

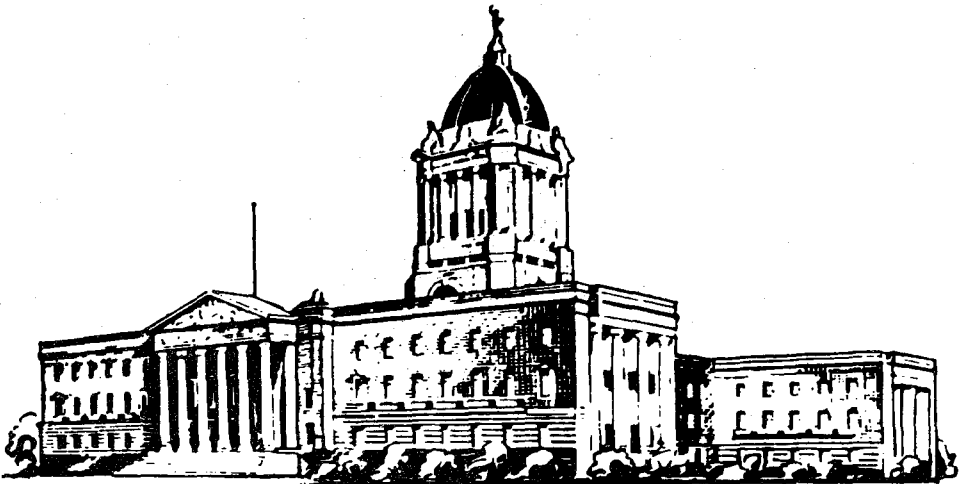


First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

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	Ellice	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

Monday, November 28, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): I would like to present the Auditor's Report and Financial Statement for the year ended March 31, 1987, of Venture Manitoba Tours Limited.

I also would like to, at this time, present the Auditor's Report and Financial Statement for Venture Manitoba Tours Limited for the year ended March 31, 1988.

I also would like to, at this time, submit the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review of Natural Resources Estimates.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I wish to table today, pursuant to the requirements of the Supreme Court of Canada, the re-enacted regulations under The Development Corporation Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 44—THE MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 44, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Minenko: It is a pleasure for me to introduce Bill No. 44. We believe that to be most effective, the Manitoba Intercultural Council must be an arm's-length independent organization. Part of that independence includes having a presiding officer elected by the council and an executive secretary employed by that council.

Bill No. 44 amends the present Manitoba Intercultural Council Act to ensure the independence of the MIC by ensuring that persons chosen for these two key positions be responsible to the council.

The third aspect to this Bill is to address a concern raised in the MIC Special Audit which advised that the Act does not presently provide MIC with the specific authority for the allocation of grants. With this third amendment to the Act, we are making a commitment that the granting function shall remain with the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 45—THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CONFLICT OF INTEREST AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 45, The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Conflict of Interest Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conflits d'intérêts au sein de l'Assemblée législative et du Conseil exécutif.

* (1335)

BILL NO. 46—THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 46, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2).

BILL NO. 47—THE LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney General) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 47, The Liquor Control Amendment Act (2).

BILL NO. 48—THE EXPROPRIATION AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 48, The Expropriation Amendment Act.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the public gallery where we have 15 students from the International Rotary Youth Exchange Program. They are under the direction of Miss Saffron Ellis.

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

We also have in the public gallery, from the Grant Park High School, thirty Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Normand Roseman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Free Trade Agreement Impact Work Force

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Canadians last week gave a mandate to the federal

Progressive Conservative Government and, therefore, paved the way for the Free Trade Agreement. While that support was less certain in the Province of Manitoba, the national will will nevertheless prevail. It is my wish and that of my caucus that down the road we can look forward to making sure that this deal was good for Manitoba despite our very grave reservations. The trade deal will affect industries in different ways. Some will be winners and some will be losers.

My question, therefore, is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). Has the First Minister prepared a study into exactly how free trade will affect Manitoba's industries and, much more importantly, Manitoba's work force? Will he table that report and study in this House?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The Free Trade Agreement offers many positive benefits to Manitobans. It offers opportunities for reduced costs on their consumer goods, opportunities for a lower cost of living by virtue of the purchases necessary to set up a home in Manitoba for young Manitobans wanting to become established in their own homes. It offers an opportunity for tremendous increase in markets for many of our producers, manufacturers of goods in Manitoba.

I remind the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) that every single commodity group represented in the Keystone Agricultural Producers are supportive of the Free Trade Agreement because they see an opportunity for a secure access to a major market right across the border in the United States. As well, of course, many industries have indicated they see opportunities for increased production, increased sales in the United States. Last year, Mr. Speaker, we sold more than \$200 million worth of computer parts to the United States, despite the fact there is a 4.5 percent tariff on those parts. That of course will be an opportunity for us to expand.

* (1340)

I say this to the Leader of the Opposition, that the studies that were done by the predecessor administration, the New Democratic Party Government, showed there were net economic benefits to Manitoba. As well, they indicated there were some who expressed caution. There were some areas of industry who expressed caution or concern but at this point in time there were no known losers in the deal that would automatically be seen to shut down. She raised earlier this year the issue of McCain's. McCain's is now saying they are not going to be shutting down in Manitoba. So the fact of the matter is we will await what happens. Should there be necessity for adjustment strategy, we will employ an adjustment strategy that will allow workers to retrain, that will allow people to become skilled in the areas in which the opportunities exist.

Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to do whatever is necessary to ensure Manitoba maximizes the tremendous benefits to be given to us under a Free Trade Agreement.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Adjustment Strategy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a supplementary question to the First Minister, Mr. Speaker, I was trying to move to step 2 and yet we are still getting the arguments from stage 1. Can the First Minister tell the House if he has met with business and labour groups to discuss a strategy aimed at helping them adjust to the new economic and social environment which free trade will usher in?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The fact of the matter is, since the opportunity for a Free Trade Agreement with the United States presented itself, the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism began meetings with businesspeople, with investors throughout our economy to ensure we would be right off the mark to take advantage of the opportunities to— (Interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Filmon: From the time the opportunity for the Free Trade Agreement presented itself, our Minister and our Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism have been working with Manitoba business. They have been meeting with various sectors. I have been speaking to groups throughout our economy in Manitoba, to the fashion industry. We were the first province off the mark meeting the day the election was held in Minnesota, signing an agreement for economic cooperation and trade development with the State of Minnesota, meeting with people in the medical and health care industries who are manufacturing products we could be manufacturing in Manitoba to meet the burgeoning needs of the developing health care industry, meeting with people from major corporations in Minnesota and investment bankers who are looking at Manitoba as a place to invest to create joint ventures and opportunities for job creation.

That is what we are doing to take advantage of the Free Trade Agreement because we know, if we are first off the mark, we are going to be the benefactors of the tremendous benefits under free trade.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, I am glad he is looking after the Americans. Now, if he will look after the Canadians and particularly the Manitobans.

Labour Retraining Programs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Will the First Minister be introducing a new labour readjustment and retraining strategy, measures which will assist workers who may well lose their jobs because of the Free Trade Agreement, help them to adjust to get the training so they will be able to access what may be new job opportunities?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition can try and be as cute as she wants, but I am not looking after the Americans. I am looking after Manitoba's interest when I am out promoting investment and job creation opportunities in the United States. I am out there promoting it so the investment

takes place in Manitoba, the job opportunities take place in Manitoba and Manitobans get the benefit not the Americans. She does not have to try and twist that any other way.

* (1345)

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, in holding our consultations with economic groups throughout our society, the various industrial sectors, should there be a need for adjustments in the way of job training, retraining, skill development, technology development, to assist those to access the new opportunities under free trade, we will be providing that. We have a very strong infrastructure of job training and retraining. We are talking with industrial sectors. We have been talking recently with the garment industry sector and many others so, wherever the need is there, we will provide a strategy and an opportunity. I might say as well the First Ministers or at least the Premier's meeting in Saskatoon reaffirmed our commitment to adjustment strategy to ensure our work force was capable of meeting the opportunities provided for under free trade in Canada.

Lead Exposure Standards Amendments

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a new question to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery), we have been repeatedly assured, despite the study provided by environmentalists, that free trade would not threaten our environmental and health standards and we would not be moving toward a standard based on the lowest common denominator. My question, therefore, to the Minister is, is his office, his department, giving any consideration to lowering the lead exposure standards in the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): I appreciate the Honourable Leader's question. Any time a group or a sector comes to us with a concern, we investigate it on their behalf. There has been no determination or thought of raising the lead level in blood or air in our factories.

Acceptability

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a supplementary question to the same Minister. Can the Minister provide the House with any medical or environmental evidence that would indicate our standards are too high?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): Manitoba has the lowest level of all in the provinces of Canada. Some other provinces have equivalent blood levels.

There are many conflicting reports on the effects of lead in blood. I have spoke with Dr. Tenenbien and have read many reports on it, Mr. Speaker. It is a very confusing one, it is not one that is clear. We are not

going to move to raise the lead levels in blood or air. The bottom line for our department is the safety of workers in the workplace. We will make no changes that would have any effect on their health.

Minister's Quotation

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for that response in that our standards here in Manitoba are identical to the standards which are set nationally in the United States, although higher than many set by individual states. Can he, therefore, explain to this House what he meant by the quote, "Was it put in as window dressing or was it put in because it was really required?"

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): The previous Government did a lot of things that were window dressing. This Government will look after the basics of the workers.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Americans put in a blood level equivalent to ours and then made a lot of exemptions for it. That has not happened in Manitoba and it will not. We are going to ensure that the safety of the workers is the bottom line for this Government.

Lead Exposure Standards Amendments

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health (Mr. Connery). I totally resent any implication that there was window dressing when there were some 16 people who were hospitalized under the former lead levels under the former Government from 1979 on, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the Minister to table the results of the superior lead levels in this province and table it with a commitment that he will not change the lead levels, as he has reported today in the Winnipeg Free Press.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member would read the article, we did not say that we were going to be changing the levels. We said that our department received that request, received the concern and we were investigating it. Mr. Speaker, the efforts of our department has been to work with the companies to bring the levels down so that they are safe for the workers, and not lose the jobs. The jobs are important to these people. We want to ensure their safety. Our department is working cooperatively with those companies for the safety of the workers.

* (1350)

Hospitalization Numbers

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Minister should know that under the previous guidelines, levels and standards, there were 16 people who were hospitalized in a very serious way with the former standards. Under the new standards, there has

not been one person who has been hospitalized under the standards.

I would ask the Minister to table his research and scientific information in terms of the lead levels in this province that would lead him to speculate about the changes in the lead level that are causing concern for workers, workers particularly who are dealing with lead in this province.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, the previous Government had many studies on the lead level in blood that they had available too, and I am sure they studied it. We are having ongoing research and work performed by our department to check the levels. In fact, the MFL is having a noted doctor coming in, I think it is, December 12 to speak on the level of lead in blood and its consequences. We will be having staff there to listen to him and to take advice from that particular individual.

Free Trade Agreement Adjustment Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). The reports last week, I am sure the First Minister is aware of them. When we questioned his Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery), he had absolutely no projections at all in terms of what workers of what areas of occupation would be affected by the new Free Trade Agreement. We can certainly talk about the winners in the Free Trade Agreement but, Mr. Speaker, we have to deal with also those people adversely affected in our province and in Canada. Premiers all across this country are now beginning to call on the Prime Minister to release the information to deal with an adjustment strategy.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: What is the adjustment strategy of this Government, and has he called upon the Prime Minister for a federal-provincial strategy on this very important issue?

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I, as a part of the Premiers' Conference, reiterated my commitment to an adjustment strategy. We, as Premiers, issued a communique ensuring that the Prime Minister would stand by his commitment, his earlier commitment that we would have an adjustment strategy in response to whatever changes in the marketplace took place so that workers in Canada and in Manitoba, in particular, would be skilled, knowledgeable and able to take advantage of the new opportunities that presented themselves as a result of the Free Trade Agreement being implemented between Canada and the United States.

Mr. Doer: I know now the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) would not have asked for an adjustment strategy if he

did not have an adjustment strategy in Manitoba that we should deal with as a province. I am pleased that he did raise it on the agenda with the First Ministers' meeting. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) would not table any strategy.

Would the First Minister table the adjustment strategy of the Government so that we can work collectively as all Members of this Legislature, and have workers, business and the Government work together on an appropriate adjustment strategy that the First Minister has now acknowledged is necessary in this province by his call at the federal-provincial meeting?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we run extensive programming in Manitoba for retraining, for training and retraining so that our work force will become as it must be, competitive, knowledgeable, technologically superior in order to take advantage of opportunities that will present itself in the future. We have those programs available through our extensive community college system, through our technical training in our secondary schools.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) will have ample opportunity during this Question Period to ask his questions.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Filmon: As a result of the extensive training programs that we have, we are confident that we can take care of any of the needs that present themselves as a result of the challenges of the new Free Trade Agreement, of new job opportunities, of new investment and of new technology, and so in our future our work force will indeed be able to meet those opportunities.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

* (1355)

Provincial Auditor's Report Release

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness). The Opposition has shown its determination to scrutinize and constructively criticize the province's finances. On July 25 during Question Period, the Minister led me to expect the report of the Provincial Auditor several months before December. December is only three months away.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kozak: Three days away.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I am having difficulty hearing the Honourable Member's question. Order.

Mr. Kozak: Christmas always approaches a lot faster than we expect. December is only three days away and we are fast approaching the end of debate on the Government's Estimates. We need the Auditor's report. Where is it? When can we expect it?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I am well aware that the Opposition is to its reserved banked list of questions. That is obvious every day, but I did not realize they had gone that far back on the reserve that they pulled a question that had been drafted some three months ago.

Let me say I am not responsible for bringing down the Provincial Auditor's Report to the Legislature. I had occasion to ask the Provincial Auditor over the last week when he may be bringing it down and he led me to believe that he would be bringing it forward to the Legislature, to all Members at the same time, some time before Christmas. So it appears as if the Provincial Auditor's Department will not be bringing it forward indeed as quickly as I had hoped.

2nd Quarter Financial Report Tabling Request

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): A supplementary for the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness), retail sales in Manitoba have posted a real decline in the first nine months of this year. This confirms our view that the Minister's Budget has failed to boost consumer confidence. Will the Minister now table the province's Second Quarter Financial Report so that this House can get to the truth of the matter?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The MLA for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) is misguided again in some of his preamble. The total sales have not dropped. As a matter of fact, they have increased in the province, not as the level as we may have wished, but I must say in all honesty that the context in which the Budget was written, the context in which the presentation of the forecasted revenues were prepared, is all in line. Indeed, I can tell the Member right now that there are no shortfalls in revenue forthcoming from the sales tax, the retail sales tax.

Specific to his question, I am hoping that I will be able to table the second quarterly within 10 days.

Financial Reports Release

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): A final supplementary for the same Minister, the Minister will of course be able to confirm that although the dollar value of sales went up, the volume actually went down on a volume basis. The last quarterly financial report was released on September 16th. Can the Minister assure the Opposition that we will have both the report of the Provincial Auditor and the Second Quarter Financial Report prior to concurrent debates in this House on the Government's Estimates?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) does

not seem to understand. The Provincial Auditor does not report to me, he does not report to the Government. He reports to the Legislature, all 57 of us, at the same time. He is a servant of the Legislature, not of the Government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can give no assurances with respect to when the Provincial Auditor is going to report. With respect to the second quarterly, I am trying and I will make every effort to table that report within this House within the next 10 days.

* (1400)

Ambulance Services Funding

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, on November 7, 1974, the chairman of Manitoba Health Services Commission, Larry Desjardins, issued a letter outlining the granting formula for ambulance services for municipalities in this province. The letter states funding will be \$1 to \$1.50 per capita. Strangely but perhaps not surprisingly, the 1988-89 funding formula does not show appreciable change. In fact, it outlines funding at \$1 to \$1.50 per capita.

Is the Minister today willing to admit ambulance funding in this province has not improved under this Government and will remain at the worst level unless he takes an initiative for change? Will he share his long-term plans for sufficient ambulance funding with the House?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I presume that question was for me so I will attempt this question. Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to my honourable friends in the House before that we were not satisfied with the level of funding or a number of areas in terms of ambulance funding. However, I find it passing strange my honourable friend, the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), would today come with a question in Question Period on ambulance services when they passed the whole Manitoba Health Services Commission, including ambulance funding, in 30 minutes.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

External Review

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): I am sorry I was away ill that day that Ambulance Services was passed. My question to the Minister, in this House on August 24 of this year, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) stood in answer to the question from the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) concerning ambulance services in this province and said a review of ambulance services is under way. Well, Mr. Speaker, the next day a memo was sent to the Minister from the acting executive director and informed the Minister the review announced by the past Government was never started. The fact the review was not under way and the Minister had announced it is a question in itself.

My question to the Minister is, why has the Minister asked for an internal review and not agreed to the external review as has been asked by all members of the ambulance service in Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I regret my honourable friend from Selkirk was absent on Tuesday last week, but possibly—(interjection)—well, Mr. Speaker, she did indicate she was away ill and that is the reason why she did not ask the question on ambulance funding. I find it passing strange her colleague, the Health critic, chose to pass \$1.4 billion worth of Health spending in 30 minutes without asking a single question on ambulance funding since this issue is so pressing to my honourable friends in the Liberal Party.

Mrs. Charles: The Minister speaks of not asking questions. How about answering questions?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order; order, please.

