not work, what one has to do is say, okay, as Minister I have listened to you, I have tried to understand, I have talked to you, I have tried to explain. We have reached a difference of opinion that is irreconcilable and that decision has to be taken at one time or another and this is my decision within my responsibility as Minister. The decision might have been that this person had to move to Brandon for a temporary period of time. It might have been that this person did not have to move to Brandon for a temporary period of time. Once that decision was taken, then the Minister would have to live by that particular decision. I think he could be much more righteous. Actually I do not think he can be much more righteous in the way he approaches this. But I think he would have more cause to be more righteous if he had undertaken that consultation individually with that psychiatrist before having taken the action he did. I think by not doing so, he has forced two good people to resign prematurely. He has forced them to take a very difficult decision that they might not have to have taken had he been more consultative and more cooperative. He is creating

a crisis in Selkirk that is not doing anything to solve the crisis in Brandon because of bad process. In closing, on this particular comment—

* (1700)

An Honourable Member: The hour being five o'clock—

Mr. Cowan: Perhaps I could have leave for one minute to close this off.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): Is there leave? (Agreed)

Mr. Cowan: I will be very brief. That is the situation as explained to me. I believe the process, if that in fact is what had happened, is wrong in this particular instance. I, however, also believe that it is not too late to recapture the process and to sit down and have those discussions and try to set this straight. I believe the Minister when he says he has the interest of the patients at heart. I believe the Member for Kildonan when he says he has the interest of the patients at heart. I know that our Party has the interest of the patients at heart. That is why we showed initial support for the Minister and will continue to show support for the Minister when he acts in the best interest of those patients. But where the process works against that, then we have to be somewhat critical. This is one of those instances, according to the information that has been provided to us.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): The Honourable Minister, make it short please.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I certainly will. My honourable friend, the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) said, his last words, "with the information he has available." I have resisted negotiating in public either through the media or through this House, but I simply want my honourable friend, since he has made contact with one of the individuals who has retired or they had made contact with him or vice versa. He invited me to phone the individual. I know what was on the table, what the negotiating positions were.

I asked my honourable friend to contact that individual, find out in what terms she described the Brandon Mental Health Centre; and, secondly, what the requests were to go on the 90-day secondment to Brandon, find that out. When he has that information and if he wishes to indicate to me in private so I can verify it for him, and then if he wishes to debate that issue in this House and open it, given the full information from the individual, I would be prepared to do that. So I would just ask my honourable friend to make that contact of the individual and get the full information from that individual.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Helwer): The hour being five o'clock, it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Edward Helwer (The Acting Chairman of the Committee of Supply): The Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report the same, and asks leave to sit again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): I have a motion on a committee change. I move, seconded by the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) for the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plozman); the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) for the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan).

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to announce to Honourable Members that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will sit Thursday morning at 10 a.m. in Room 255 to continue consideration of the Annual Report of the Manitoba Telephone System.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS BILL NO. 2—THE BUSINESS NAMES REGISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate on Second Reading, Public Bills, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 2, The Business Names Registration Amendment Act, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney General (Mr. McCrae). Is there leave to allow this Bill to stand in name of the Honourable Attorney General?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney General): I do not know if leave is required. I see the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) seeking the floor. I intend to speak after the Honourable Member for Osborne.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I just have a few brief remarks on Bill No. 2. I have watched the debate on this bill for some time and I have, like many Members in the House, been in contact with the various parties whose names have been used as we look at this bill.

I have waited for some time to see some action on the part of the Government relative to the problem that prompted the Member from Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) to bring forward these bills in the first place. I am pleased to note that the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) will be speaking after me and I am interested in hearing what his remarks are going to be on this Bill.

I think that there are really two issues before us. I think one has become lost in the concern over the effect on the Brick's, given the anomaly between the federal and provincial legislation relative to the Registration of Names and Trademarks.

I would like to deal first with the Bill, Bill No. 2. I think, and the Attorney General has certainly shared legal opinions with us and we have our own legal opinions, that the Bill, in its attempts to solve the problems that confront the Brick's, will not do the job; that in fact there is a substantive constitutional argument that makes it impossible for these Bills to produce the kind of remedy that the Brick's seek and I think all members of this House seek. But I think that does not make the Bills invalid and I think that the concern over the Brick's has tended to obscure the fact that in the current Business Names Registration Act there is some lack of clarity, there is some concern about the identification of partnerships, there is some concern about advertising as well as registration of name, and I think that this Bill speaks adequately to that.