Funding

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

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): The Minister of Health has told me personally in this House and he has told members of the ambulance service industry he is not responsible for the delivery of the service. My question to the Minister is, since the City of Winnipeg says it is not their mandate to deliver ambulance service, the Minister says it is his not his mandate, the federal Minister apparently says it is not his mandate, my question is, will the Minister outline just what he believes is his responsibility as the Minister and what will he do to make sure adequate funding is in place?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I would have welcomed any suggestion my honourable friend could have made during the Estimates debate. It was so important that my honourable friends in the Liberal Party wanted to give us suggestions on constructive criticism on how to better deliver health care services, and they were strangely absent in the passage of the Health Commission Services Estimates.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I tried to explain to my honourable friend who, at one point in time by her question, wanted fully insured ambulance services. I tried to point out to my honourable friend from Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) that she did not understand probably what she was asking for, because fully insured ambulance funding would take a substantial amount of funding which, quite frankly, we do not have in the Province of Manitoba, not an experience unique since April 26 in the change of Government but existing for a long period of time.

What this Government is doing, Mr. Speaker, and obviously without the cooperation of the Liberal Party as they had indicated they would, we are undertaking complete review internally of the funding program, of the method of delivery of ambulance service. No one

ever said there would be an external review of ambulance funding, as my honourable friend indicates. Certainly, I never indicated that. I do not know whether she indicated that on behalf of the Liberal Party. But certainly the review that is ongoing is the one that I committed this Government to and will complete.

Native Justice Inquiry Attorney-General Studies

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Last week the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) asked questions about the Research, Planning and Evaluation Branch of my department, and what research projects were ongoing, how many there were, and whether we would find it possible to cooperate with the Inquiry into Native Justice in Manitoba.

I can tell the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that there are seven research projects currently in progress in the Research and Planning Branch of my department. I am in the process of preparing a letter for the Commissioners of Inquiry to let them know the types of projects presently under review by Research and Planning and offering our cooperation. Once the projects are complete, they will be available to the inquiry should the inquiry wish to have them.

Social Assistance Rate Increase

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of Economic Security (Mrs. Oleson). Today the Minister announced an increase of 3.9 percent in social allowance rates effective January 1, 1989. The news release stated that it was based on the cost of living increase as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Winnipeg.

Will the Minister confirm that this calculation only relates to inflation as measured in the first eight months of this year, namely, January to August, and ignores the fact that inflation has indeed escalated this fall so that for the period January to October, the first 10 months of the year, the actual rate of inflation is 4.2 percent? Will she confirm, therefore, that the 3.9 percent does not truly reflect the inflation experienced in Manitoba and that, therefore, the social allowance recipients in this province are being short-changed?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member should ascertain the accuracy of his facts before bringing the matter before the House. Would the Honourable Member kindly rephrase his question?—(interjection)—

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I did not hear your entire ruling because of some noise here.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member should ascertain the accuracy of his facts before bringing the matter before the House. Would the Honourable Member kindly rephrase his question?

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I am simply relating to the statistics that I hope the Minister is using, that is Statistics Canada. Will she confirm that her Government is not indeed passing on the rate of inflation to the social allowance recipients of this province?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. According to Beauchesne 362, it is not good parliamentary practice to communicate written allegations to the House and then to ask a Minister either to confirm or deny them. Would the Honourable Member kindly rephrase his question?

Mr. Leonard Evans: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister tell us why she only increased the rate for the social allowance recipients by 3.9 percent?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): The rate was increased by 3.9 percent in keeping with the former practice, the past practice, of taking the months from January to August, which the Member should know, as he was the previous Minister, was done in years past. This year we had two options. One was to go with the actual cost of necessities which was 3.3 percent, or the CPI which was 3.9 percent. We chose the more generous agreement, because we felt it would be better for the social assistance recipients of Manitoba.

Mr. Leonard Evans: For the information of the Honourable Minister, last year, we increased the rate by 5.3 percent and inflation was only 4.2 percent. Check your facts or your files on that.

* (1410)

Rate Increase Adjustment

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Will the Minister reconsider the position here because, in effect, a 3.9 percent increase really means that we are reducing the standard of living among the poorest people in this province, 23,000 disabled people and single parents, the poorest people? They are giving tax breaks to Inco and CPR. Can you not find a little bit of money? Will they cast aside the spirit of Scrooge and let the spirit of Christmas prevail?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Mr. Speaker, it is really interesting to be subjected to this pathetic performance by the former Minister when we are using exactly his same formula he used in calculating social assistance increases. I will indicate to the Member that we will monitor and make sure that if there is an uncommon increase, then it will be monitored, and we will make suggestions as to increases. But this is the practice that has taken place in former years, and we are attempting to meet the needs of the people who are on social assistance.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, obviously they are not meeting the needs, because right now, in October, the rate of inflation is 5.7 percent. They are just ignoring the escalation in the rate of inflation, and therefore these people are being short-changed.

Rural Rates

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): My last supplementary relates to the people in rural Manitoba. When is this Minister going to take some action to eliminate the serious gap in welfare rates in rural Manitoba, as administered by municipalities and the provincial social allowance rates? Are these people in rural Manitoba going to continually be treated as second-class citizens in this province?

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Mr. Speaker, it is amazing how urgent this is after seven years of neglect by the former Government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to the Members of the House in Question Period, in Interim Supply and on other occasions, that I am meeting with the Union of Municipalities and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities to discuss this very issue.

Water Conservation Strategy Cost to Province

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, on Thursday and Friday of last week, both the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) announced the Manitoba Land and Water Conservation and Development Strategy.-(Applause)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to note that I get a standing ovation each time that I ask a question. But I think the thing that was more important was the fact that when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made his announcement, there was more meat on the parrot that got mistakenly cooked than there was in the announcement, because the announcement lacked any specifics.

My question then is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner). Can he tell the House today what that strategy will cost over that 10-year period? What proportion of that does he anticipate the Province of Manitoba bearing?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the announcement that was made on soil

and water conservation strategy on Thursday of last week was certainly welcomed by the municipal people at their convention. It certainly has also been welcomed by many other people in Manitoba. The drought that they have experienced in this province over the last year certainly indicated very clearly that something had to be done. The previous administration had seven years in which they could have taken some action to make sure that communities now, with the possibility of running out of water before the end of next year, is certainly a great possibility.

We have announced very clearly that we will put in place initiatives that will alleviate not only that, but will also put in place initiatives that will stop the degradation of soil, which will stop the washing away of good soils into our lakes and destroying our rivers and streams and lakes. Those are the kinds of initiatives that we will take. It is a long-term project of many small things.

Mr. Laurie Evans: As I suspected, it looked very much like a wish list to Santa Claus, and we got no answer as to the amount that was involved.

First Project Start Date

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): My question is to the Minister. Can he tell us whether the first project under this initiative will take place in 1989? What will it be and what will it cost?

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the question is a very valid one. There are many communities that are waiting with similar anticipation as to whether they will be first, whether they will be second, whether they will be the ones that are going to be drought-proofed, whether the flooding and the siltation on lakes such as Lake Dauphin will be stopped, and how it is going to be stopped. Those are all the questions that are being asked. They are very valid questions. Now for me to stand here and say this one will be first or that one will be first, and this is going to be the cost would be irresponsible at this time. I have indicated and if the—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Penner: We have a cold north wind blowing in this Chamber at this time.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated last Thursday and again Friday morning, we were going to consult very closely with the people of Manitoba as to what the priorities of these projects should be. Once we have gone through that process of consultation with the people of Manitoba, we will stand up in this Chamber and indicate to this Chamber very clearly what priorities and what the costs of those priority projects will be.

Sustainable Development Centre Mandate

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Tomorrow will be two months since the Prime Minister at the United Nations

announced the International Centre for Sustainable Development. My question is to the Premier, has he heard any more about the specifics as to this centre in terms of what will it cost, what will be its mandate? Should we worry about Mr. Blenkarn's statement that perhaps it will never come to Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the Member's question is yes and no.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired. The Honourable First Minister.

Mr. Filmon: No, we should not worry about Mr. Blenkarn's statement.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The time for oral questions has expired.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I wonder if I might have leave of the House to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable First Minister have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I know that I do not have to even ask. I can just look across and see the Winnipeg pins being proudly displayed by all Members throughout the Legislature. I know that they are joining with me today in congratulating the Winnipeg Blue Bombers Football Club on winning the championship of the Canadian Football League, the Grey Cup, yesterday in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, in extending our congratulations, I think it is most appropriate that we recognize the efforts, firstly, of Dr. Ross Brown and the executive of the Winnipeg football club; Cal Murphy, the general manager; and the management of the Winnipeg football club; head coach, Mike Riley, and the entire coaching staff of the football club; and of course a tremendous group of players who have performed outstandingly, who have overcome adversity and difficulties in the early part of the season to go against all odds and win the championship of the Canadian Football League.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker, they have demonstrated by their tremendous desire and talent that they are winners, and they deserve the recognition and support of all Manitobans. We are proud to have them. It was a tremendous thrill, I think, for all of us who watched the game. I am sure that everyone watched it right to the very last second, and it comes at a very, very appropriate time. The Canadian Football League has had its difficulties over the past couple of years. They have had a restructuring, a realignment, and indeed the Winnipeg football club was an integral part of ensuring that the league remained viable, and that it responded to the challenges and the pressures that it was under.

The Winnipeg football League, of course, voluntarily agreed to a change from the Western Conference to the Eastern Conference so that they could keep the regional balance and distribution in the league. That move, Mr. Speaker, I think had a great deal to do with the continued success of the league. It placed a tremendous responsibility on me in representing the province on the weekend at the Grey Cup because of course not only was I there in the responsibility of representing Eastern Canada in the Grey Cup, but indeed my own history and heritage insisted that I take part as a Westerner. So I really was there representing both East and West. I can tell you it was a good feeling because Manitoba can undoubtedly take great pride in being central to all of Canada and involved in every aspect of Canadian activities. We did indeed participate.

I am very proud of the initiative and the achievement of the Winnipeg football club. On behalf of all of my colleagues on the Government side of the House, and I am sure, as I say, I speak on behalf of all Manitobans, indeed all Members of this House, that we commend and congratulate the Winnipeg football club.

In recognition of this outstanding achievement, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislature, I will be following past practice and tradition and awarding the Order of the Buffalo to the Winnipeg football club. It is appropriate, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) points out, that award was given in 1957 to the Winnipeg football club, and was given again in 1984 to the Winnipeg football club. (Interjection) But it was given to them in '57 because they went to the Grey Cup.

We are just having a little dispute as to history but, once we straighten that out, we will agree that this Legislature supports the award of the Order of the Buffalo to the 1988 Grey Cup Champions, the Winnipeg football club. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): If I could have leave to make a non-political statement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Transcona have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Kozak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Manitobans are proud of the success of our Grey Cup champions, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. The performance of Winnipeg's defensive team is worth mentioning because no football fan will forget the key plays that stopped the B.C. Lions in their tracks.

James Murphy, the game's most valuable player, was unstoppable when it counted. Bob Cameron, a Canadian, got the better of a 60-kilometre wind with his kicking; and Trevor Kennerd, another Canadian, was right on the mark for 14 of Winnipeg's 22 points. In the 76 years of Grey Cup history, no team has ever bounced back from a break-even season to the league championship.

It is not whether you fall down that matters. It is how you pick yourself up that makes greatness possible, both in sport and in life. The Winnipeg Blue Bombers

are both a credit and an inspiration to our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to stand to make the non-political statement about the success of the Winnipeg football club, another triumph of public ownership in the area of sport in Manitoba, public ownership in the Province of Manitoba. I can say, as one of the fans (Interjection) well, I was on the board of directors during the 1984 season, as well—the 12,000 fans who were at the game against Hamilton, I thought the last three games were very, very successful in terms of our city and our province and our community in terms of that victory.

Sports wins for a community are very important for the pride of that place and I think this win yesterday is very important for our province and the City of Winnipeg.

I would like to applaud the executives who have been mentioned by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and the football players who have been mentioned as well. I think they gave us a lot to be proud of in terms of their overcoming the odds in terms of the victory yesterday. I also applaud the Premier in presenting the Order of the Buffalo to the players. We gave it in '84. It would be totally inconsistent if we did not reward the players again in '88 for their victory.

Mr. Speaker, I also think that there are some serious challenges ahead, I mentioned the 12,000 people. I think the Grey Cup is the one last uniting national sporting event in our country and anyone who stands in this House today should be also proud but also be challenged by the fact that we have a very serious problem with our national sports league. I would like to see us do everything possible in this Chamber and, as legislators, on the challenges we have locally, whether it is getting out collectively on the payroll reduction plans in the private and public sector, getting out to the communities and helping with the community-based football team, because we have to collectively in this country turn around the CFL in the next couple of years. Otherwise, it is in very serious trouble.

So, Mr. Speaker, in appreciating and standing up in terms of this award, we have to recognize that we have to do our bit as Government working with business and people and the community to ensure the CFL maintains itself for another 75 years. I know when we opened North Portage, I put the Winnipeg Blue Bomber schedule in the capsule, the 1988 schedule in the capsule, that said this would be the recognition point of another Grey Cup. I was glad it took place. It did not look like it was going to happen all year, and suggested that when we open that capsule in 75 years that we did everything possible to ensure that 75 years from now there would be a truly national league which is, of course, the CFL. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On November 16, the Deputy Speaker took under advisement a point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) respecting the admissibility of a document tabled on the preceding day, November 15, by the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis). In his remarks, the Honourable Minister made reference to a point of order raised on November 15 by the Honourable Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) respecting the document in question.

This matter raises two separate issues: first, the question of the admissibility of the document tabled; and, second, the timeliness of the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader. I will deal with these in the order that I mentioned.

* (1430)

I must apologize to the House for overlooking a point of order raised by the Honourable Minister of Community Services. Additionally, I believe in view of the precedents cited in my ruling on November 14 and that ruling itself, I may have been at fault in accepting the document tabled by the Honourable Member for St. Johns. The document has, however, been accepted, which constitutes a ruling and that cannot be changed. Under our practices, a Speaker does not have the authority to change a ruling once it has been made.

For the future, based on our precedents, I believe that I must require that tabled documents in the forms of letters and other written documents must be signed or must bear a declaration respecting their origin signed by the Member tabling them.

With respect to the Honourable Government House Leader's point of order, I must point out to the Honourable Member that I cannot deal with it because, under our practices and in accordance with the parliamentary authorities to which we refer, a point of order must be raised at the appropriate time. That is when it occurs and not at some later time.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your ruling nonetheless.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Mr. Pankratz for Mr. Helwer.

ORDERS OF THE DAY HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that following

consideration of the Annual Report of Manitoba Hydro and the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources would be consideration of the Annual Report of the Manitoba Energy Authority.

I would like to advise you that I believe the result of consultations between House Leaders would have it that Private Members' Hour not proceed today.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to not proceed with Private Members' Hour today? (Agreed)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a disposition to allow the calling of Bills No. 35 and 43, both of them at second reading. Mr. Speaker, we would propose that those Bills proceed along the path as long as the House so wishes, after which I believe we will propose that we call the Motion of Supply and go into committee.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 35 THE LOAN ACT, 1988

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 35, The Loan Act, 1988; Loi d'emprunt de 1988, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Our caucus is prepared to let this Bill proceed.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 43—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1988 (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 43, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1988 (2); Loi No 2 de 1988 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak).

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): The Liberal Opposition knows that the Government needs monies to operate in the latter part of the current fiscal year, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will be pleased to know that we will once again not obstruct passage of Interim Supply in any way. However, on this occasion, I would like to register deep concerns that the Minister should address. The Minister will recall that, at 8.7 percent, Manitoba's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is substantially above his Budget forecast of 7.5 percent. He will recall that he has conceded that capital investment in Manitoba will not meet his forecast. He will note that Manitoba retailers are reporting an actual decline in volume of transactions during the first nine months of 1988.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have in hand the report of the Provincial Auditor that on July 25 the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) led me to expect long before now. I do not have in hand the Government's Second Quarter

Financial Report that must be near completion and that the Minister assures us will be submitted to this House in 10 days. Although I strongly suspect that the Minister's Budget has failed to create conditions that will stimulate business and the consumer to leave continued economic growth in Manitoba, the Liberal Opposition prefers to debate financial matters with all relevant data in its possession.

We need both the Auditor's Report and the second quarter report so that the fast-approaching concurrence debate in this House on the Government's Estimates can be a high-quality debate, a debate that the Government can use to inform its next Budget. I accept the Minister's assurance of timely publication of the second quarter report. I hope it is more accurate than his July assurance on the Auditor's Report. I am disappointed that the Minister would give assurances in July on which he apparently cannot deliver today.

I must in addition, Mr. Speaker, express some satisfaction that Bill No. 43, the Interim Supply Bill now under consideration, extends Supply only until March. We in the Official Opposition hope this is a signal that the Finance Minister plans early introduction of his next Budget. If concurrence debate bears out the Liberal view that the current Budget is not having an adequate impact on business and consumer confidence, we look to the Government to reconsider with all due dispatch its negative stance on a gradual reduction of the 2 percent flat tax on net income, its negative stance on a Manitoba stock savings plan and other matters that the Liberal Party has raised repeatedly.

Once again, we are prepared at this point to have this Bill proceed. I am delighted, in addition, to have had the opportunity to put my and my Party's concerns on the record. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I am pleased to join the debate on Bill No. 43. I do not know how many Members of the Chamber recall that we had already passed The Interim Appropriations Act (1). This is the second, and this second Bill is here as a result of the unwillingness perhaps of the Government to be somewhat more realistic about how long this Session is going to take. That is due in no small measure to the fact that there are a number of new Members in the Chamber, and also no small measure of credit for that has to go to the inexperience of the Government in terms of ordering its business and proceeding in a more expeditious manner with the introduction of legislation and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to speak at length on this new Interim Appropriation Act. The fact of the matter is that this Legislature is not going to stand in the way of the Government going forward and being allowed to conduct its business. I am not sure that we should be taking Chamber time to debate this second Appropriation Bill but, be that as it may, I am going to use the opportunity to outline some of my concerns about the direction that we are taking as a Government, and the financial implications of the agenda that this Government has set for the people of Manitoba.

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker, we are, I think, in serious trouble. We have seen the latest indication that our economy is

struggling by virtue of the fact that the real value of retail sales has actually declined over the last nine months. That follows on the heels of some rather glum statistics when it comes to unemployment. There has been referenced a number of times in this House that there are 7,000 more people unemployed today than there were in the corresponding year, 1987-88—7,000 more people who are not contributing actively to the welfare of this province.

There has to be a reason for those weakening economic signals. I think there is a reason and I think it is the fact that we now have a Government who has failed singularly when it comes to putting forward an economic agenda, when it comes to having some sort of economic vision for what this province may and should be as a matter of fact.— (Interjection)—

The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) yells from across the floor, "take a look at our record." I can put on the table a dozen initiatives of the new Government in 1981 that have led to the stimulation of the economy both in southern Manitoba and northern Manitoba.

Let us look at the record of this Government in what is now some eight months of a reign of error. We have a Government that has revised the history of Manitoba when it comes to hydro development. We now have a chairman of Manitoba Hydro and a Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Neufeld) who lack the courage and the vision necessary to develop our hydro resources. They have said quite categorically that they are going to take a laissez-faire approach to both the development of Manitoba Hydro resources and to the use of the latent energy that exists in our river systems to develop Manitoba's economy.

So what have we done? We have seen in effect the position of the Government move from one of aggressive development, the responsible development of our hydro resources, to one in which they are looking for alternatives, expensive alternatives, like thermal generation and the importing of power. We have a Government that has not recognized the benefit of developing that system both for our own use and for export, a Government that continues to deny, in the face of evidence to the contrary from many quarters, that the export of power to the United States and to other jurisdictions is financially beneficial to the Province of Manitoba, to Manitoba Hydro and to the ratepayer.

We have a Government that has bungled the negotiations with the Upper Mississippi Power Group, a \$4 billion sale, a sale that would have significant long-term benefit for the ratepayers of Manitoba not to mention the economic spin-off benefit of a major construction project.

We have a Government and a Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro who does not appear willing to aggressively pursue the export of our power, no indication that discussions, negotiations with UMPG, Ontario Hydro, SaskPower, are anything but token in terms of their present content. There is no direction.

I recently spoke with the chairman of Manitoba Hydro who indicated to me that the discussions with the

Japanese company, DKK, who are looking at investing in a cesium plant in the province, have now been extended another nine months. There is no immediate prospect of anything significant developing on what was, I think, a realistic opportunity to attract investment and to use our energy.

Mr. Speaker, we can talk about hydro resources, and the lack of a will to development is one signal that there is no interest—perhaps that is not the right word—but in promoting economic development in the province. What happened to the prospects for early negotiations for a potash mine? Discussions between Canamax and other partners, including Dennison Mines, were proceeding quickly back in the early part of 1988, and it was my expectation and I think the expectation of many Manitobans, not to mention those out in the southwestern part of the province—the McAuley, Russell, Binscarth area—who are looking forward to this kind of development. What has happened to that?

The prospect for the sale, the divestiture of Manfor and the investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in the upgrading of that facility and a better use of the wood resource in that area, what has happened to that? This Government is not taking an aggressive role when it comes to looking for divestiture options, looking for investment in the province. It seems to be on hold.

What happened to the more immediate problems that face companies like HBM&S? What has the Minister responsible for Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) done to ensure that the 2,500 people who work for HBM&S will have jobs into the future? We have seen a Government that seems prepared to sit on its hands. It wants to let things happen to it.

I have some bad news for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). If some of these things do not happen in this fiscal year, this Government's record, when it comes to employment creation, when it comes to investment, when it comes to the financial circumstances of this province, is going to deteriorate very rapidly. Not one of the major initiatives that were on the drawing board that were within the realm of possibility have come to fruition. I can tell the Minister of Finance that he is going to have a very serious problem on his hands if this Government does not develop, in a very short period of time, some kind of economic development perspective. We have not seen one.

There has been no major initiative on the part of this Government for small business, for economic development, whether it is the kind of Homes in Manitoba Program that the Government introduced in 1982, some few months after its election, some \$50 million program to start the economy moving again. There is not a single initiative that this Minister of Finance can point to which would show us, show Manitobans, that they understand that the Government has a role to play in encouraging, creating opportunities, promoting them and pursuing them with the private sector, in conjunction with the private sector, where it is appropriate.

This is a rather dismal record. It would appear that this Government has been in power for 40 years. They

are so tired, they are so lackadaisical. They are so lacking in enthusiasm for dealing with the fundamental problems that this province faces. It is pathetic. It perhaps mirrors the attitude of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) whose major role in this House is to stand up and express concern, not do anything but express concern. The Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) continue to express optimism that Manitoba's economy is going to grow. If their record on the major potential projects that could stimulate our economy is any indication, we are going to meet with calamitous failure. It appears that no one on the front bench of this Government cares whatsoever.

The Government is losing ground when it comes to employment in this province. It is losing ground when it comes to the creation of new wealth because of their laissez-faire attitude. They are losing ground when it comes to—(Interjection)—The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is going to have a serious problem before the end of this fiscal year unless we start to see the development of a concise and practical plan for economic development.

I can tell the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Pennér) that his pie in the sky discussion of drought-proofing Manitoba holds no short-term benefits for the economy of the province. The Minister was talking about his new utopia where Manitoba was drought-proof and that it was actually going to create a net economic benefit. For every dollar we spend on drought-proofing, he said, we are going to get \$4 in revenue. That is simplistic thinking, to say the least, but it is also erroneous because there is no way, even if those projects were to proceed and even if the benefits were anything like the Minister of Natural Resources expects them to be, the pay back would be before 10 or 20 years. I can tell the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that our problems are more immediate than that.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko, in the Chair.)

* (1450)

The Government has taken as its only plank, in terms of economic development, to be the elimination of some of the payroll taxes for a small number of medium-sized businesses and its decision to give some tax money back to companies like Inco, experiencing record profits, and to the CPR as their major business initiative. I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those initiatives are not having any impact whatsoever, either on the plans of other companies, which was paraded through this Chamber as the logical consequence of tax reduction, or on any of the other investors who may be coming to the province. The economic policies of this Government do not work.

Now why is all of that important in this debate? It is important in this debate because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) understands as well as anyone else we need some of these companies. We need new investment in Manfor and HBM&S, we need an Alumax smelter, we need a potash development. We need hydro development in this province. We need energy-intensive

businesses in this province like DKK. Unfortunately, the necessity of having those kinds of developments flies in the face of the Government's reluctance to get involved, to be a promoter, to be a conduit for economic development in the province. They bind their own hands when they refuse to get involved.

I would like to, although it is not my norm to be even more critical of some of the Ministers involved to say they lack the credibility, they lack the initiative to carry those projects forward. We have seen on too many occasions Ministers sitting on their hands failing to take the initiative. I want to say as we face this dilemma now becoming apparent, the falling retail sales, the slowing of our economy, increasing unemployment, this Government has to come up with something a little bit imaginative to create some opportunities, to create some enthusiasm, to help some things happen because, if they do not, the bottom is going to drop out of the consumption—

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Doom and gloom.

Mr. Storie: —in this province. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says doom and gloom. I do not certainly want to be here painting a doom-and-gloom scenario. The fact of the matter is, and the Minister will not be able to refute one of the items which I have raised, there is nothing happening in this province—zero. There is no good news on the horizon and it stems, I believe, from a lack of sensitivity on the part of numerous Ministers and this Government to the importance of Government initiative. The Government has to be doing more than paying lip service to economic development.

The fact of the matter is, as well, while this doom-and-gloom scenario, the fact we are losing jobs—there are more unemployed in the province—has an impact on Winnipeg. It has a more pronounced effect on rural and northern Manitoba. Certainly projects like Manfor and HBM&S are important but the smaller communities, remote communities, rely on from time to time more Government assistance, more Government involvement in the local economy than does a community the size of Winnipeg. So the Members represent an area which is going to be doubly hard-hit by the economic slowdown we face.

We inevitably get into a situation where, when the economy starts to slow down, Government revenues start to decrease. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is going to have to redouble his efforts to find savings within Government, to cut programs, to cut expenditures in areas like health and social services to maintain any kind of responsible fiscal position. The Minister knows he is facing a critical time when it comes to the new Budget he is going to have to introduce in the spring, and the prospect of a slowing economy only magnifies that problem.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is while this Government has not been showing any initiative when it comes to economic development, any imaginative or creative problem-solving in that area, they have been slowly eroding some of the programs Manitobans have come to rely on.

I was just going over some of the press releases, some of the announcements made by the Government with respect to health care and, while there have been some good announcements, there have also been some ominous signals on the horizon. We have seen the increase in the deductibles. We have seen an increase in dispensing fees which create additional costs for those using pharmaceuticals. We have seen the cutbacks or the restrictions placed on home care delivery. We have seen the new agreement with the Manitoba Chiropractic Association which introduces user fees, which decreases the number of visits. Those are small signals. Unless this Government does something about the economy other than doing a great deal of wishful thinking in public, we are going to be in trouble. No one wishes that on the Manitoba public.

I do not know who in that Cabinet is responsible for economic development. There is no focus, it is quite obvious, as there was in the previous Government with the Jobs Fund Program which provided incentives to businesses, had numerous business-oriented programs to support the creation of jobs in the province. There is nothing, there is no focus. It is also unfortunate there does not appear to be a Minister—although we have nominally a Minister responsible for Industry Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), there does not seem to be a Minister who has any great or grand design for an economic blueprint for the province.

I am going to be interested if the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has a moment to hear from him what the economic development strategy of this Government is. Is it near rhetoric? Is it huffery and puffery as we have seen on so many other important issues? Is there a strategy he can show us? Can he say here is what we think is important? Here is what we as a Government believe it is important to do to create these opportunities? Or, do we have, I guess, a true *laissez-faire* approach where the Minister of Finance and his colleagues are saying let the chips fall where they may, let Manitobans take their chances, let the unemployed and the underemployed deal with their own uncertainty and unfavourable positions. I do not think that is good enough. The bottom line, I think, is the Minister of Finance—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Storie: The bottom line is for the Minister of Finance, he can either deliver to the Manitoba people now and his Government can deliver an economic development strategy, can indicate to the people clearly some of the major industrial development opportunities which I have outlined are possible and indicate what the Government is doing about bringing those on stream or he can start out lying to the people of Manitoba now what is going to happen in the next Budget and the Budget to follow when it comes to the delivery of services, because we clearly will not have the revenue to provide a level of service which Manitobans have come to expect unless these things start to happen.

The Minister knows all too well his first Budget, and perhaps his only Budget, was a success largely due to

the grace of the federal Government's largesse, the equalization formula, additional revenues which were not anticipated and the previous Government which had the intestinal fortitude to say, well, we are going to pay for some of these programs with some increases in taxes. This Government has not had the courage either to find new sources of revenue in any fair and honourable way or the courage to become more involved in the development of the economy of the province, and that is going to lead us into an economic situation which is unacceptable.

The Minister will obviously get support for this Interim Appropriation Act. We need the money to carry on. The warning signals, the warning light in his cockpit should be on clearly by now. Rather than abort this flight, I would suggest the Minister get some of his colleagues off their butts and let us have an economic development strategy for the province.

* (1500)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I also have a number of comments to put on the record. In fact, I would like to note today's date. Being November 28, it is one week after the election, the election that left us here in this province with the Free Trade Agreement whether we like it or not. I would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba the general consensus was not in support of the Free Trade Agreement. I think that could be documented by any public survey. I do not think anyone needs to be a pollster to know that is the case. Whether or not we support it, the Free Trade Agreement, we are going to be stuck with it. I ask that this date be noted in the record because in the week since that time, we have already had some attempts on the part of the Opposition to get this Government to recognize the reality of what we are going to be facing with the Free Trade Agreement.

I asked last Friday, for example, what this Government has done to determine what the impacts will be on employment in this province. The only answer I received was the same old rhetoric that we hear over and over again from the Members opposite. I am wondering, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you could ask the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) to stop singing the—no, I do not believe it is the American national anthem but it is another pro-American song. I am wondering if we could ask the Member for Lakeside to stand and give us a solo or else allow me to continue with my speech. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would say that we asked that question on Friday and received no answer. I have asked the question in Estimates. It was asked again today. Each time, and for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Members of this Government have missed the point. Everybody has said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that right from the start with this agreement, there will be winners and there will be losers. A lot of the debate is revolved around who will be gaining the most, who will be losing the most, what the balance will be. Presumably, the Government here in Manitoba and federally has been arguing, there are more winners than losers. I do not agree with them on that, but that is their position.

Even they, in arguing that, admit that there will be losers. In fact, one of the federal Ministers, Mr. Benoit

Bouchard, was quoted as saying there will be several hundred thousand losers. We have even heard the Prime Minister, of all people, in his usual very trustworthy and reliable tone talking about having the best adjustment mechanisms ever seen in the world to deal with the people who would be losing because of free trade. I guess my difficulty is I do not trust the Prime Minister to deliver on that. I also do not trust this Government because, even though they have said they support the Free Trade Agreement, when asked in committee, when asked last week, when asked today what the impact of free trade will be, all we hear is rhetoric. They have no studies whatsoever to determine what the impact will be on employment in this province.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think it is unreasonable for them to have had those kind of studies. In the Province of Ontario, they have a study right now which they have had in their possession for several months which indicates there will be several hundred thousand jobs lost in that province because of the Free Trade Agreement. My question to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connerly) and the question again to the First Minister today was, what is the impact in Manitoba? Where are our studies to determine what the impact will be? Even more important than that, what action is going to be taken to ensure the best interest of the workers who will be laid off and will lose their jobs because of the Free Trade Agreement?

Once again, as I said, we are talking, yes, about possibly some winners but we are also talking about losers as well. When we are talking about people who are losing their jobs, many people who have been in an industry for many years, working for a particular firm for 5, 10, 20, 30 years, what will be done for those individuals in Manitoba? I ask that we note this date because it is November 28, one week after the election. It is months after this Government took office. We know they support the free trade deal. We also have found out that they have no studies, nothing to back up that support, that it is all rhetoric. I ask that we note this date because there will be a time when there will be layoffs announced in this province and it may be very soon in relation to the Free Trade Agreement. There have already been a couple of announcements nationally. The very great suspicion is that they are directly related to the Free Trade Agreement.

There have been several hundred jobs that have been eliminated. The concern is that they were related to the Free Trade Agreement. I ask that we note this date because I am going to remind this Government of this date. I am going to remind them of the date of the election and the fact that they have done nothing in this province, absolutely nothing, to prepare for the impact of free trade. I consider that totally inexcusable. They have not even recognized the problem. When they are asked about the impacts of free trade, they keep getting up and talking about what they see as being the benefits. I already said there will be winners.

The debate in this particular situation is, how many losers and what are we going to do for those who lose because of free trade? It is no consolation for them to have rhetoric thrown at them about the great opportunities for free trade if they are out of a job.

That is the bottom line. That is the bottom line of what I have been raising as Labour critic for our Party, what both Leaders of the Opposition raise today and we are not getting answers. We are not getting answers whatsoever.

In fact, today I think the most indicative example of the approach of this Government was when the Premier got up and talked about this study that is being conducted into the business impacts of free trade. I remember getting the same response from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) last week, the business impacts.

You will notice one thing and that is they did not once mention, either the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today, the impact on the working people of this province, about the employment of many people in industries who could be severely impacted by the Free Trade Agreement.—(Interjection)— Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Labour is echoing his comments at this point. They obviously have not understood that there will be people out of jobs because of free trade. They like to talk about jobs that will be created. They have difficulty documenting how many and where but they also, on the other hand, do not recognize the fact that there will be people who will lose their jobs.

I think the most incredible example of how out of touch this Government is in regard to that is when the Premier gets up and talks about all the adjustment programs that are in place at the present time to help workers in this province. That is such incredible nonsense because this Government, in the six months that it has been in office, has already taken action to cut back on those adjustment programs.

We have seen, for example, what they are doing to the Jobs Fund and, particularly, the Jobs Training for Tomorrow Program. We have seen what they have done; they have eliminated it. We have seen what they have done to the Unemployed Help Centres, the one in Brandon and the one in Winnipeg, which is directly designed to assist workers who are unemployed, both with UIC in the short run and also with adjustment, and hopefully returning to employment. What have they done? They have eliminated funding whatsoever. So let not this Minister talk about what they are doing for adjustment in this province, what they are doing for workers in this province. What they are doing is they are cutting back on programs that already existed.

The sad part about that is that they are cutting back at a time when the need is even greater than it ever has been in the past. I know, when I introduced Bill No. 31 for support in this Legislature, a Bill that would greatly strengthen plant closure legislation—this was several weeks ago—I pinpointed at the time a couple of the reasons why I felt it was important to strengthen plant closure legislation. I pinpointed the fact that there has been an economic slowdown in this province over the last several months. It has been documented, I know, by my colleague from Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Are we are going to have more plant closures, more layoffs, because of it?