I think it does propose substantive amendments in Section 2 in particular that will improve the current Business Names Registration Act and I think that for that reason it should be moved to committee. I do agree with the concerns raised by the Member from Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) about the retroactivity, and I would commit at this point to ensuring that that clause be amended so it does not create some of the problems that have been identified because I think there are substantive concerns; but I think it is important, given the situation that has arisen that there be further debate and there be an opportunity for members of the business community in Manitoba to speak to this very serious concern about the registration and the ability to do business within the Province of Manitoba.

What we are faced with here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as has been mentioned many times in this House, is a local corporation, a good corporate citizen, who has been carrying on business in this community for 20 years, now has their business threatened, not by some ogre, not by some awful group of individuals who are coming in here intentionally to hurt them, by another Canadian corporation, but because of an anomaly in the laws, an anomaly in the trademark laws, in The Business Names Registration Act here in Manitoba. One is able to overpower the other and one is able to impinge upon the business of the other.

I am just having a little trouble hearing right now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

* (1710)

Mr. Alcock: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we first passed—I was not a Member of this House—but

when this House passed The Business Names Registration Act, it was because the Legislature at that time recognized that there was value in a name and there was a need to protect that. Because of this problem between the federal trademark legislation and our own Business Names Registration Act, that intention has been thwarted. It is now possible to, if the local business has not gone the step of registering federally and if at the time they first registered they did not know about that, it is possible for somebody else to register, come in and request that they stop using the name that they trade under.

I think, as anybody who has been in business knows, that your name, particularly the longer you are in business and the longer you do business, your name begins to accrue value. In fact, when businesses are traded and sold, one thing that is sold is the goodwill, it is the good name and the business capital that is attached to that name.

I think that we are in real danger if we let this opportunity pass of simply perpetuating the situation that has caused trouble, not just for Fred Brick, not for Brick's Fine Furniture, but for a number of companies in this town. I think it is time that issue had a thorough airing. What is interesting to me about this is that this is not a new issue. This issue has been around for at least 15 years that I am aware of. I recall back when the Commonwealth Holiday Inn incident arose back in the early Seventies that there again was a concern when the Holiday Inn International came into town. At that time, a decision was made to register Holiday Inn International for much the same reason and, in fact again, another small Manitoba corporation was harmed.

I think that the case for finally addressing this problem is clear. I think it is time that we moved on in a substantive way. If I have any serious concern, it is that I am completely unclear as to what the Government of Manitoba is doing about this. We have a Government that purports to be acting on behalf of the people of Manitoba, that has sat for six months knowing about this issue and I would like to know what they have done to address it. I have heard nothing from the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology (Mr. Ernst), and I would assume, when a Manitoba corporation is imperilled the way Brick's Fine Furniture is, that I would hear something from that Minister and there would be some identification of some resolution to that problem.

I appreciate some of the constitutional problems that the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) is faced with. At the same time, I remind the Attorney-General that he is the Attorney-General of Manitoba and I think he has a duty to act on behalf of Manitobans. This is a Manitoban corporation that is being harmed and I would like to hear what action has been taken on behalf of the Manitoban corporation, and what action has been taken with his federal counterparts for which his Leader professes special relationships and ability to speak to his federal counterparts. What resolution has been brought to this problem?

Again, I would like to just step back from this. I think, in terms of the Bill, there are some substantive improvements to existing legislation that can be made

by moving this Bill to committee, by going through a thorough review, by hearing from the members of the business community as to their concerns on the larger issue here. I think there is value in moving this Bill through.

I agree with the position that the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) has put forward that the Bill does not solve the constitutional problem and it does not finally resolve the problem of Brick's Fine Furniture. That resolution, I would suggest, is in the hands of the Attorney-General, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology and his federal counterparts should they continue to be his federal counterparts past November 21.

But I think it is past time for waiting. I think that the actions that have been created by this problem between the two pieces of legislation has caused considerable concern for Brick's Fine Furniture. They have incurred considerable costs and I think it is time that the Government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alcock: In conclusion then, I would -(Interjection)- What? I got the point, thank you, Jim. I would hope that the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), when he stands to address us now, will be able to provide not only what I am sure will be a careful and well-prepared analysis of the legal aspects of this Bill, but will also be prepared to speak to how this Manitoba Government is going to help this Manitoba Corporation. Thank you very much.

Mr. McCrae: I am pleased to rise to discuss Bill No. 2 and, by extension, Bill No. 3 at the same time, since the two Bills we presented to resolve the so-called Brick problem.