I also documented at the time the fact that the Free Trade Agreement will lead to an increasing number of

layoffs and plant closures in this province. The economists who talk about free trade call this adjustment. What adjustment means is while there may be some jobs created in some sectors, there will be jobs lost in other sectors. There will be major layoffs and there will be plant closures. In fact, this weekend there are already press reports of companies that are looking at relocating in the United States because of the Free Trade Agreement. No matter how much rhetoric this Government throws out about the opportunities from free trade as they see it, that does not take away from the fact that there will be layoffs, that there will be people negatively affected in this province.

That is not a question of scare tactics. That is their defensive approach. That is what the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) talked about on Friday. He said it was "scare tactics" on the part of the Opposition to mention it. It is not just the Opposition that is talking about laid-off workers. As I said, the federal Government itself recognized that. Economists have identified that. Unions in this country have identified that. Businesses in the sectors that are going to be affected by free trade, I mean negatively affected, have pointed to the fact that there may be plants that will be transferred or closed down entirely because of the agreement.

I raised the question earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the date today, because I really think it is unfortunate but I know with this Government, because of their insensitivity in terms of issues such as this, that it is going to take the first plant closures in this province related to free trade before they wake up. I think that is unfortunate because when that does happen, as the critic for our Party, I am going to be raising the fact they had ample advance warning about what to do for the workers who will be negatively impacted by the Free Trade Agreement.

They had the opportunity today to do what other provinces are doing, and that is taking a lead approach on this by demanding from the federal Government that there be a comprehensive approach to dealing with the laid-off workers who are going to be affected by free trade.

* (1510)

They already have in this Legislature Bill No. 31, which they can support, they can take over its sponsorship. I do not think that is any difficulty. There is a Bill that would give strengthened protection for workers affected by plant closures. I have a resolution that I have introduced in this House calling for an employee adjustment fund. I introduced it several weeks ago. What would that fund do? It would provide funding both from the federal and the provincial Governments, as well as from employers, to employees affected by major layoffs or plant closures, provide funding for training and readjustment and even, in some cases, provide funding to maintain the operation of the particular plant itself because in some cases those plants can be run and have been run successfully where companies have closed down and employees continue to run them.

So the model is there. There is a Bill, there is a resolution, they have examples of other provinces. My

question is as to why this Government refuses to respond. What does it take for them to realize that all this rhetoric and this faith in free trade is not going to do any good whatsoever for workers who are going to be out of a job, particularly workers in sectors where it is difficult for them to adjust to other employment, particularly workers who have been working 20 years and 30 years, many workers in their 50s who are unable to adjust to other employment, who do not have the opportunity to go to retraining, sent to retraining to further their education because of their age?

What are we going to do in this province for those workers? Are we going to throw out the same sort of bland statements we heard from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today? I mean, is the Premier's visit to Minneapolis that he keeps talking about, is that going to assist the 55-year old worker from a garment factory who will be out of a job in the next several months, because that will happen in that sector, I have no doubt about it. Is that going to assist them? The answer is no.

What will assist them is a comprehensive approach from this Government, developed now, that will deal with that particular problem. I want to tell this Government that we are going to continue to hammer away at this issue. We will continue not just to criticize their inaction but to propose the alternatives because we feel there are things that this Government, this province can be doing now to deal with the concerns of the workers who are going to be affected by the Free Trade Agreement. We believe there are mechanisms that can be put in place this week, this very day, which can start the process to ensure that we do something.

I wish I was not standing here debating this particular issue now—the Conservatives can laugh. I have never felt so disappointed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my life as a result of an election, not because of the partisan result, because I recognize that is part of our democracy system. I was more depressed with the result of this federal election than I was here in Manitoba. Even though I was directly involved in the recent election and saw the defeat of many of my colleagues, I am more depressed about the results of this election as I am sure many other Manitobans are because, for those of us who are concerned about this free trade deal, it was not the election result that mattered but the fact that this free trade deal is going to go through.

There is a feeling of powerlessness, I know, from amongst the part of many people who opposed the deal, there is a feeling that we won the debates. I honestly believe that there are still more people in this province and this country who are opposed to the deal, and how frustrating can it be to win the debate but to lose the issue, to lose the issue because of the election.—(Interjection)— Well, for the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) should realize that the free trade vote was concentrated with one Party and the anti-free trade vote split between the two other Parties. It does not take any great mathematician to figure out that even though there were fewer people in this country that supported free trade that there were more Conservatives elected.

As I have said, I am not quarrelling as much with the result of the election in terms of the Conservatives being elected. I think we all have our partisan views on those matters. But as a Canadian, I am very worried about the impact of the Free Trade Agreement and I am particularly worried when I see, now that the election is over and that the Conservative view of Canada has been accepted now by enough people for them to form a Government, they still are not dealing with the concerns of the other side.

Here is a great opportunity for the Prime Minister, for the Premier in this province to say, yes, we fought on the free trade issue and, yes, the Conservative side won. Free trade will go through, but we are going to sit down and we are going to deal with your concerns. We are going to listen to the concerns related to how many workers are going to be affected and the many other areas of concern, whether it be our sovereignty or social programs, etc. It was a great opportunity.

But I watched the Prime Minister's speech, his press conference following his election and I must say it was one of the, I felt, more arrogant speeches I have seen from a successful politician. There was no olive leaf that was given out. Instead he made a crack suggesting that somehow the opposition to free trade was related to anti-Americanism. He keeps liking to refer to that. But I liked what John Diefenbaker had to say about that and I know, as a New Democrat, I get some funny looks when I do quote John Diefenbaker but I respected him. I also respected the fact that he stood up for Canada, something the Conservative Party, I do not think, does the same way that he did 25 years ago. He said he was not anti-American; he was pro-Canadian. There are many people in this province and in this country who are saying the same thing today. They resent the statements by the Prime Minister. He won the election but that does not give him the right to continue that kind of insult, that kind of rhetoric.

Where is the olive branch from the Prime Minister, where is the olive branch from this Premier saying, yes, you raised some legitimate concerns and we are going to deal with those concerns. It is not there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it is not going to be there until this Government here and the Government in Ottawa is going to be hammered by the daily announcement of plants closing and moving to the United States or just closing, period. I know that is what it is going to take.

I am going to continue, as I said, as Labour critic, to be demanding that this Government do something in regard to free trade. I really do not want to be sitting there with representatives of laid-off workers banging on the doors of this Government, begging for action. They should not have to do that. We should not have to wait for the first or the second or the third group of laid-off workers in this province. We should look at the experience that already exists. We know that plant closures and layoffs can be some of the most traumatic experiences that anyone, any individual worker and their families, can be faced with. We have that experience from other jurisdictions. We have it from previous layoffs here in Manitoba. We do know there is going to be an increased number of layoffs because of the Free Trade Agreement.—(Interjection)— The

Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) says it hurts the owner. Yes, it does hurt the owner, too.

In fact, I would suggest that we deal with the concerns of the workers, that we also have programs put in place to deal with some of the problems that are going to develop in some industries because it has already been documented by the banks, for example, that loans are not going to be as readily available for certain sectors because their viability is going to be lower under the Free Trade Agreement—not all sectors. Some will have an enhanced viability. As I said, there are winners, but we have to look at the losers as well, whether they be in business or whether they be working people.

I am very concerned that this Government has not done anything in that regard. They have not even conducted a study. That became apparent in the Estimates of the Department of Labour. They have not even conducted a study. They have been selling the proverbial used car to us this last six months they have been in office and in Opposition, telling us what a great deal this free trade was, selling it like a used car at every end of the province. Now we are asking, what are the facts? What is the mileage? What is happening in this particular case? What bill of goods have we been sold? They do not even know. They cannot even say right now, because they have no research, who are the winners and who are the losers. That is incredible because that information, even if there was nothing else that had been done by this Government, would at least give us a starting point.

I think we could take that information and go to everyone in this province, whether it be businesspeople or whether it be labour people, and we could say, look, here is what is going to happen. What are your suggestions and your ideas on how we can deal with it?

Instead of that, all we heard today, one week after the election, November 28, 1988, is the same rhetoric we have been hearing here in and here out. They have to realize that they do not have to fight the free trade battle anymore. They won it because of our past election. That is clear and I will be the first one to recognize that. Free trade is a reality. Now we are into another stage in this country's history and that is dealing with the implications of free trade. That is dealing with the winners but also dealing with the losers as well.

I want to predict, if there is going to be an Achilles' heel of the current federal Conservative Government and the provincial Conservative Government as well, it is going to be negative impacts from free trade because, when those announcements do come in about the losers of free trade, people are going to see that this Government just has nothing in place, that it does not care about the impact it is going to have on those people. If it did, it would have announced the policy already. It is going to be the same thing that is happening nationally. We are already beginning to see it, the first few plants that have been announced to be closing, that are moving to the United States. What is going to develop is a great backlash against this attitude that is happening and is so evidently clear from the federal and provincial Conservatives.

* (1520)

So, in conclusion, I want to say, now that I have this opportunity today—and I am going to be saying it again in the Labour Estimates. I am going to be saying it again in debate on Bill No. 31. I am going to be saying it again in regard to the resolution that I have already on the Order Paper in regard to employee adjustment. I am going to be saying it at every opportunity, as is every Member of the NDP caucus, and that is that this Conservative Government is going to have to wake up and listen to the concerns of Manitobans on free trade, to extend that olive leaf and work together as a province to try and deal with certainly whatever positive aspects there will be, but also the negative aspects as well, because it is no use telling someone who is out of a job because of free trade, who is laid off, the senior plant closed down, but oh, well, it is a great thing and it is benefitting this person or that person or that business because they are going to be saying, well, what about me. You sold me a bill of goods on free trade and where am I going to be standing because of it? That is the bottom line. It is the human dimension of people losing their jobs, their livelihood and the impact it has on them and their families.

It is about time that this Legislature in Manitoba, recognizing the political realities that were with free trade, dealt with that. That is something I know the NDP caucus and I am sure other Members of the Opposition are going to be demanding from this Government, that they listen to the human dimension now, that they react before it is too late. Unfortunately, I think they will not, but let them take this opportunity, perhaps even this debate, to signal at least some concern for those who are going to lose because of free trade. If they do not, it will be remembered in this province for a long time to come.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to indicate my support for the measure currently before the House.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words in this particular debate on Interim Supply. It gives me an opportunity to make some observations as to where I think this Government is heading and what the impact of Government policies are on the people of this province.

My first impression is that based on the cutbacks to certain groups, based on the fact that they have not provided certain groups with adequate funding to meet the cost of living, and given the fact that they have cut back particularly in the area of labour organizations, employment centres, that one could safely say that this Government displays an anti-worker attitude. It displays an anti-poor attitude and indeed it displays an anti-women attitude as well.

This Government in the last few months has done something incredible. They have cut the funding to the Unemployed Help Centres in the City of Brandon and in the City of Winnipeg. This is absolutely idiotic. We are always given the excuse by the Minister responsible, well, that is a federal responsibility and we should not be concerned. The fact is those particular Unemployed Help Centres bring money into this province, real

dollars. Maybe Members opposite and many other Members of the House do not realize that the workers and the employers in Manitoba put more money each year into the unemployment insurance fund than we take out. Manitoba is a net contributor to the national employment insurance scheme in this country. So unemployment insurance, year by year, workers and employers together put more into the pot than they take out.

Here are two organizations in Brandon and Winnipeg who have some expertise and who work with those people who are having difficulty and cannot get a fair shake, in their views at least, from Canada Employment Centres. They have demonstrated to everyone that they have a very good track record, they have a very good ability to win cases on behalf of the unemployed. As a result, what has happened both in Brandon and in Winnipeg is that those workers, in effect, have gotten awards that they would not have gotten otherwise without the assistance of those centres. To that extent, this province gains a few hundred thousand dollars per year that it would not have otherwise.

I just do not understand this Government, for the life of me, for not wanting to ensure that those kinds of centres carry on. There is no question that unless the Minister of Employment Services (Mrs. Oleson) and this Government change their position, those centres, particularly the one in Brandon, will have to go out of operation. They will have to close their shop. The irony of it as well is that many people who have gone there apparently have been referred by some Members opposite over the years as a way of getting some assistance to help them deal with their unemployment insurance problem. These are the problem cases. These are the cases where there are grey areas, where you need someone who will advocate for you.

It does make sense that there should be some kind of a body, particularly when it is those bodies, these two centres, have been successful in bringing money into this province. Why do we want to cut off our nose to spite our face? I would hope that somehow or other the Government will change heart on this.

I asked for an emergency debate on this item about a month or so ago. I was not successful.—(Interjection)—I am talking about the Unemployed Help Centres. Now the Liberals are finally realizing that there is a problem there. I would hope that they would support us and try to persuade this Government to change their position because we are getting money from Manitoba by these centres that we would not have had otherwise. Certainly, we are helping those particular people who, if they do not get unemployment insurance, often will end up on welfare, will end up on municipal and, in some instances, on provincial social assistance rolls ultimately.

In terms that I described this Government as being anti-poor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the fact this Government is not prepared to pass on the real inflation that has occurred in this year to these long-term social assistance cases is a classic example of their lack of concern for the poorest among us. There are 23,000 Manitobans who are on long-term social assistance. These include the aged, they include disabled people, people who cannot work, as well as single parents, and the bulk of whom are women.

What we are doing is approving what the Government has done, is pass on a 3.9 percent increase but we know, as of the end of October, the rate of inflation is higher than that. As a matter of fact, in the month of October alone, it is running at 5.7 percent. The facts are that our Government last year provided an increase of 5.3 percent when the year inflation was only 4.2 percent. So let it not be said that somehow or other this Government is following the procedure we used.

We used a rather intricate procedure for looking at inflation. We looked at the Canada food basket from the Canada Department of Agriculture, the change in prices as they measure them, as well as the CPI and other information that we had. What we have instead is a 3.9 percent increase which totally ignores the escalating inflation of this fall, totally ignores the rate of 5.7 percent. We are not saying 5.7 percent. We are saying at least recognize that.—(Interjection)—We are recognizing that.

What this Government is doing around the province, in every one of your constituencies, you are taking food off the table of the poor people in your ridings. That is what you are doing. The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) is speaking from his seat. I will tell you there are many people in his riding who are dependent on these rates. Thanks to him and his Government, they are going to get a raw deal. They are getting a raw deal from this. Their standard of living is being reduced. We are taking food away, in effect, from the poorest people among us. What are we doing? What is it all about?

I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government is anti-poor. This Government did not like the one-tier system that we were going to bring in. The Minister of Economic Security (Mrs. Oleson) said we had a number of years. We at least developed a system, we were putting it in place, we announced it. It was all set to go.

We get this Conservative Government in place and it is entirely scrapped because the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said during the election they do not like a one-tier system, they do not want the province to take over rural municipal welfare, but rather they would like to regulate the municipalities. Okay, when are you going to start to regulate the municipalities? I think that is the wrong way to go. I do not like to see us regulating municipalities.

I tell the Government sound advice. They are going to get into deep trouble when they start trying to police the municipalities to tell them what rates of welfare they should pay out—far better to do it yourself, far better to take it over and do it. You can involve the municipalities in all kinds of ways but, if you are going to police the municipalities and regulate them to bring about some kind of equity in this province, I say with all sincerity, you are going down the wrong track. It is just an inadequate way to go. It is fraught with difficulties but, on top of that, I am not so sure that social justice will be served.

What we have got then are people in rural Manitoba who are continuing to suffer social injustice. If there is any area of social injustice that exists—there are many areas of social injustice that exist among us, but

this is probably one of the worst. We know that some municipal Governments pay only a fraction of what the provincial rate is. I simply do not know how those individuals affected can possibly manage.

• (1530)

This Government has been in office now for many months. The Minister told us last summer that she was going to consult with the municipal organizations, the municipal officials. Well, here we are just about into the month of December and she is still telling us she is going to consult with them. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to hold my breath on this one. I suspect nothing is going to happen whatsoever and those people are going to continue to suffer this social injustice.

The other point I would like to make is with regard to what is happening to our economy. I made the point—(Interjection)—if the Member for Arthur, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), wants to get up and debate it, fine, let him do so, but I say this Government has demonstrated clearly that they are anti-working persons. They are anti-worker, they are anti-poor. There is no question about that.

Also, a matter that should concern us in this Legislature is the fact that our economy is showing signs of slowing down. There are many reasons for that. The fact that there are some—(Interjection)—Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) continues to talk from his seat. I would welcome his participation in this debate. I would like to hear what he has to say when I am completed my remarks, Mr. Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

The fact is the economy is stagnating. Just about all the indicators you look at reveal that we are doing rather poorly compared to the rest of the country. I say that whether you are looking at capital investment, our increase in capital investment is less than the national average. Our manufacturing shipments are increasing at less than the national average. Our Consumer Price Index is going out of whack. It is now running at 5.7 percent. The weekly earnings—(Interjection)—I am talking about the figures that are now available for this fall. I am talking about the current months that are available. I am talking about what has happened to retail trade in the last few months.

What has happened to the farm cash receipts? What about building permits? What about housing starts? We see generally across the board, no matter what economic indicator you are looking at, a decline.

It does not matter what you look at. The Members opposite can laugh but, I tell you, they will not be laughing in a few months from now because the situation is going to get more serious in the months ahead. It is going to be more serious in the months ahead because some of the factors are beyond the Government's control.