We are getting some mixed signals from Honourable Members, certainly the Members of the Liberal Party and also Members of the New Democratic Party. The Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) tells us that all of a sudden this Bill is a Bill that should go to committee and somehow be improved on, when he is in possession of a legal opinion that would suggest that no matter what is done with these Bills, there are constitutional arrangements in our country set out, certainly in Sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act.

The Honourable Member for Osborne suggests I have not been listening to him. I have listened carefully to what he had to say and it is interesting to compare what he has to say with some of the comments of some of his colleagues, not unlike the Liberal Party of the 1980s in Manitoba, to delivery mixed signals.

The Honourable Member suggests this Bill move on to committee, but the Honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) said this on September 22, ". . . I find that it is difficult to come up with any feeling of enthusiasm for this Bill, which amends existing legislation which does give full protection. As I said, it is just merely a rewording of what is already there." That is what the Honourable Member for Radisson had to say on September 22. I ask you and others to

compare that to what we heard today from the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

The Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) on November 1 said that the amendment is poorly researched. He said the amendment amounts to a weak proposal, and now the Honourable Member for Osborne would have us believe that somehow all of a sudden, miraculously this Bill has undergone some kind of conversion to the point where it is now a useful Bill, something that with minor amendments in committee can be useful to solve the Brick problem. I suggest the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is mistaken, to put it in the kindest sense that I can.

As you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Fred and Cynthia Brick incorporated Brick's Ltd. in 1969 and Brick's Fine Furniture in 1978. Subsequent to the local incorporation, The Brick Warehouse was incorporated and trademarked federally. In February of this year, The Brick Warehouse Corporation applied to register its name in Manitoba. This was refused by the director of the Corporations Branch of the Department of, at that time, Consumer and Corporate Affairs because of the perceived conflict with the existing name of Brick's Fine Furniture. Based on the possible confusion of names and our existing legislation, Sir, I support that decision.

In the fall of 1987, Fred and Cynthia Brick were approached by lawyers for The Brick Warehouse and asked to stop using their name because The Brick Warehouse Corporation had the trademark The Brick. Subsequently The Brick Warehouse Corporation commenced a trademark infringement action against Brick's Fine Furniture.

This matter continues, as all Honourable Members know, there is no question that this action has been costly to Brick's Fine Furniture and confusing to the public, and this is unfortunate since Fred and Cynthia Brick had first right to a business name in the furniture business incorporating the word "Brick." The situation resulted in a variety of actions being taken. Both myself, Sir, and my predecessor have written to the federal Minister expressing our concern about the fact that a conflict of names can occur between federal and provincial jurisdictions, and that it is here where the real problem lay.

As well, the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), introduced Bills 2 and 3, no doubt, I suggest, with the genuine feeling that these amendments would somehow solve Fred and Cynthia Brick's problems. However, I am concerned about the timing of these Bills, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the press release of the Honourable Member for Elmwood, dated July 19 of this year, he says, "Over the past two years, I have been increasingly disturbed about how many small independent businesses have been victimized by large intra-provincial companies." If the Honourable Member has been concerned for that long while his Party was in power, then I wonder why they did not come up with legislation, if that is indeed the answer, or other actions in 1986, or 1987, which would have attempted to resolve this problem.

The Honourable Member for Elmwood is a Johnny-come-lately, we have seen that in this issue, and we

have seen that certainly with respect to his behaviour in regard to the Land Titles Office.

* (1720)

With the introduction of these Bills, the debate appeared somehow to question my role, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the handling of this matter. The Honourable Members for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), Logan (Ms. Hemphill) and others implied that only they, somehow, cared about small business, which is something that is patently laughable in this province. Does this mean that if the situation among the firms were reversed that the Honourable Members in the New Democratic Party would not care? Those Honourable Members do not have any monopoly on caring, they have certainly demonstrated that repeatedly to the people of Manitoba, and I resent, as others should, such innuendo, especially with the small business record of the New Democratic Party, especially when we consider matters such as the payroll tax, the mismanagement at the Workers Compensation Board to the disadvantage of small businesses across this province and the workers employed by them.

More importantly, all Members should realize that a corporate registry should not favour any particular firm, whether small or large. A registry is exactly that, it is a registry, and it has to be neutral among firms big, small, local or extra-provincial.

I have been criticized about the amount of time that has passed since the Brick Warehouse Corporation opened for business in Winnipeg. I make no apologies for this, Sir, as I did not wish to preempt the possibility of the two firms resolving this matter amicably, indeed my office has been in almost daily contact with at least one or the other of the two firms involved. I have met with both sides. I have attempted to bring the two sides together because, in a difficult constitutional, legal matter like this, I think both sides would have been best served by coming to an amicable agreement to allow the peaceful co-existence of the two operations in the City of Winnipeg to the benefit of both and to the benefit of the consumers of our province. Whether I should have waited 30 days or 90 days or 150 days is a judgment call and I will stand by the judgments that I have made.