On the other hand, there are some matters that the Government could address. They are not taking a positive approach to unemployment. They are not taking a positive approach to try and stimulate the economy at this time.

If you look at retail sales, and I know the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) likes to talk about well, it is the drought. It is really the drought. But you know, if you look at what has happened in Saskatchewan, you will find their retail sales are not that great but still a lot better than in the Province of Manitoba. In the month of September, our retail sales increased by 6.9 percent. Saskatchewan increased by 10.2 percent. Even if you take the year as a whole, very roughly speaking, Saskatchewan almost doubled the rate of increase in retail sales over the Province of Manitoba. Where did Manitoba rate in retail sales, which is an indication of consumer demand? We ranked 10 out of 10 for this year.

Frankly, the situation is such that if you looked at it, if you took the year as a whole and looked at the change, you see it is at a rate that is below the level of inflation for the year. For this year so far, we increased our retail sales by 3.6 percent but the rate of inflation for that period of time was 4 percent. As I said, in real terms, therefore, the retail sector is shrinking because, as long as you have inflation numbers exceeding the numbers for retail sales increase, there is no other conclusion that in real terms Manitoba's level of retail trade is declining.

I think the sad fact of it is this Government has no plans to try to counteract the economic downturn. There are other figures here I made reference to and I am not going to bore you with reading out all these numbers—(Interjection)—I am glad Members opposite are listening, however. The numbers speak for themselves. They are not my numbers, they are numbers from Statistics Canada. They can read them as well as I can. They can look them up, they can read the reports and so on.

I heard reference just, I think it was, yesterday and certainly over the weekend about the vacancy rate in the City of Winnipeg rising by 45 percent. I think that was the statement. There were a number of reasons for that. Obviously, the degree of housing construction has a bearing on it but so do other things such as what is happening to population. This is not my statement. People in the rental business say one of the reasons is that the population is declining. I do not know about that, but that is what they are saying. They are giving that as a reason for the vacancy rates starting to increase.

The other reason they refer to is the slackening of growth in employment, that the fact that employment, that is jobs created, is slackening off, and of course if you do not have a job, how can you rent an apartment unless you go on welfare of course? Given what is happening around here, perhaps the numbers on welfare will increase. But if you look at the Statistics Canada reports from the labour force survey and you take what has happened in the last four months—and I use the last four months because these are the figures that they have put together to see what has been happening in the last four months, that is with the period ending October '88. So we are looking at July, August, September, October, the four months.

What has happened in Canada? In Canada, in terms of the number of people working, the number of people

employed, there was an increase of one-third of a percent. What happened in Manitoba in that period of time? Instead of an increase, we had a decline in employment of 0.4 percent. You might say, well, what is 0.4 percent? It is significant, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If that was a plus, I would not mind it, but you have a plus for Canada as a whole and we have a minus for Manitoba. Why, oh why, are the number of job creations, the level of job creation declining in Manitoba while it is increasing in Canada as a whole? Can the Members opposite, can the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) explain that? That is not when we are in office, that is when you are in office, the last four months. Well, you can answer it, why there has been a decline in jobs in that period of time, percentage declines, 0.4 percent, whereas in Canada, as I said, it was plus 0.3 percent.

The same thing in the unemployed. What has happened to the numbers of unemployed? In the last four months, there has been an increase of 15 percent in the level of unemployment. These are the actual numbers of unemployed in Manitoba whereas, in Canada as a whole, it only increased by 4.9 percent. So again you have figures revealing a rather weak labour market. As they say, the labour market, the job situation is very, very weak in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I therefore ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in particular, what if anything are you going to do about it? I suspect they will give us the usual answer that, well, we shaved a bit off the payroll tax. Frankly, what they have done with the payroll tax is totally insignificant. It is so minimal it is hardly recognizable. It is just a drop in the bucket. Admittedly, they gave a chunk of money to the CP by not increasing the diesel locomotive fuel tax as Saskatchewan did, and they gave a break to Inco, I gather. They have done those things, but I do not see any great stimulus coming from either of those two industries because of the tax break. All we have done is given up millions of dollars that we could have used to give to some of the poor people in this province. In fact, that is how you can create some demands, some stimulus in the retail sector, is to be a little more generous to the poorest people because, I can tell you, they will spend every last dollar of it because the levels are relatively low.

The Government has no economic—as far as I can see, I guess they have a set of policies, but I cannot see any positive results of those economic policies. The facts show that the economy is starting to stagger, and I am going to be the first one to say there are all kinds of reasons for that. It is not just because what Government does or does not do. I have never said that all the years I have been in the House. We are not an economic island unto ourselves. We are affected by the national economy, indeed the North American, the international economy. Let us face it, I am not disputing that. But for whatever reason, we have this rather poor economic situation and I am saying—and my message is, if anything, a message to this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in particular, or question, what can or will you do about it? Will you do anything to provide some stimulus? Will you do anything to provide something to assist in job creation?

You can use all kinds of figures, but I want to make the point again that, if you take the last month, October, unemployment in Manitoba—I am using actual rates now—increased from 7 percent to 7.4 percent. In Canada as a whole, it dropped from 7.6 percent last October to 7.2 percent this October and of course it means that the Canadian rate is lower than the Manitoba rate. A lot of that has to do with what is going on in Ontario but, nevertheless, we are in an unusual position where our rate of unemployment is higher than the national average.

We are in a position where year over year our employment has deteriorated, whereas the Canadian unemployment picture, as the national whole, has improved. So I say, there has to be something wrong. Therefore, I also say, if there is something wrong, what are we going to do about it and, more specifically, what is this Government going to do about it? Will it bring forward a set of economic policies to tackle economic growth?

There was one program that we had in place that I believe provided that stimulus and it provided great assistance to the private sector. It was a great complement or supplement to the institutional training that we had.

The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and others are talking about the need for training. We are all talking about the need for training and retraining because of the impact of free trade, the fact that new skills may have to be learned if people are displaced, etc., from the trade agreement. Fine, and we have some excellent colleges here, some excellent technical institutions, but not all the training necessarily occurs in the training institutions. There are roles for training on the job. Our Job Training for Tomorrow Program, which was in my department of Employment Services, a \$10 million program, did indeed provide the small business sector with some subsidy, with some assistance to provide training on the job. Well, this program is no longer. The only thing that remains of the program are a few applications that are still in the mill. But as of June 30, no new applications have been received and, therefore, really to all intents and purposes that program is in the process of being phased out and is just about finished.

There is nothing that I know of that will be forthcoming to replace it and I think this is a tragedy, particularly when I say that a lot of retraining can occur on the job. Not everybody is made out to go to a technical institution to formal academic institutions for training. Many are better trained right on the job and more money, more emphasis should be put on that. So we do not have that type of program any more. That is gone, that has vanished.

So, I detect the Government really has no sense of direction in terms of dealing with the economic problems that we have, absolutely no sense of direction, and I say it will become more serious in the months ahead and the people of Manitoba, therefore, are not being well served by this Government. I say it is sad that they do not have some focal point. They scrapped the Manitoba Jobs Fund. Okay, that is the decision they made. They are entitled to make that decision, but

there is nothing to replace it. There is no concerted action. There is no unified approach by this Government to tackle problems of economic development. I say, to that extent, Manitoba is not being well served, therefore.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have taken this opportunity to put a few thoughts on the record. I would hope that at some point the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would respond and tell us, yes, they are going to recognize that the economy is slowing down and that, as a Government, they are prepared to do something to offset this, to provide some stimulus to the economy, working with the private sector. I am not saying create jobs in Government. The Jobs Training for Tomorrow Program provided funding to the private sector. Please understand, those jobs are not make-work jobs, they were in a private sector, whether it be a painter in a painting shop, an auto body worker in an auto body shop, or a clerk in an office, or whatever it is, or a worker in a day care centre, whatever it was. Those were real jobs. So it is just sad that that program has been phased out.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few thoughts, I will sit down, and I trust that at some point the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) can give us some response indicating to Manitobans which way this Government is prepared to go.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and let me thank Opposition Members for their remarks. I know there are several Members on our side of the House who would just love to rise to the challenge and be able to refute, like I know they would be able to, many of the comments that have been laid on the record.

Let me say, in closing debate, that I thank the Liberal Opposition for the responsible approach they have taken to second reading. I thank Members of the NDP for some of the comments they have put on the record. I feel though, before I do sit down, that I should spend the next five or ten minutes at most, hopefully, refuting some of the comments that have been made by various Members, particularly of the NDP.

First of all, to direct some comments to the Liberal critic for Finance (Mr. Kozak), let me say, I will do everything within my power to ensure that he has documents as to the provincial finances, either in the form of the second quarter or to the extent that we can pull away the Public Accounts, year ending March 1987, away from the provincial Auditor's Report to the provincial Legislature, I will ensure that to the extent possible that he has that information before we have the Standing Committee on Public Accounts because I understand his point. It is only fair that he has the latest information available to him, financial information, before he enters into debate on matters of a fiscal nature. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will undertake to provide whatever I can to him.

Let me say to the MLA for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) though that—indeed to all Members of the House—the economy is not in decline. The economy is doing reasonably well under the circumstances and I must say, given the fact that we just come through 29 quarters

of unprecedented growth in the country as a whole, 29 quarters unforeseen in the Western World since the Great Depression, it is well acknowledged within the context of the federal and national economies that there is unquestionably going to be a downturn.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

* (1550)

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cannot come here and say for a moment something is black when it is white, and I cannot say something is white when it is black. At least when I was in Opposition, I did not claim that this Chamber, that the fine ceiling of this Chamber was going to come tumbling down on us because of all the doom and gloom. So I am consistent. I have always prided myself on being consistent in this respect.

Let me say, when challenged by Members opposite to indicate what the economic plan is, the first step of the economic plan is to put our own shop, our own house, into order. That is the No. 1. That is one of the bases that we went to the people in the Province of Manitoba on which they gave us a mandate to govern. That was first step of the economic plan that we presented to the people of the Province of Manitoba. To that end, there will be information that will be laid before all the Members in this Chamber within 10 days, as per my promise to the MLA for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), dealing with the second report of the finances of this province, the Second Quarterly Report, which will indicate that we are well along our way with respect to the finances of this province. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is so obvious to us, what is so obvious to all of us in Government, indeed should be the case for Members opposite, is that there are large pools of money that are looking everywhere to invest these days. The world has become small; the fact, it has become trading in every respect. People are looking for places to invest where the return on their capital, of course, is maximum.

What we are trying to do as a Government is to position ourselves, indeed position the Province of Manitoba in a position such that people who are in control of these large pools of capital will at least look at our province for a period of time, not like what was the case in the years past when they would totally neglect this province because of a whole host of reasons, not the least of which was that you had the highest taxation regime almost within the Western World; secondly, because you had labour legislation that precluded anybody from wanting to look at this province in a serious fashion.

So those basically are the basic underlying tenets of the economic plan. Let me say that for the record. Let me also indicate that this Government is not going to rush into hydro development for the sake of pure development. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be hydro development if and only if it is based on sound economics—not politics, sound economics. Of course, the former administration pulled away from that approach, and the ratepayers of this province will soon

realize what it was that the Government imposed upon them basis a decision other than on pure economics.

We did decrease some taxes in this province. We have held others constant. To the extent that we can bring into place and put into place the fiscal standing of this province, we will decrease the personal taxes as quickly as we possibly can. Nobody is more aware of the impact that high personal taxes have on spending, on the disposition of disposable income, indeed therefore on sales tax revenue on sales within the province. We are fully aware of it and yet we are fully aware of why it is that we have high taxes. We do not have high taxes because the Members of the New Democrat Party wanted high taxes. No, there are high taxes because they had to be put into place because borrowers would no longer lend to this province if they were not going to go to the people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just make a couple of other points. The Members chastise us for not having in place a job creation strategy. You are right, we are not going to put into a place a false economy based on a Jobs Fund where money was borrowed just for the sake of trying to hold into place employment statistics because what that does, first of all, is give a false impression. It creates a false economy and leaves the legacy of the borrowing costs for years to come.

When the MLA for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) gets up and rails against us for not increasing social allowance rates at some level equivalent to some rate of inflation, let us say we would love to have increased them 5 percent, 6 percent, but the fact of the matter is \$1 out of every \$2 that each one of us and each taxpayer pays in this province in support of provincial income tax, \$1 out of every \$2, goes outside of the province in support of interest payments. So we would love it if we could roll back the clock to a point that we were at six years ago. That was the false economy which the Members opposite created. We found out it does not work.

I suppose the last comment I would say is that the tired small-c conservative approach that the Members are beginning to adopt, that being continue to borrow money, continue to throw it into job creation programs, continue to make decisions not based on economics but on politics, does not work. It will not work in any respect. It has been proven to be unworkable. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only approach from our viewpoint is to put our own shop in order, show outside investors that there is some semblance of management that is in control in this province, that they will not be taxed to death, that there will be a stable economic climate, and then they will invest in this province and jobs will be created.

Nevertheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me say as the final point, we recognize that there will have to be developed some programs in support of private sector activity. It does not mean that they have to be done in the terms of job support or specific aid in employment creation. They could be done through the tax mechanism. They could be done in a whole host of ways. I can say, in all honesty, we are contemplating various approaches to Governments involved.

But nevertheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the model that the Members of course hold so close to their hearts, the one where it is Jobs Fund created, where you borrow money to give money out, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is telling us that those programs do not work. Basically, they are telling us they do not want them, because they cause bad feelings as between sectors, as between individual employers.

Again, with regard to the myriad of economic indicators that the MLA for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) lays before us, let me say to him that 70 percent of our economy within the Province of Manitoba takes its lead, as he knows, directly from the national scene. We are well aware that Manitoba over the last five years particularly had a huge direction of public sector spending, so much of it borrowed, for which now the legacy is just massive, interest rates which are preventing us from doing a number of, what we would like to consider, progressive thrusts in a number of areas.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I felt it was important that I react to some of the false claims made by Members opposite and, hopefully when we move into some of the major Bill dealing with The Appropriation Act, 1988, I know all Members on my side of the House would wish to comment in much greater detail at that time. Thank you.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

Mr. Manness: I move, seconded by the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), that Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill No. 35 and Bill No. 43 for third reading.

* (1600)

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill No. 35, The Loan Act, 1988, and Bill No. 43, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1988 (2), for third reading, with the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

BILL NO. 35—THE LOAN ACT, 1988

Mr. Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I would like to call the Committee of Supply to order to consider Bills No. 35 and 43. First, we will deal with Bill No. 35, The Loan Act, 1988. Clauses 1 to 9—pass; Schedule—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass; Bill No. 35—pass. Bill be reported.

**BILL NO. 43—THE INTERIM
APPROPRIATION ACT, 1988 (2)**

Mr. Chairman: Clauses 1 to 10—pass; Preamble—pass; Title—pass; Bill No. 43—pass. Bill be reported.

Call in the Speaker.

**IN SESSION
COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House): Your Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 35, The Loan Act, 1988, and Bill No. 43, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1988 (2), and reports the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), that the report of the Committee of the Whole be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

THIRD READINGS

BILL NO. 35—THE LOAN ACT, 1988

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance) presented, by leave, Bill No. 35, The Loan Act, 1988, for third reading.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I move, seconded by the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

* (1610)

**BILL NO. 43—THE INTERIM
APPROPRIATION ACT, 1988 (2)**

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader) presented, by leave, Bill No. 43, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1988 (2), for third reading.

MOTION presented and carried.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand that with regard to Estimates, the Estimates of the Department of Urban Affairs will be before the committee in Room 255, and the Estimates of the Department of the Attorney-General will be in the Chamber.

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

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

**CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY
SUPPLY—URBAN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I would like to call this committee to order to consider the Estimates for Urban Affairs. We have had the Minister's opening statement and the statements by the critics.

We will move at this time to item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$227,800—pass.

1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$55,300—the Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Mr. Chairperson, before you pass that, can I get just a bit of an explanation from the Minister as to what these Other Expenditures are for? Perhaps you can direct me to a specific page in the book if there is a breakdown.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): On page 11, the right-hand side, \$9,700, \$11,800 \$10,400, \$3,400, Transportation, Communication, Supply and Services, Other Operating Grants, etc., all along there.

Mr. Angus: Grants was one thing that I had ticked off.

Mr. Ducharme: The \$20,000, we are negotiating a grant with the Urban Studies Institute at the University.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, pass.

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Chairperson, . . . I am not sure where the Minister thinks it would be most appropriate to talk about legislation for The City of Winnipeg Act. Do you want it to be under Administration and Finance or is there another spot?

Mr. Ducharme: I would sooner have it talked under my salary but it does not really matter, whatever is the will of the committee.

Ms. Hemphill: I was going to make the point, Mr. Chairperson, that this is another one of the Estimates where we do not have a large amount of time and I have a certain number of questions. I am not sure if it matters particularly if I give the question when we are on a particular page or if we get through them in the two-and-a-half hours that we have left. Is all your staff here for questions?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, they will be here right through the day.

Ms. Hemphill: Fine.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures—pass.

1.(c) Administrative and Financial Services: (1) Salaries \$181,900—the Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, I notice that there is a one staff year reduction between this year and last year.

Mr. Ducharme: There was one directorate position that was not kept on for this year.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(c)(1)—pass; 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$23,900—pass.

Item 2. Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg, provides for the current operating grants to the City of Winnipeg, (a) Current Programs Grant \$19,326,000—the Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if the Minister would like to introduce this section in terms of his philosophy, in terms of giving the money to the City of Winnipeg. It has been an item that has been contentious from ours, that is the Minister's and my perspective when we were on the other side of the ledger. Rather than we sort of start asking questions, if he just wants to introduce it, we can get into a general discussion on it.

* (1620)

Mr. Ducharme: If you are asking for philosophy, the philosophy would not affect these particular current programs' grants. As you can appreciate, most of these commitments were made as of March of last year to Council. What we have done this year is, recently we have gone in and reviewed the five-year program again. We did that again with the city to tell them that we would like to receive as much information as we can up front. We are trying to relay that while we go through the Estimate process also with the city. Like you, I feel that the city has the capabilities of determining their own programs and we will assist them wherever we feel it is possible through our expertise that we have. I think the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) and myself both realize that when we were on City Council we did feel that most of the city should be operating their own programs with probably some of the expertise that is coming from the Urban Affairs department.

Mr. Angus: Let me see if I can paraphrase what the Minister has said so that we are both talking the same language: (1) you are going to continue prior commitments in relation to grants that the former Government has made; (2) your general philosophy is unconditional grants. That is that you are going to be giving them money but you are not going to be necessarily telling them how to spend it.

There have been programs such as the sound attenuation barriers on Lagimodiere Boulevard and the Mitchelson Bridge in the North End part of the city, the Kildonan Bridge in that area. Do you want to just talk on those for a second again?

Mr. Ducharme: I would call it, if you want to call it a name, the Mitchelson-Doer bridge.

Mr. Angus: Okay, call it whatever you wish.

Mr. Ducharme: The city did ask for support on that particular program and what I am saying to you is, right now, if you want to compare the barrier, the noise barrier, that there are times when the provincial

Government will ask or, through negotiation, suggest some type of projects. However, we will not do as was done earlier when you have had a program such as, I guess, the one for the busing, I think the Member realizes that back some time ago there was a condition applied to the busing at one time that we all got worked up about was when they said, well, you can have your grant with an increase as long as you keep the fares as they were before. I think that is a different type of interference that we really have to avoid.

We did suggest a small program since I have been here, the one on the termites. We suggested that we would go into that program with them and we suggested a certain amount of monies if they would match it. Those programs will not be discontinued. What I am saying is that you do have, over the period of time, the city has come forward in their five year, and they have some programs that they feel are their priorities. They are making plans on them. They have all their detail work done, and I would say that any change in that theory would have to be on a project specifically with our input and with theirs.

We would like to negotiate. At the present time, we do not have any projects that we feel are a priority with the provincial Government.

Mr. Angus: Let us take the noise attenuation barriers as a place to start. The former provincial Government began with the former Minister, I think his name was Lecuyer, who got it going. There was some concern within the city that it would create some sort of a precedent. Is there any thought about continuing and/or looking at a long-range development plan for noise attenuation barriers between major transportation corridors and residential housing?

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

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I just wanted to clarify that on this particular barrier, there was after the barrier had gone up, as you probably appreciate, along Bishop-Grandin we did the earth ones, and now we have done the one along Lagimodiere. The Lagimodiere one, I believe, after they have been up and after we can do some studies, they are supposed to come back to us with those studies. So that was part of the experimental program that was set in place. So I guess when they do come back with their studies on those then we will know what it can do for the other areas.

Mr. Angus: Then is it reasonable to assume after a review and reporting time the city will be able to come back and enter into some form of a cost-sharing agreement with the provincial Government for noise-attenuation barriers in other parts of the city?

Mr. Ducharme: I hope, after the review, then we can enter into those negotiations somehow.

Mr. Angus: On the capital budget, specifically the bridge, the city did ask for cooperation and assistance. Unless I am wrong, they had asked for cooperation and assistance on three bridge proposals. They may

have prioritized them but the Minister may have more information they have not prioritized them, but there was the extension of the Bishop Grandin through Waverley, there was the Charleswood corridor, and then there was the Kildonan corridor. As all three of them were set into a separate and special capital budget identifying large dollar ticket items in requirements that they would like assistance on or from the province, was that assistance forthcoming?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I do not know what negotiations on those three projects you are discussing as that was with the previous administrations. To add to that, there was only agreement apparently to fund the Kildonan corridor.

Mr. Angus: Yes, the Minister was in Opposition when, I guess, those negotiations were undertaken between the city and the former Government. I am not sure how they managed to prioritize because it was my understanding the city did not prioritize them, but was it the former Government that prioritized the requirements to the best of your knowledge?

Mr. Ducharme: All I can do is suggest at this time there were discussions on the Kildonan Bridge and that is the one the previous Government decided to go with and we in Opposition, of course, are not privy to those discussions of what went on between the city and the Kildonan Bridge or the people who were involved. Maybe we can blame the previous administration at the time but even probably in fairness to the other critic as she probably would not be privy to that either because it would have been an agreement in those monies on that particular project.

I am told the city did look at traffic counts and this was priority over Charleswood.

* (1630)

Mr. Angus: That is my recollection as well, the Kildonan corridor did have a priority over the Charleswood corridor. The Bishop Grandin extension had a priority over both of them in terms of direct counts and numbers. I am not sure how they determined that or what the involvement is of the Department of Urban Affairs. I guess, through you to the Minister, the question is, is it going to be the philosophy of this Minister to give unconditional grants and allow the city to prioritize, or are they going to continue to give conditional grants telling the city which projects they will fund and which ones they will not fund?

Mr. Ducharme: If you are talking about provincial monies, the city have always had that prioritization or the negotiation process with the Government and I think that would be a negotiation process. I guess I would be a little foolish to say, if we were against some type of project we did not really like, then I guess we would hope that our negotiations could convince them otherwise, but they have always been that way.

I believe on the Waverley one you are talking about, I think that when the discussions were on that one I think they were hoping, and they did just complete it

last year, the Bishop Grandin section between Lagimodiere and St. Anne's, and then I guess they would come on with the other ones. I do not know why they went ahead with the Kildonan ahead of that one. Maybe it was because they were completing that section first.

Mr. Angus: Is it your intention to contribute financially to the Charleswood Bridge and to give them the green light to go ahead on the Charleswood Bridge?

Mr. Ducharme: We have not been asked in regard to that project yet. I guess that will be in their next demands. I think you are aware—you were also there—that there is the program that goes from 85 to 90, the \$90 million. I think we are getting pretty close—

Mr. Angus: To having spent it all in the first—

Mr. Ducharme: —to having spent it all.

Mr. Angus: —couple of years.

Mr. Ducharme: Yes.

Mr. Angus: I have no further questions at this particular time on this. I think there might be questions from my counterpart, and then also when we get into the Transit Operating 2.(b) we have some questions.

Ms. Hemphill: Actually I was going to go into some Transit Operating questions.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Then is it—

Ms. Hemphill: I just have one additional question on the Charleswood Bridge. What is the full cost of that? Is it about \$26 million?

Mr. Ducharme: I am told it is around \$19 million.

Ms. Hemphill: Around \$19 million. What role does the department play? What do you intend to play? When you say you have not been asked, I am sure you are getting ready for the question, and what are you doing to get ready for the question? Are you going to do your own analysis and make a judgment?

In other words, the question, are you going to give them the green light to go ahead or are you going to influence whether that goes ahead or not? What role does the positions of, I think—the St. James Community Committee and some of the groups who were very opposed to this thought that, instead of having a major four-lane overpass, there could be a much more modest structure that would serve equally well, and that they would like some money to go into sort of alleviating the traffic pressure east-west and not relying so much on the bridge. Does the Minister have a position on that?

Mr. Ducharme: We mainly get involved in the monetary after they provide us with the traffic counts. We get involved in the financing and the land use and that is about it. As you know, we do not get involved in the

corridors or anything like that. We just get involved in the actual bridge, the funding to the bridge.

Ms. Hemphill: But by funding or not funding the bridge, you take a position on the bridge. I think that if the Government thought that it was a low priority or that there did not need to be that level of expenditure of a major four-lane traffic corridor, one could handle that by refusing the funding. Do you not see the province having any role to play in determining the development of the city, or is it just whatever the City Council wants to do?

Mr. Ducharme: Basically, as I said before, our role is probably not to second guess the information that the city provides us, the same way as the previous Government did not second guess the city on the Kildonan corridor or the Kildonan Bridge, and we generally will look, from an urban point of view at the total project, what it does to the total city and not try to get involved in just that particular area. We will look at it from all the traffic counts that they give us, etc.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Are you prepared to pass? The Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Just so that I can set the record straight, in the Five Year Capital Program, the one the City of Winnipeg produces and publishes—this is a public document—they have clearly indicated in 1988 they would begin the Bishop Grandin Bridge and then, subsequently, the Charleswood Bridge and, thirdly, the Kildonan Bridge. So to indicate, the Provincial Government, and whether it was politically motivated or otherwise, did not pluck out a particular project and try to advance it is erroneous. They clearly did for whatever reason.

So the Minister does have the opportunity to say, we do not want this particular bridge to go ahead until further studies are done, or under certain conditions.

So I think the Minister has indicated, and I guess I would just like to confirm what he is saying, it is not going to be his intention to get involved in that manner. He is going to be allotting unconditional grants to the City of Winnipeg and allowing them to make their own decision. I would like an affirmation or a confirmation to that statement, if it is possible.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, maybe to the Members, the City of Winnipeg really does have probably—they should with their particular councillors in their areas have the expertise and the political knowledge to know that is the project for that area.

There are 29 of them and one of us and one of you so I think, if the City of Winnipeg is adamant, they have been going through all the hearings in that particular area and they have said if they come forward and they say, that is our priority with that particular bridge, I do not think right now that would be our decision to stop it. If all of a sudden the information they have given us is showing or there is some definite indication they are showing us it is such a negative throughout the whole city, and it is for the benefit—it is a negative

effect on the whole city—well then, I guess we would probably have to do this. But at this particular time, we have not come to that judgment. We have based it on their traffic counts and their financial capabilities to do the job and the land use that has been made available to them.

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

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairperson, again on the current program's grant and as you sort of get into it, I do not want to unnecessarily hold it up, but I do not, at the same time, want to be told after I have passed it, that question should have been asked at that time.

As the Minister perhaps is aware, and I certainly am, the infrastructure of the City of Winnipeg is in desperate need of programs that will help create the delivery of basic services to the citizens. The citizens and the taxpayers oftentimes have alternatives to recreational programs and/or alternatives to helping themselves in transporting themselves from point A to point B, whether they take their car or take a bus. But when it comes to the delivery of water, there are very few individual citizens who actually are not bound by what the city determines or does not determine.

* (1640)

Water main breaks in the city have been escalating on a regular basis. Sewers are collapsing at an unprecedented rate. After years and years and years of good service, the older parts of the city are deteriorating faster than the amounts of money the property taxpayers and the city fathers can afford to put in to keep them serviceable, Mr. Minister. At the same time, we have noticed there is a good opportunity for programs that replace the infrastructure to create jobs.

In the past, when I was the chairman of Works and Operations, we were very successful in persuading the Government of the Day then to help contribute and to make matching dollars on two bases of need. One was the positive spinoff in employment that was created for the industry and the people who do the drawings, the consulting work, the digging, the general labour and the general positive impact on labour; and two, it addressed a need that was definitely there. I would like to encourage the Minister, and I would like to hear his comments on whether or not they intend to introduce any programs that would be above and beyond the current program grant designated towards helping the City of Winnipeg meet and address its infrastructure problems and at the same time create employment opportunities.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I do not think that the provincial Government would have those kind of monies. I think it would have to be something that would be worked out with the three levels of Government—in this day and age to expect that this would be strictly a provincial-city type of relationship or funding.

I know that a resolution was passed at the Premiers' Conference and another one was passed and supported

at the Ministers' Conference in regard to supporting what you are referring to. Of the few hours of discussion of the time that was available at that Ministers' Conference, it was suggested that we go forward and ask the federal Government to, knowing that none of the provincial Governments have those kind of monies. I know at the Premiers' Conference, Mr. Devine was the chairman, and supposed to go to the Premiers to get their involvement and put pressure on the Prime Minister. I know that he was to carry the message. I know what you are referring to on the water main renewals. We know the loan that you are referring to is \$8 million a year. I think the program would be finished in the year 2020. So that is the kind of thing we are looking at, just to put the water main renewals.

The city, the only monies that we have available, of course, is through the \$90 million program that was established right now at this time. We know that it is almost wiped out, because the city has put their priorities into other structures and not into the repair and maintenance and repairing all the little water mains and the roads that are in areas that have been sitting there for years. That is a priority that they have addressed. I know it has always been a fight at City Hall. What is your priority, to fix up what we have got or add to the new structures, such as bridges, etc.?

So it is something that we hope, as a new Government, that we have some success in negotiating with the feds and the city and provincially along the way. We did put in \$11 million into land drainage improvements but other than that—

Mr. Angus: Being facetious, I would like to ask where the \$11 million shows up in this budget, just in order to identify it.

Mr. Ducharme: This was of the \$90 million we put in.

Mr. Angus: Part of the \$90 million?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes. Remember it is a program that is \$90 million that is supposedly a negotiation amount between the city and the province. If you look right through, there was \$3 million in '85; '86 another \$3 million; '87, \$3 million; and approved in 1988, \$1.26 million.

Mr. Angus: Perhaps the Minister would be kind enough to provide us with a breakdown of the \$90 million, and perhaps its terms of reference, so that we can have a better understanding of the fund and where it has been spent and in fact, if the city has decided that their priorities are into a different area and there is no money left for them, I am not sure how you are going to deal with that. The problem nonetheless is there and, Mr. Minister, if I may suggest, you can wait for the federal Government and they may or may not. This particular Government has indicated that they were not going to do anything specific except perhaps talk about it, so it is a step in the right direction, but I would also think that you could begin negotiations with the city to identify the problem and potential solutions.

I recognize that we do not have enough money to do the whole thing and we do not have enough

companies to be able to do it effectively. But, Mr. Minister, a five-year program that attacked the infrastructure itself above and beyond the \$90 million Transportation capital works projects that forced the city on contributing dollars and which shows some leadership—and I think would be an excellent program that would: (a) identify a need, and (b) help create employment. I think it is one thing to sit back and say that, yes, they have got a problem and, no, we do not have enough money to address it. I think it is an entirely different one to say, yes, I am going to commit myself to invest a certain amount of money on an annual basis over a specific period of time earmarked to solve this problem and to force the city to contribute some of their dollars towards that at the same time.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I would be glad to provide the Members with that on page 42. You have to realize that under the city commitments that these are not in stone. You have been through that process, I am sure, and I know that you have been through that process, that those are the ones the money is committed under that \$90 million and that carries over into the next page, 43.

The only thing I could say to the Member—and you could see by those amounts that you are right. If we are going to go into a program and focus in on repairing broken down items and not new ones, I would suggest to the Member that this would be as a result of our starting our negotiations with that five-year program that the \$90 million—we will call it the 90, let us use that as the name of it. That when we do go into another one where it goes from 90 to 95, for instance, maybe the Government could then maybe suggest their priorities, if that is the case, and make sure that, if we so wish, some monies are put forward into the particular program to protect those services that are in the ground. As you know, you have been a member of the process also, that if you take a look at the five-year even to the one that is 90, and now that the projected ones that go into 92 and 93, always the next few years are your high and then it drops down to your lower amount and they have eaten up the high level. It seems it always worked that way.

Mr. Angus: That is a philosophy, Mr. Acting Chairperson, to the Minister who says spend it while you have got it, we will worry about it Year 4 and 5 when we do not have it, which needs addressing in a different manner.

While we are on page 41 and 42, and we are talking about infrastructure and the repair of infrastructure, the objectives were to provide \$180 million over that period of time. It says right up at the top, "To financially assist the City of Winnipeg in the renewal and revitalization of its urban infrastructure through \$180 million."

Mr. Ducharme: No, no. It is \$90 million on both levels of Government. It is \$180 million.

Mr. Angus: They are both

Mr. Ducharme: I guess, and most people forget that really and I guess the city does all the time, that one

90 is ours and one 90 is theirs but it does not seem to work out that way.

Mr. Angus: I think my colleague had a question, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): The Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) had her hand up first.

* (1650)

Ms. Hemphill: Just to pick up on the subject of the inadequacies of the infrastructure, sewer and water, a large number of the inadequate areas, of course, are in the older parts of our city. I have one concern that has not been mentioned yet. We all recognize that there is a great deal of work there to do and that it is going to be done over a period of time, and that it is going to take budgeting and planning and I think some help from the federal Government.

In the meantime, what worries me is that where the system is known to be totally inadequate because the pipes are very small, because they do not have the backup system and there is a serious rain or water break, the city does not take any responsibility for the damage that is done to the homes even though they know that the problem is caused by an inadequate system. They will admit that. What they put in their official letter is that it was an act of God. Well, the rain was an act of God but the flooding was a result of inadequate pipes.

I guess my appeal is that since the areas are generally known that are the difficult areas, the worst areas in the city are known to the province and to the city, I think when something happens in one of those areas there should be more help that goes to the residents. I do not think we should be falling back on this act of God that gets the city out of taking the responsibility for having an inadequate system. I think they can say we are sorry it is inadequate, it is going to take us a while to fix up all the infrastructure in all of the areas but, in the meantime, you are not going to carry the burden alone of carrying the costs of the damage that results from it.

I think this is something that should be discussed between the province and the city because we recently had a situation a few months ago, and we all knew that the rainfall was too heavy for the system to carry away. There were a number of Inner City residents who were caught with damage that they could just not afford to cover. I am wondering if the Minister is aware of this as a problem and if he has any sympathy for the residents caught holding or left holding the bag.