Bills 2 and 3 do absolutely nothing to further the case of Fred and Cynthia Brick, I think that has been clear right from the beginning, clear to everyone except the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and now somehow to the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

The passage of these Bills would do nothing to prevent a recurrence of the present situation, and the reason for this is twofold. First, the amendments are really, as the Honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) has said—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would ask that all Honourable Members extend the courtesy to the Honourable Attorney-General and if they wish to continue conversations, perhaps step into the loges or outside the Chamber. Thank you.

Mr. McCrae: I guess I should note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) has been sitting and listening attentively to my comments.

Firstly, the amendments are really a rewording of the existing Acts and I think that is almost a quote from the Honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) in his speech on this matter. The amendments add nothing of substance to that which we already have in existing legislation.

Secondly, constitutional precedence say that provincial legislation cannot be relied upon to refuse to register a federal corporation due to a name conflict with a prior registered provincial corporation. I have given that particular opinion, shared that opinion, constitutional opinion, with my Opposition colleagues. What is needed is for the provincial and federal registries to work as closely as is reasonably possible so as to minimize the likelihood of such problems recurring. As well, I will once again ask the federal Minister responsible for Trademarks to review federal legislation and practices to ensure that trademark law conforms to the principles of corporate registries.

There is a basic principle which should prevail in this regard and that is that the person who first registers a name should have the ongoing right to its use. I will do what I can to ensure that this is the case in the future but I cannot turn back the hands of time and neither can the passing of Bills No. 2 and No. 3 into law do anything to help in this situation.

I clearly cannot support Bills No. 2 and No. 3. I am surprised at the comments of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) today coming when they do and in view of the comments from other members of his caucus. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this does not mean that I am less caring or concerned about provincially incorporated firms who are confronted by a federal trademark or a federal incorporation. As I said, I will do what I can to try to coordinate the provincial and federal registries. I have mentioned, Sir, the Honourable Member for Osborne wants to know what action has been taken and he says that there is a duty on my part on behalf of Manitobans. I accept that duty, I accept that responsibility, and for the next moment or so I will tell the Honourable Member what has been happening since I took the position I have on May 9.

Very early on my taking the position I have, I learned of the dispute between Brick's Fine Furniture and the Brick Warehouse. Very early in my term of office I met with Fred Brick; somewhat later I met with representatives of the Brick Warehouse. I have met with Fred Brick again and Cynthia and others on this issue. The Deputy Minister's office has been in constant touch with Fred Brick keeping him informed of developments and assuring him that this Government is doing what it can within the bounds of our constitutional arrangements in our country, within the bounds of the law that we have, remembering as we now know that the Bills before the House now do absolutely nothing to help, and merely muddy the waters.

The Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) agrees with that, so I cannot understand taking a water-

muddying piece of legislation and trying to fix it. His colleagues do not think it can happen, so I cannot understand how the Honourable Member for Osborne somehow feels that it can happen. I think he is taking an unrealistic view, perhaps to present a picture of caring, which we all do. I do not question that Honourable Members in all Parties care, and our concern about a situation like this that can develop.

But let us be realistic about the kinds of things that we propose. Tomorrow there will be a meeting of Deputy Ministers of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. On the agenda of that meeting is the matter of the Brick and the Brick Warehouse dispute. There will be a meeting of officials, of trademark officials and corporations branch officials at the end of this month at which the Brick matter will be discussed.

I have had correspondence with the federal Minister, as I have said, as has my predecessor. There have been attempts to bring the parties together. Those attempts have been real, they have been genuine, and so far have not yielded fruit. There is a federal court case in progress at this time that Honourable Members should be aware of before bandying about too many irresponsible comments which might have the effect of prejudicing somehow the case in the federal court, the case either for Fred and Cynthia Brick or the case for the Brick Warehouse.

We do have an operation of law in our country and I would hope Honourable Members would respect that and keep that in mind when they are making comments about the Brick matter. The federal court is there to serve as a dispute-settling mechanism, if you like, in cases like this. This is not the first case like this. If Honourable Members were to check over the history of our country, they would find probably hundreds, if not thousands of cases of names having similar rings to them and being settled by the courts.