Mr. Ducharme: Certainly I appreciate where the Member is coming from. I can tell you that I am fully aware and have been fully aware probably for the last 30 years, because in the insurance business you are fully aware.

Ms. Hemphill: That is just after you were born.

Mr. Ducharme: Thank you very much. That will not get you any more questions.

Ms. Hemphill: Or answers, I want answers. I have the questions.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I am fully aware and in the insurance business, in which I wore my other hat, we would be the first people they probably phone. As you appreciate, there are areas throughout the city that you cannot buy that type of coverage. If you look at eliminating the problem totally and that would be to go to the double system of drainage system with the sewer and the storm sewers, we all know that you would completely eliminate it. It would probably be in the vicinity of probably \$1 billion. We know that is not the answer, so all I can say is I really had not had any consideration in regard to that problem because we have never discussed it. It came through probably when Members in a very, very good year did not have to bother with it. It was in the summer of 1988. All I can say to the Member is, no, it has not been and that I will make sure, I will find out what the city is doing and give us an update on what they are doing in regard to those areas.

Ms. Hemphill: Mr. Acting Chairman, I appreciate the Minister's response. I think my point is there may be grey areas but there are times when we know that it really and truly was an act of God and there is no system that you could have had in place that could have prevented it. There are times when we also know darn well that it is the inadequacy of the system. I am just appealing to the city to be just a little more—and in this case there were maybe about 20 homes, and I know they are always worried about precedent but we know there are a limited number of areas that are really potentially going to be hit hard. They should be taking the responsibility. It should be at their doorstep and not dumping it on the laps of the Inner City people who can ill afford it. Just having them admit sometimes to culpability, although I know they are reluctant to do that, I think is something they should consider.

I am willing to pass this and go on to the Transit.

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, and also I was aware, when I was in the city, with Duguay Road. Duguay Road was one area where they were considering changing it a little bit and it was going through the system and I know maybe the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) can tell us what they did. I do not know whether they just received reports or what on that particular area but, when I left City Hall, they were discussing it with the Member from that particular area because that was another area that always got hit whenever you got a heavy rainstorm.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): In response to that, you know, often—because he did ask a question, I will answer that one. If we do find that it is because of improper spills in sewer systems that cause backup, in other words backup of fats or oils and then they cause it, so it is not all an act of God nor is it a fault on the part of the city.

But I just wanted, Mr. Acting Chairman, to point out that it is probably a matter of public record that I do not exactly agree with the Minister when he says that 29 councillors have all the expertise and professional

knowledge to run the City of Winnipeg, particularly under today's structure. Therefore, I for one, and I have not seen a logical explanation, am rather astounded that there have not been major changes come in restructuring the City of Winnipeg and the way that it operates. I know that the Minister has promised this later on in the Session but, by that time, it will be late on and debate will be very hasty and we will certainly be fast approaching the city elections, the urban elections.

Getting back to the infrastructure and, under the structure, I do not disagree that there is room for leadership by the provincial Government, and particularly when I take into account that a substantial, if not major, amount of water main renewals in the City of Winnipeg in the last few years and, if the provincial Government is going to be asked or even the federal Government is going to be asked to contribute to the cost of renewal of these things, they should have some say in it. I am wondering if the Minister has any thoughts on the fact that in the City of Winnipeg substantial, if not major, amount of work done on water mains are water mains that go anywhere from 7 to 12 or 15 years old, whereas this city is still being serviced with some water mains that go back into the 1890s. I am wondering if the Minister sees any role—because this still scares me, seeing some of these subdivisions and wondering just what kind of a bill at \$200 a foot it is going to cost to continue to renew services that are less than even 10 years in some cases.

I am wondering what role they may have now, or might see in the future, for (1) setting the standards of the type of materials that go into water mains and indeed into sewer installations, and the type of installations, taking into effect ground conditions and all the rest of it that may exist, not only in the City of Winnipeg indeed but in any installation in the province.

Mr. Ducharme: I know there have been lots of studies done on the waterpiping in regard to asbestos and what they were using, and we know that there is a problem with the cast iron. They are like the old galvanized piping that people had in their houses. They rot from the inside out. I know John, when he was Works and Ops, I think that was one of the major programs that we brought out to try and get the water mains repaired over a period of time where we finally worked them on a lot basis per occurrence of them splitting, because we would have been jumping all over the place. We did come out with the theory that those who have the most breaks over a certain stretch would be repaired the quickest. They are working at a clip of \$8 million a year.

I do not know what the latest figures are—the ones that are under 10 because, when I was there, it—I know what the numbers were then, but I do not know what they were in the last couple of years of the ones that have been installed say six and seven years ago. I know that in one area of St. Vital where they were doing Meadowood, which was built in the—I guess Meadowood was built in the early Seventies, in that area—middle Seventies. They were having trouble with them even then. They were breaking before the ones—I know I was getting more water main breaks than the

councillor in the adjoining area of Glenlawn. We were getting more in the Meadowood area which seems to be affected more. I really have not got the answer for what studies. I know the city has been conducting studies but I do not know what, unless my administration has some results of those studies, but we do not have the results of those studies.

* (1700)

Mr. Rose: It is maybe no secret that, as I said earlier, some water mains are still operative after over 90 years in this city. So somebody must have known how to handle the materials and the soils some time back before we had the engineering technology that we have now. This is no small problem. This amounts to millions and millions of dollars a year. It is very little secret that urban sprawl and developments such as Southdale in the south end of Winnipeg add on to present taxpayers' bills in providing services, but the well-kept secret in the City of Winnipeg, or it seems to be well-kept, is that not only are they paying for those improvements but, after seven and eight years, they are paying millions of dollars to replace faulty water mains.

Now the province, and this is why I am involved with this now, seems to be being asked to supply money to renew water mains that should have been properly put in just a few short years ago by the contractors who made the money on those developments. My question, which does not seem to be answered, is, because of that problem and because you are being asked to pay for infrastructure repairs now, not capital but infrastructure repairs, do you see a role in your department to lend some leadership to see that the right technology is used both in the installation and repair of these very vital services that are very, very costly, amounting to many, many millions of dollars a year which money could be spent on other things including social services, education, and repairing our bridges and roads?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, to answer that, to take a role, I think our Government has probably taken a role. It is that we were involved in discussions with our counterparts across Canada and, when we did meet, this was probably one of the main items, what you were referring to.

You mentioned earlier about The City of Winnipeg Act, that we did not bring in changes to The City of Winnipeg Act. At no time did we intend to bring in at this particular Session any major changes to The City of Winnipeg Act. The only one we brought in were some changes that had been asked for by the city that were for housekeeping and the number of councillors because the Boundaries was meeting and would not meet for another nine years.

I want to mention to the Member that the process that we will go through will be sitting down with the City of Winnipeg—I think we have a meeting in February—to go over the White Paper that you and the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) were involved in, go through their total yeas and nays, and come up with that along with—there are many other changes—

meeting with the surrounding municipalities, because the surrounding municipalities have their concern in regard to The City of Winnipeg Act also. We met with them earlier this summer and they said, before anything was to be put through the Legislature and may need changes of The City of Winnipeg Act, would you please consult with us?

Myself and the Municipal Affairs Minister (Mr. Cummings) will meet with those additional zone people. We feel there is a system which is not working with the additional zone people. We know that. We are aware of that. I guess it came down to probably the first time that Rosser pulled out a few years ago when it started to collapse. The Government did decide to allow Rosser to pull out of there. So every other one now has used that as a threat whenever they do not get their improvements the way they want or their planning the way they want. So something has to be done. Somebody has to sit down and redo and look at the additional zone problem.

It is not just to sit down and talk about the number of councillors and the power of the mayor and the power of the committees. All these things are very important and have been addressed. Some of the things were addressed in the Cherniack Report. But I think that to come in with that legislation at this time without consulting with all these people who are going to get affected by it, I think it would have been, I believe—and I am entitled to my belief because I am the one who is going to have to live with whatever this Government does. I believe that consultation is very, very important and that is why I did not bring the major changes in during this Session.

Mr. Rose: One comment on that, the thing has already been studied to death and I am sure that the Minister at this time has had ample time in Opposition to study the proposals and should have some better answer than that.

My question is the same as it was before. I see all these developments going in and I see all these water mains being dropped into the soil. I know that as a taxpayer in the City of Winnipeg—and that is their business as long as they do not ask the province for more money to renew them. I see these being dropped in there and, as a taxpayer of the City of Winnipeg, I am fed up to see the administrations continuing to renew water mains. I do not know what the earliest one might be but it would not surprise me if somebody told me that they are only three years old. I know of some that are only seven, specifically. When I see this, it worries me, and it worries me on behalf of the people whom I represent that these monies are being wasted.

I am wondering, because now yourself and the federal Government are being approached for monies to replace these, if indeed there is not a specific role for these levels of Government with all their expertise, particularly the federal, the National Research Council and all the rest of it, to look at these new subdivisions and see that not only the right material but the right method for installation is used such as we did almost 100 years ago.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I am going to say that our staff, for instance, does not have more experts than

the city in regard to the pipe that they are putting in. I could be wrong but I believe that they have gotten completely away from the cast-iron pipe.

It is not only the piping that we should be concerned about. The Member was a councillor for an area that has another problem. A road life expectancy, when is it finished? We know that people pay for a cement road when it goes in under their L.I. or under their development plan and then we come along now and at large the city pays for the asphaltting of that road. If you have a roof on a house, it is good for 25-30 years. I am talking about the local roads. I am not talking about the collector roads or the main arteries. We know that everybody uses them, but that is something else that has to be addressed. When is a road, when should people now say, I now have to pay under my local improvements? You now have somebody new living in that particular house on that bay. When should you now go under an L.I. again?

These are things that have to be addressed, and I agree that the city maybe at some times has not addressed those issues, but I can tell you it was not through lack of consultation at the City Hall level in the past because the pressures are put on everyone to address that. I know that when the water mains were addressed, the city did come in with a program and that was addressed. Now these other issues are going to have to be addressed.

Mr. Rose: I just want to say that it disappoints me that on this major item when the urban Governments are coming to other levels of Government, provincial or federal, that nobody can assure me that when a contractor puts a water main down today, after 365 days there is absolutely no guarantee on it and it is going to cost them \$200 to \$250 a foot to replace it almost immediately, that there is not some role for somebody in Government, seeing that I cannot get it from the City of Winnipeg, that we make sure that these very expensive installations which have to tear up streets—they have to tear up boulevards, they have to go down and make new installations—that there is not some research to make sure that the job is done properly.

Mr. Ducharme: I am sure the city has done their research on which type. Of all the problems they have had with the cast iron, I am sure they have come out with many, many programs on what is the best to use.

Mr. Rose: But they do not work.

Mr. Ducharme: I do not know what their record is right now on what works. All I can say is the city has responsibility to use the best products. That is all I can say.

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

* (1710)

Mr. Angus: So that it is not left on the record that the city employs a bunch of buffoons, they do have

technically competent people. They make their judgments on the best advice available to them at a particular time.

The Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) is absolutely right. There are sections in the city where cast-iron pipes have lasted many, many decades. There are other sections of the city where the soil conditions have drastically deteriorated and affected the cast-iron pipes. The best information they had at the time, which was 10 or 15 years ago, was that they would work. They found out the hard way that they would not. Then they, of course, may have compounded the error by putting in asbestos pipes which led to problems and now they have gone into plastic pipes.

I do think that the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) is delivering a message that should be taken by the Minister in that you have resources and contacts on a national basis to be able to offer assistance and guidelines to the City of Winnipeg so that they can address this problem more effectively. It would seem to me that, as opposed to passing the problem off and saying that it is their problem and they should hire their own technical people, there should be a bit more of a cooperative role provided by the senior level of Government. Again, as the Member for St. Vital says, in light of the fact that we have so much money invested in it and there is a continual desire from the city to offset the property tax collection and help augment it, there must be more of a role of cooperation in that area.

With that, I will—unless the Minister wants to respond.

Mr. Ducharme: The only thing that bothers me with the national is that I do not mind going to the Government for the national approach like we have done. That was one of the first items that I as Minister did, was get involved in this particular program of repairing and replacing.

The reason why I have mentioned the city expertise is because you have addressed and you mentioned the same things I realize in that the soil conditions for the cast iron could be completely different in another area. So to use the experience of one other area other than city, I feel that I would sooner use the city's expertise and the city's background on what has caused the problems in the past.

You have other areas where you cannot even use waterline pipes. You get in parts of the Northwest Territories and Newfoundland and what it costs to put in these services, they are going through a completely different type of problem. They have the problem of the servicing of waterline at \$20,000 per lot compared to ours. So there are problems throughout the country.

I would hope that the city has accumulated the expertise on saying that the plastic pipe is the best. I guess we hope that will be the norm that they use. I know they are using it in all the new developments. Let us hope they use it in all of their replacement items.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): 2.(a)—pass.

2.(b) Transit Operating Grant \$16,485,000—the Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Two very quick questions, Mr. Acting Chairperson: (1) the Minister alluded to, and I would like it stated clearly on the record, the conditional grants, of tying the grants to fares and/or the concerns that we had at the (c) level of tying the Transit operating grants to the purchase of buses in certain areas. I would like his assurance that is not going to be done. There are no strings to this particular block of money being passed onto the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Ducharme: We have not considered putting any strings attached to either the fares or the purchase of the buses. That has never been discussed.

Mr. Angus: That is fine. Those are the two questions I had.

Ms. Hemphill: Mr. Acting Chairperson, on the same issue, it is my recollection that the reason for the province deciding to fund 50 percent of the operating deficit, which is what the province funds, was in order to help keep fares down. I mean the whole purpose was recognition that the city itself could not handle the operating deficit by itself without significantly increasing the fares, and the province went into a cost-sharing arrangement for the purpose of helping the city keep the fares down by paying half of the deficit.

If the Minister is going to continue, you know, it is a question of whether or not that was a condition or whether or not that was an understanding that was the basis for the provincial Government coming in and paying 50 percent of the deficit in the first place, and I think it was. So I do not see it as much of a condition as a helping hand to the City of Winnipeg to keep the fares down.

If the Minister does not intend to do it on the same basis, in other words, to continue to pay half of the deficit in order to keep the the deficit from being carried on the backs of the riders who can least afford it, what does he see as his role, if he has any, or what is being done to protect the riders and to keep the fares down? What the province would not have wanted to happen is to pay 50 percent of the deficit and to then have, say, the whole cost of the deficit being borne by the riders in increased fares. How do you intend to help keep the fares down?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, it is 50 percent of the operating to an annual ceiling. So that is the way it reads.

I think my comments about the fare increase was because I remember when a Government came forward at the last minute and said, well, that is fine, you can have your grants, but you do not raise your fares. I think that is probably why I made that comment, and I am saying that to promote the whole idea is to maintain a reasonable fare structure. If we find that the city gets out of line in comparison to other cities, and Winnipeg is not out of line with other cities in regard to fares and they have never been out of line in comparison to other cities, to come to them and say, well, we want to cut back or you cannot raise those fares, we have not gotten to that level. We are not there.

All I can say is that when we are negotiating with that 50 percent level, and it is there, it is in place, sure we watch the fares for everybody. That is part of the negotiation process when you are discussing, but to hold the hammer to them and say you cannot raise the fares, period, when they can show you in black and white that they are competitive throughout Canada and they have shown that they are competitive. The city has come out with their bus refurbishing, repairing of buses and restoring buses and trying to come out with different programs to keep those fares down. To be honest with you, I would say that the Transit operating the buses is probably one of the best run operations that the city has.

Ms. Hemphill: I think I would just like to add to that point and say that if we are at a reasonable level with the other cities, and I think we are, but one of the reasons I suggest is because the provincial Government over a period of years has been prepared to pay 50 percent of the deficit. It absolutely has definitely had an impact in helping the city keep transit fares at a reasonable level, which is what the grant was supposed to do in the first place. It may be a matter of the kind of communication but whether the grant came at the eleventh hour or not I would like to think the reason for the grant was so the city did not have to raise the fares.

I have two other questions in this area if I can stop choking. I will ask a quick one and then you can talk. Is the ridership up or down? Are people using more transit, cars less?

* (1720)

Mr. Ducharme: I understand the ridership is pretty stable. It is nothing that is really changing drastically. From one year to the other, it has been climbing. I know it has been fairly stable in the years I was there. I had the last report we have that it is fairly stable.

Ms. Hemphill: Mr. Acting Chairperson, a last question in this area dealing with level of service, what does the Minister feel are deficiencies in the delivery of service to date? I think he made some mention of being told to buy buses and put them in certain areas. My guess is it is because the areas would be those that were recognized as being deficient. I can simply say as an Inner City representative there is no question bus service to all of our communities in the Inner City is not adequate. I would like to know what the Minister feels about the level of service and whether he feels there are any inadequate areas of service?

Mr. Ducharme: I know the city has a system for a certain percentage of ridership before they remove buses from an area. They work on a ridership schedule. If people are using buses in areas, I know they have their time slots set for that. If people are using buses in areas, the city has a schedule for doing that. I know they are adding on to the new routes that are out in the suburbs but, before the suburbs get any major routes in an area, they go through the transition of the bus loop type of system where they have to add on to one to go downtown. I know they do that in a lot

of the areas of the city. I am talking about the new ones. So they are not taking the buses from any of the older areas and moving them into the new ones.