That is not to say that here in Manitoba public officials should not be concerned about the difficulties that name conflicts can present. I think all Honourable Members who have spoken on this debate have shown a sensitivity to that particular issue. So what we need to do is continue those meetings with federal officials to attempt to find a regime whereby the trademark office in Ottawa is aware of what the rules are in all the provinces, is aware of what registrations have been allowed in the provinces so that trademarks are not allowed which conflict in some way and cause confusion in the marketplace and cause difficulties for the players in the game. There is no question but that the Government of Manitoba has been active, has been diligent in its work, but we do have a court case pending and this is something Honourable Members should remember.

Honourable Members should also remember that the Government of Manitoba has been quietly sensitive about this particular issue and has not tried to make great political gains out of this issue. I do not believe there are great political gains for anybody in this. What we have is a difficulty faced by two Winnipeg businesses which must be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. These Bills do not do it. I do not suggest for a minute that Honourable Members should be supporting these Bills.

* (1730)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), whose motion to adjourn debate would thereby close the debate, I would ask if there are other Honourable Members who wish to speak to this Bill.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 3—THE CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 3, The Corporations Amendment Act, standing in the name of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae).

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said at the commencement of my remarks on Bill 2, I think it is fair to say that my comments could be regarded as applying to Bill 3 as well in that the Honourable Member, with all the good intentions in the world in attempting to help, has come forward with legislation, which it is clear to me and I believe it is clear to Honourable Members in the Liberal Party and is certainly clear to certain members of the legal profession, that Bill 2 and Bill 3, if applied in the way that the Honourable Member would foresee them being applied, would be absolutely unconstitutional.

The Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) shakes his head when I say that, but I do not think the Honourable Member can ignore the fact that we have a Constitution in this country and that it is the duty of people in this country to respect the Constitution that we have. Now the Honourable Member for Elmwood wants to get into the debate. He took quite an opportunity at first reading of the Bill, I suggest stretching the rules somewhat if not even going further and making comments about the Bill which amounted to a speech at third reading, when all Honourable Members know that at first reading the purpose of comments is about one sentence to explain what—I see Honourable Members now shaking their heads because of course they have used far more than one sentence each time they have introduced Bills in this particular Session. The practice is that one sentence, perhaps two, to get the idea across as to what is contained in the Bills is all that is required.

The Honourable Member used that opportunity and wasted no time to link the dispute going on between Brick's Fine Furniture and The Brick Warehouse, to link the problems that there are with respect to that dispute to his Bills. By doing that, even at the very first reading stage of this Bill, he gave himself away in the sense that the Bills, as he proposes them, to assist the Bricks in this situation will do absolutely nothing. Honourable Members in the Liberal Party agree with that statement. Yet now, we hear something different again today. So I am a little confused about their position.

Even in his press release of July 19, 1988, the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) says that amendments to The Business Names Registration Act and The Corporations Act will give precedence to previously registered Manitoba firms over a national firm's trademark, when we know that constitutionally that cannot happen. That is impossible under the constitutional arrangements in our country. The Honourable Member puts that into a press release, and I am sure has repeated it several times, that somehow we are going to show the federal legislation that Manitoba legislation is somehow going to prevail. That is just not going to happen. The Honourable Member should know it. If he does not know it, he is being stubborn. Maybe it is his zeal to help in the Brick situation. Maybe it is his zeal to appear to be something that he knows he cannot do. That is where I have to draw the line.

I, at least, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will be realistic enough to try to do those things that I can do. As I have said earlier today, I outlined some of the things that have been done and are in the process of being done. I have resisted the temptation to take part in this debate and in a sense to speak directly and frankly with the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) about the way I see his role in this matter. I have resisted that temptation because we have laws in our country. We have a federal court case in progress. I was doing my best, Sir, to attempt not to prejudice in any way the case for either side in that particular dispute. Certainly, in principle, I am sympathetic to the long-time operator of a furniture business in the City of Winnipeg. On the other hand, I have to be respectful of the laws of this land, especially as Attorney-General of the Province of Manitoba.

So the Honourable Member seeks to somehow run roughshod over federal legislation and constitutional arrangements through this legislation. Maybe that is a strong word for the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Whether the Honourable Member intends to do it in this way or not is really not the question. No one is questioning the Honourable Member's good faith. I do not question the good faith of Honourable Members in the Liberal Party either because I think we all see that there is a conflict here that needs to be resolved. Indeed I have used my office as Minister of Cooperative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs and as Attorney-General of Manitoba to attempt to bring the Parties together.

It appears to me, and it always is in cases of regarding litigation in the courts, if there is some way to settle differences outside the court, usually you get a settlement that everyone can live with. We have made that kind of argument on matters like final offer selection. Surely, in a free and democratic society, free collective bargaining is the best way to arrive at decisions, allowing people to reach decisions and decisions to which to have some kind of an attachment, even an emotional attachment, because sometimes those agreements are worked out under difficult conditions. The sleeves are rolled up. The ties are loosened. The discussion becomes very frank and finally some kind of settlement is arrived at. It is an honourable settlement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that both sides can

live with over the longer term. This is what I have been trying, through my offices, to bring about.

At this stage of the game, we have not come to that kind of successful resolution. The Session is wearing on. The time came for these Bills to be discussed and a position to be placed on the table. As I say, I am surprised at the Liberal positions, plural, on this matter, but I am saying that the position of any right-thinking Government Party which has, at its disposal, legal minds to advise as to constitutionality, has to behave in a responsible way. As an Attorney-General, I believe it would a little out of line for me to stand up and support legislation, the intent of which I know to be unconstitutional. That would be irresponsible on the part of an Attorney-General.

* (1740)

The Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) somehow takes issue with what I say. He looks at me with pain on his face and suggests that somehow I am not making the kind of sense that he would like me to make. It is true, in the world of the New Democratic Party, reality is somewhat elusive. It is true for the Honourable Member for Elmwood. Reality has never really got in the way of his processes, decision making or otherwise. I think that the time has come in this province for reality to prevail and for Governments to recognize realities and for Honourable Members in the New Democratic Party to do the same.

As I said, it is passing strange that the Honourable Member expresses concern because over the past two years, he has been concerned about this situation. All of a sudden, it took sitting in the back bench of a third Party in the Legislature, it took that to happen to him before he was moved to act in the case of the Brick matter or in the case of name conflict problems. It took him all that time and only under those circumstances would his Party allow him to bring forward such legislation. When they were a Government Party, that kind of legislation did not come forward. That tells me something. When one takes the position of being in Government, one has to assume the mantle of responsibility for decisions that are made. The Honourable Member knows that he is not encumbered by that kind of problem in his present situation. We know how unencumbered he is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we know that suggestions he has made regarding the Land Titles Offices, we know how unencumbered the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) is when we know the suggestions he has made about the Land Titles Office in the Province of Manitoba.

Now the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) reminds me about relevance. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he has more experience in this place than I do. I respect his comments about relevance, and I will move quickly to get back to what is contained in the Bill. The Bill contains an effort on the part of the Honourable Member to bring attention to a serious matter, but it does nothing to solve the serious matter. Now the Honourable Member has been successful to some extent in bringing attention to a very serious matter. But I really did not need his help. His Government was there for the last two years and did

nothing. He did not do anything about bringing attention to the problem for the past two years, but now, as I said, miraculously we all know about this issue.

Well, that is an important issue and so to that extent I suppose we can give the Honourable Member some measure of our gratitude, but I am telling you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the Honourable Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) suggests, "very little credit" for bringing the matter forward because the Government was made aware of the matter very quickly upon taking office. As I said, repeated meetings have been held, very frequent contact with the parties has been had.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remind you on this Bill, as I did on the last Bill, that tomorrow the Deputy Ministers of Consumer and Corporate Affairs across this country will be getting together for a meeting and on the agenda of that meeting will be this very matter in the City of Winnipeg. I am sure there will be a useful discussion as to how the problems that we have encountered through this case—and many others I might add, many others that have been dealt with in various ways, either through negotiated resolutions or through the court system. This matter will be discussed at that meeting. There is a meeting of Trademark officials and Corporations Registrars from across the country, and that meeting will be held at the end of November. At that meeting, the Brick situation will be discussed and possible solutions proposed and maybe and hopefully arrived at before too long.

We are in the middle of a federal election campaign. My office also has been—we have the federal Minister who will be returned as a federal Minister I assume after the 21st. We have been in touch with that Minister's office in an attempt to set up a meeting with him and myself. We have also had repeated correspondence, as has my predecessor in the provincial Government. As I say, we will be continuing to press for changes in the trademark office which would not allow repetition of the kind of situation we have here. We think that there might be some usefulness to looking into an automated system in Ottawa, if they do not already have one, but if they do have one, that automated system should contain the names of every corporation registered under provincial authority right across the country, so that when making decisions about trademarks, those names can come forward so that comparisons can be made to decide whether there is a conflict.

I remind Honourable Members that even then there will be occasions when the parties involved, where the officials will conclude that there is no conflict but the parties somehow disagree, even then we are going to end up in court. So this is the unhappy situation that we find in the case of The Brick Warehouse and Brick's Fine Furniture.

As I say, my office has been used to try to bring some resolution to this problem, but under no circumstances will either Bill 2 or Bill 3 do anything to assist anyone, and the only purpose that the bringing forward of these Bills has achieved, and I do give the Honourable Member some credit for this, has been to bring attention to the issue and, as I say, it was not

all that necessary because this Minister has been working and involved with the issue, but it has brought attention to it and it is an important issue and I hope within the not too distant future, working together with my federal and provincial colleagues to find the answers that will make this so that it will not happen again.

In the meantime, I do encourage the parties if at all possible to find some way to resolve this problem because I have always been a believer, having been one who has worked in the court system, I have been a believer that the courts are a good place to get law, sometimes to get justice you have to resolve your disputes by good old fashion negotiation and good faith negotiation. Sometimes those kinds of settlements are the ones that are the most lasting, the most honourable, and the ones that are the easiest to live with.

So I will close my comments on this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by saying thank you to the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for raising the matter. Unfortunately his Bills helps no one and if used in the way he wants to see them used would clearly be unconstitutional, and so for that reason I am unable to support them.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel I should speak a little on Bill No. 3, partly to respond to some of the concerns that the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) has raised, for he does raise a question about why there would appear to be some conflict in the position taken by Members of the Liberal caucus and the statements that I made on Bill No. 2.

I think that if he stops and thinks for a minute he will understand why that has taken place. Being new Members in the House, when we encountered this piece of legislation when it first came in, we did much like the Attorney-General did. We sent it out for legal opinion and we got a legal opinion that focused its attention initially on the problem that I think brought the Bill forward into the House, and that is, the problem that the Bricks face. While I am pleased to hear of the Attorney-General's love of courts, courts are very expensive exercises and people like the Bricks and others who are forced to go that route incur huge costs, protecting something that one would think intuitively should be their right.

I believe in fact The Business Names Registration Act was intended to give people that right. That is why we have the Act in the first place, but I concur with the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) and I said that in my remarks on Bill No. 2. I said I concur with his opinion that Bills No. 2 and No. 3 do not do anything substantive to solve the problems that confronts the Bricks right now.

But it was after—and that was the position that Members of my caucus took as we went through our legal opinions and as we stood to speak on this Bill. However it was after I read the legal opinion which the Attorney-General shared with me, and I went back to the Bill and I went back to the legal opinions that do point out that in fact there are substantive improvements to the existing Business Names

Registration Act proposed in this Bill, that there are sections to it that are well drafted, that are in terms of his own legal opinion, say, insofar as these proposals purport to apply to local or private matters in the province, they are constitutional. That is your legal opinion, that is his legal opinion, not ours.

Other legal opinions also go on to suggest that there are some deficiencies in the current Business Names Registration Act having to do with partnerships, having to do with advertising, in that there would be some benefit to business in Manitoba in having some of these sections passed, not all of them. I indicated in my remarks, and I suspect the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) would agree to removing some of the more troublesome clauses and would be prepared to support those removals in committee.

At the same time, so that there is a reason to move these Bills to committee for that kind of examination, there is, however, the larger problem. That is, what about the business community in Manitoba? What about small businesses in Manitoba? I mean, the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) says in his remarks that this has happened to other businesses, and it is true that it has happened to other businesses. I am surprised. There was a comment made about the previous Government and how they did not do anything to act upon the concern that the Member for Elmwood says he has had for some two years.

Well, the previous Government did not share this vaunted warm and close relationship with the federal Government. The current Premier (Mr. Filmon) has spoken often about how he can pick up the phone and solve the problems that exist between the provincial and federal Governments, and they have not done so, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have done exactly the same thing the previous Minister did. They wrote a letter, right? But they do not appear to have taken advantage of that special relationship.

If one solution is, and I believe that one solution is to change the registry so that there is checking between the provinces, that does not take a whole new Act to do. That does not take enormous amounts of legislative time. That could be done and it is not being done. Six months, half-a-year we have waited and it has not been done.- (Interjection)- Now the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) tends to make the point that they are a new Government. Well, the Government in Ottawa is not a new Government. It has some idea, in fact it has proved it has become a very old Government very, very quickly. Of course, the current Government of Manitoba has proven that it is a very old Government very quickly, in fact, an increasingly bankrupt Government despite their relative youth.

* (1750)

Now I have been patient. I have, in discussions with the participants in this dispute and with the Attorney-General, waited and waited and waited for this loose-tie, sleeves-rolled-up meeting. I have waited for the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst) to get involved in this and to facilitate a solution to this problem, and to assist Manitoba corporations in achieving some kind

of resolution that does not rob Fred and Cynthia Brick, that does not force them to incur greater and greater legal fees. I have not seen that kind of action from this Government on behalf of the people of Manitoba. I think that is very sad. I have not seen it yet.

It is interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) comments that the Government is tired and they are indeed tired. Their policies are tired; their actions are limited. Before I go down the road that the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) has pointed me towards, let me step back and attempt to climb to a higher level from this one. I do think, leaving aside the conflict that does exist, and I have some appreciation for the Attorney-General's position in that he cannot as Attorney-General run off and get into a legal battle that would clearly result in a decision that says that his attempt is unconstitutional. He does have a responsibility to be more accurate before he approaches the courts.

At the same time right now, today, this is a serious issue of concern to the business community in Manitoba. These Bills do provide some clarity to the existing Acts. They do not solve the constitutional problem. They do not solve the Bricks situation, but moving them to committee would give us an opportunity to examine the remedies that they propose, would give an opportunity for the business community of Manitoba to come forward and speak to the Bills so that we could have a broader airing of the issues that have led Fred and Cynthia Brick into this problem. They did not create this problem. They acted in good faith when they set up their business and when they went about doing business in the Province of Manitoba.

If nothing else, that airing, those public sessions, those discussions would alert other people intending to do business in the Province of Manitoba to a very serious problem that could impact on them in the future. It would also allow, by your own legal opinion and by others, some small but important clarifications to the existing legislation that would be, on balance, improvements to the existing legislation. For that reason, they should move to committee.

The Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) from his seat suggests there is another way to do it. If there was I would like to see it because I have not seen it from this Government. I have waited and put off speaking on these Bills for some time. I am waiting for somebody to phone me and say it is solved. We have solved this problem and we do not need to worry about it any more. That has not happened. The Attorney-General from his seat again says I am suggesting something that I know will not work. However, again he is choosing to misinterpret what I am saying.

The amendments suggested to this Bill improve the Manitoba Bill. They do not solve the Brick situation. They do not and I accept that, but that is not a reason for throwing them out. They do provide substantive improvements to the existing legislation and for that reason they should go to the committee, they should be amended in committee and they should be proclaimed. The Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) from his seat again says that is not what another Member of this caucus has said. Again he chooses to misinterpret

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the words. I agree with the Attorney-General that these Bills do not solve the constitutional problem but they are, again, important Bills. They do provide substantive changes to existing legislation and they should be proceeded with.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the Honourable Member is sort of needing a little help to get through this next few minutes. I wonder if he would entertain a question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader does not have a point of order.

Mr. Alcock: If he is asking for leave for a question, sure.

Mr. McCrae: My honourable colleague, the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock), suggests that there is something to these Bills, that they can help if they are amended. How does he square that statement with the statement made by the Honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) who says the sections of the Act proposed to be amended are really a rewording of what is already there? It is hard to see where any real additional protection would come in.

In addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how does the Honourable Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock) square his comments today with the comments made by the Honourable Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) on September 22 as recorded on page 1506 of Hansard? "I find it difficult to come up with any feeling of enthusiasm for this Bill which amends existing legislation which does give full protection. As I said, it is just merely a rewording of what is already there." How does the Honourable Member for Osborne square his comments today with the comments I have just

read to him, stated by his colleague who sits two seats behind him, the Honourable Member for Radisson, on September 22?

Mr. Alcock: I do hope that the Attorney-General has enjoyed his experience in asking questions again. I think it brings back memories that I am sure were positive. It is a skill, I hope, that he will have to use shortly.

I have a very simple answer to his question. The answer was contained in my earlier remarks. If the Honourable Attorney-General will be patient, I will give him the answer.

Many Members from this side spoke, based on legal opinions that we had pointed out, the very concern that the Attorney-General has pointed out, that yes, there is a constitutional problem that these Bills, particularly the retroactive clause, as pointed out by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), do not provide the Government with the solution to The Brick problem. That is true. That is what the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) was pointing out. That is what the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) spoke on.

The Member for Transcona pointed out the Bills were flawed but not useless. The Members on this side suggested that these Bills move to committee. Further study, facilitated by the Attorney-General's own legal opinion, suggest that, as far as these proposals purport to apply to local or private matters in the province, they are constitutional. For that reason, they should move to committee.

* (1800)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When next this Bill is before the House for debate, the Honourable Member for Osborne will have two minutes remaining.

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