These new ones have to establish ridership and a lot of them go through the process of the loops before they become a direct route. They generally do a loop and have them join in with the direct routes going downtown. They are not taking from any particular area unless the area has shown the ridership is not there. As a matter of fact, I know at City Hall we used to always fight. I know some of the people in some of the outlying areas would be below that percentage. Maybe John could correct me if I am wrong. I think 20 percent was the ridership required to keep a schedule going. A lot of times, it got below that but politically most of the time you did not see anybody withdraw that from an area.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairperson, usually there is a quarter of a mile criteria, Maureen, whereby they provide feeder routes to pick up people from new suburbs. It does not necessarily affect the Inner City. They are continually reviewing the routes and they generate the criterias at cost per rider. I think too it is important we all understand the funding to the transit system is the operating expenses which are 50 percent from the provincial grant and 50 percent from the property taxpayers. It was a checks and balance that the politicians who have been elected there, if they do not want their property taxes to go too far out of sight, will try to keep their cost down and the province used it as a check to make sure they would be funding a certain amount of the operating expenses.

So having said that, let me ask the Minister through you, Mr. Acting Chairperson, monies have been earmarked for innovative transit ideas programs. I have long had some difficulty with the redundancy of a provincial department looking at running a transit system when we have got a 1,000 people working in the Transit System who know what they are doing. The objectives and the goals they have are worthy, they are worthwhile. I am not sure who has the administrative staff to decide the city is carrying out the plans the provincial Government has set for them, for instance, to promote public transportation as a viable transportation alternative to private automobiles in view of the environmental, social and economic benefits associated with increased transit ridership. That is really great but, unless you are providing some leadership, you are not going to achieve that goal. So how are you doing it?

Mr. Ducharme: I guess we show our leadership by providing the funds for the innovations and they have some projects that, as a matter of fact, we just approved and we are carrying that on because you are right. There have been some that have not been the greatest but they do generally come up before they come forward to us with their ideas. They usually have been well looked at by the Transit group, the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Angus: Do you mind sharing with us what these innovative ideas are? Might as well tell us what they are.

Mr. Ducharme: I will give you the ones we have just—the Telebus, the downtown bus stop information, the downtown Info Telebus promotion, large heated shelters, bus priority measures, the preliminary design for the Graham Street Mall.

Mr. Angus: Are you proceeding with the Graham Street Mall?

Mr. Ducharme: Well, no, it is a preliminary—they are looking at the cost. I supported that one when I was at City Hall. I think that is probably one way of getting that ridership to shift through to the other side of Portage Avenue, and I think that has always been in the plans of the City of Winnipeg. It has been on record, I know, at least for four or five years.

Mr. Angus: It has been on for a long time. Mr. Acting Chairperson the innovative transit ideas and funding and things like the bus mall, are they part of the operating grant?

Mr. Ducharme: No, they come out of Capital.

Mr. Angus: Under 2.(a)?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes.

Mr. Angus: How much money did you designate for that?

Mr. Ducharme: That came out of 4.(c). That is the capital. Page—

Mr. Angus: I see on my page 152, you have no monies designated under 4.(c). That is the Canada-Manitoba-Winnipeg Core Area Agreement.

Mr. Ducharme: No, Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg, 153.

Mr. Angus: 4.(c)?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes.

Mr. Angus: 4.(a), 4.(b), 4.(c). So it is \$12 million. Out of that \$12 million?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes. Also the last one was, as you can appreciate, the bus-only lane on Portage. There was monies funded for that to see whether that one can work also.

Mr. Angus: How about Rapid Transit?

Mr. Ducharme: We have not looked at any of the Rapid Transit.

* (1730)

Mr. Angus: I am sure that the Minister is aware that the No. 1 priority for the last 10 years for the City of Winnipeg and their long-range Capital budget has been the southwest corridor, transit corridor. The city most recently passed a motion suggesting that it be a

dedicated bus lane ultimately going from the University of Manitoba down to the East Yards development. Land has been put aside. The investment they were looking at was considerable over a longer period of time. Has the Minister even looked at it or considered it?

Mr. Ducharme: It is funny you mention it. It was brought up today at the official delegation of the Southwest Corridor. It did not seem to be one of their priorities now. They seemed to be back to what we discussed earlier and that is the infrastructure renewal. I am just saying that is the message we got this morning.

Mr. Angus: They are all important, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Mr. Ducharme: No one is questioning that. We have to again go by priority and negotiation. The way you do that is by talking to them and finding out what are their priorities.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Further questions?

Mr. Angus: In relation to innovative transit, and/or the Transit Operating Grant in general, does that include transit funding of the Handi-Transit?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes.

Mr. Angus: Would it be possible to get some statistical information on Handi-Transit right now as to the number of rides they have? There was a figure provided, Mr. Acting Chairperson, through you to the Minister, not too long ago of in excess of \$22 and \$23 per ride, was the cost of providing that necessary service. I would like to see some statistical information.

Mr. Ducharme: Maybe I could give you some. During '86, there was a total of 60 million revenue from passengers who utilized the transit system. Fifteen percent of the ridership of the regular system component is comprised of seniors. In 1986, the Handi-Transit provided 86,799 trips to its 6,500 registrants. Approximately 40 percent, or 34,800 of all Handi-Transit trips were made by seniors in the Handi-Transit system.

Mr. Angus: How many? I am sorry?

Mr. Ducharme: 34,800.

Mr. Angus: Of the 86,000?

Mr. Ducharme: That is correct.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Praznik): Further questions?

Mr. Angus: Is there a budget component for the Handi-Transit? How much money is it costing?

Mr. Ducharme: For the total Handi-Transit, about \$1 million.

Mr. Angus: One million?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, our share is \$1 million.

Mr. Angus: Is it safe to assume that you double that up, that it is a \$2 million operation? Is that reasonable?

Mr. Ducharme: I would say, when I negotiated with that, it was \$2 million.

Mr. Angus: I will turn this over to my colleague for St. Vital.

Mr. Rose: In regard to Handi-Transit, we have seen the Minister's colleagues get involved in this in the provincial election giving out brochures on buses. We were very pleasantly surprised to see them go into that area in the federal election. Does this Minister agree that there is a role for a separate Senior's Transport in the City of Winnipeg to encompass all areas of the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I was not aware of the federal getting involved in the federal election. In my particular area, I did not see any brochures, to answer the first question. The second one, sure, that is why if we did not feel that there should be some type of seniors' transportation our Government would not have added \$62,500 to the \$12,500 that was put down by the first Government. That was to carry over until the extended Handi-Transit came in. When we came in, we added the remaining amount to make sure that it was equivalent to what it was in 1987 and 1988. In 1987, we put the additional amount in so that there could be the downsizing of that particular program.

Over and above that, we did add to the extended Handi-Transit because that was the program that the city, at the wishes and with negotiations with the previous Government, had decided that was the route they wanted to go. The City of Winnipeg decided that they did not want to go into the STS program. That was a decision made by them, and the previous provincial Government decided that to be fair to the group that was there, to carry it from April to July 1, they would give a certain amount of money, a proportion of what they had given before. We felt when we came in that we would like to give the same as was given the previous year, and that is what we did. We added our amount on to the amount that the previous administration had given to bring the \$75,000 to the exact amount that was contributed by the provincial Government April to April of 1987. We gave April 1988 to 1989, \$75,000.00.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Acting Chairman, the Minister certainly had access to the Delcan Report and any other reports to do with Senior's Transport in the City of Winnipeg. Having access to them I would like, if possible, the Minister's opinion as to whether the sort of semi-private, non-profit operators of STS might indeed—and maybe if I could preface that. The other day I was just abhorred when somebody said or even hinted that I was thinking like a socialist. Heaven forbid, so I might as well make a free enterprise statement now to put the record straight. I think this is fair ball and I have always thought this.

The Minister said that he thought that transit was one of the best run areas in the City of Winnipeg. In my estimation, in my travels, I think it is not only one of the best operations in the City of Winnipeg but we have one of the finest transit systems in Canada, and innovative. So I have no axe to grind in regard to general transit at all. I think they are doing a really admirable job. It is not perfect, but in this country and in this climate we have other constraints.

Having said that, would the Minister hazard an opinion as to whether he thinks, and having had access to all the information, whether indeed an expansion of service for seniors might be best done by an organization in the city like Handi-Transit or something like STS that has always had a good track record, is established, is low cost, personalized and has proven itself. What would be your preference?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, the reason we extended the amount of \$75,000 is to see how the extended Handi-Transit was working. That was why we did that. To be honest with you, you mentioned the STS. I as Minister have never—and I will go on record here today—have never been approached by STS since I have been in Government. Not once has the group come forward to myself, as Minister, and ever been approached. All I am saying to the Member is that we gave the \$75,000 to probably watch and get the breakdown on how the extended Handi-Transit is going. I would like though to maybe read into the record something your colleague wrote me. It was written to me in July, I returned a letter in July to Mr. Bill Chornopyski, MLA for Burrows, regarding Handi-Transit and Senior's Transport Service. I would like to read this into the record. It is a paragraph, I think it should go into the record.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

"The policy of both the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg is to provide parallel transit service to all citizens of Winnipeg who are physically unable to use regular transit. Both the province and the city agreed that the best means of providing this service is to expand the Handi-Transit on the basis of a brokerage system delivery strategy. It is envisioned that by 1991 Handi-Transit service will double, while costs will only increase by 44 percent. Under the brokerage system, costs have been established and either \$8 per trip or \$12 per hour, indicating a very efficient and effective service expansion, will be implemented on July 1, 1988.

* (1740)

"Comparatively, Senior's Transport Service per trip costs are estimated to be approximately \$12, as determined from their 1988 budget and ridership projections." That is all I can really look at, and I think the previous Government and the city, that is what they looked at.

Now that STS, along the way, is indicating that they can offer or they operate at a different price. I have not got those stats. All I am saying is that all we could do is at the time of basing our judgment of extending

the monies that we were obligated to, and we felt would give them sufficient time to wind down, was the \$75,000 that was put on the table the year before, and that is what we put on the table.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, might I say that I am appalled that the Minister would admit that they have never approached STS, when this has been so much in the news and so many questions have been asked in the House. I would like to know a few things here now. First of all, I would be interested to know if that was the approach of the Government, whether the Government has never been approached by STS or whether STS has never approached the Government.

Mr. Ducharme: To reconfirm, STS has never approached the Government.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, I think that is patently wrong because I am sure that if he checked with some of his colleagues he would find out that at least some of the staff of his colleagues, which I guess they are responsible for, have indeed met with STS. I think also, if the Minister would check further, he would find out that there is a full review of STS operations in the Delcan Report, and all the statistics and costs. As a matter of fact, he might go further and find out that the consultants had highly recommended that was the way to go. In regard to the brokerage system, I find it also interesting that until such time as I sat on the Taxicab Board there had been no meetings between anybody and Delcan or the City of Winnipeg in regard to using cabs on the brokerage system. This is nothing new on my part, it is done all the time in other cities like Edmonton, but it was only under my insistence that they got together. So I hope that the Minister or even the City of Winnipeg is not taking all this pride in the fact that the suggestion by a Liberal was that the cheapest way to expand any system, whether it be STS or the Handi-Transit system, was indeed to use cabs in their off-hours, so just to set the record straight there.

What I hear I guess from the Minister, Mr. Chairman, is that he does favour Senior's Transport across the City of Winnipeg, separate indeed from the regular transit because of their unique problems. I am sure the Minister is aware of them somewhere, where people have to walk almost three-quarters of a mile or a mile to get to the main route and then end up without even a heated bus shelter. It seems to me that his colleagues agree with it and it seems to me that even his federal colleagues agree with it.

Being that Handi-Transit has not now, in the past or in the future, had any mandate to carry any seniors who do not have disabilities, how does he now plan in the future to live up to that philosophy, if so, that he thinks that seniors should have transport? Because without STS there will be absolutely no direct agency dealing in any appreciable size other than the seniors' homes having their own transit and things like the Lions Club, etc. There will be no way for seniors to be assured of transit in the future.

I want to repeat, and the Minister may not have his facts right, but Handi-Transit does not now nor have

they in the past nor will they, to my knowledge, in the future have a mandate to carry seniors other than those seniors who have disabilities, whether they be blind, whether they are in a wheelchair, etc., etc., etc. So whatever they are carrying now in regard to seniors is no different than that category they carried in the past. The only thing that they are doing, according to the figures, is that they are carrying 1,000 persons per month more—not 1,000 persons. They are making 1,000 trips more per month.

I do not begrudge the handicapped people in this city. In fact, I encourage to give them all the service they want, and I hope we do continue expanding Handi-Transit. But the point is that the expansion of Handi-Transit is virtually doing nothing for the ordinary senior citizen who lives a half or three-quarters of a mile away from the transit system, who has no disabilities. He or she has no disabilities, and really have no close transit service when it is 35 below, slippery on the streets, and the wind blowing.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, the Delcan Report gave options. It did not recommend one or the other.

Mr. Rose: 25,000 registered, I am sorry.

Mr. Ducharme: The Delcan Report gave options. It did not recommend one or the other. The previous Government and the City of Winnipeg accepted Option 2, okay, based on average trip costs, etc., and the total annual cost.

Secondly, you mentioned or it was mentioned, do we support? Sure we support the senior's transportation. We are doing that through the extended Handi-Transit System. Not to take anything away, or I have to give credit also to the previous administration, they did after comparing their notes with the City of Winnipeg said, this is the route we are going to go with the City of Winnipeg. We have not only followed that route but we have extended that. We have said to STS that we extended monies so that they could have a chance to wind down.

I mentioned that STS personally has never been in touch with this Minister. I used the information that we received from the city and from the previous administration and, even without STS approaching us for monies, we extended it by that amount of money. Whether the Member wants to believe the Minister or not, I have never been approached. So, okay, you can get that on the record.

Also, I am led to believe that of your ridership of STS, the users, there is about 43 percent of the total of 1,200 riders will not use and cannot use a regular transit. There is about 43 percent of that total who cannot use it.

So if you figure out the monies that have been going into this, I believe that I think everything should be given a chance to try its way, and that is the choice that was made by the previous administration when they were going through the program. We felt, to be fair to the STS, that they needed a little more winding down.

Remember the figures that I gave the Member the other day about percentage of users which would be the ambulatory increase which normally would be the seniors coming on stream, and those figures were given while STS is still operating, so that could change again when STS starts to fit in with the program.

Mr. Rose: For the record, Mr. Chairman, I do not think there was any money forthcoming from the federal Government on their election promises to STS previous to questions being asked by myself in the House. Also I would ask the Minister if he has had any briefing on a meeting held between STS and staff of the Minister for Seniors (Mr. Neufeld), because this Seniors Directorate that has been put in by the Government seems to provide nothing but a smokescreen, in other words, saying this Minister has not talked to STS or that Minister has not talked to STS, but I feel when a Minister's senior staff has talked to STS, I would feel the Government has been informed and it is up to Ministers to inform each other. Has he had any briefing on what happened at the meeting with STS with staff of the Minister for Seniors' staff?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, I received a letter from Mr. Renton requesting financial assistance for his operation. We gave to that 60-some. We told him we would give 62.5 and, as I repeat, I have never received from the time—

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, the Member for St. Norbert, state your point.

Mr. Angue: Perhaps the Minister would like to retract the fact he has never been approached when he reads into the record he has got a letter from Bud Renton asking him for money.

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

Mr. Ducharme: I want to clarify that. Personally, he has never approached me. We have not any further correspondence after the 62.5 was given to him. So they have not come to us and said to our administration they were not happy with the 62.5, they have not done that. So if they are doing negotiating, they are not doing it with us.

You say, have we met with the seniors. We met with the Manitoba Society for Seniors. I went through the percentage with them on explaining the ridership to the extended Handi-Transit. We went through the information with them. They have said to us they are working with Mr. Borland and they are comparing the program with Mr. Borland and with the City of Winnipeg and the previous administration and the one we have funded, they are working with them. That is the information I have got, is when we met with the Manitoba Society, they said after the brief they have met with Mr. Borland and they have had everything explained from him. So I do not know what more we can do as far as talking to seniors. I know the Minister in charge of Seniors has said he has had some correspondence along the way with the person who

runs STS, but myself personally have not had any correspondence after the 62.5 and personally I have never had any interviews with the individual along the way personally.

* (1750)

Mr. Rose: I guess the Government is saying in elections, they are saying we are in favour of Senior's Transport but, when it comes down to the nuts and bolts of it, this Government is not sufficiently concerned about it after the election is over to exchange correspondence between Ministers or even ask for the correspondence, and so I guess that puts it in a nutshell. I wonder if the Minister has analyzed the figures he got from Handi-Transit and been able to come up with the assumption or the fact I have, at the present rate—and this is without taking into account that STS is still in business—it will take at the present growth rate of Handi-Transit and not even taking into account the increase we all know is taking part in the percentage of seniors in our society, it will take 10 years to institute a program city-wide. Have you been able to analyze the figures and come up with a similar conclusion?

Mr. Ducharme: We are analyzing the extended Handi-Transit. We get updates. The last one I have is September and it shows and you know that the Transit System itself, as we have said, has been very, very stable. Then why would we have increases, quite substantially I must say, in July, August and September?

Mr. Rose: If you would analyze the figures, if the Minister would analyze the figures, he would find that a program he is on—well putting it in a different vein, when I become a senior, whatever age that is, they still will not have completed their program. That is several, several years hence from now. So what are we saying? We support this but we support it in little bits and pieces over a 10- or 11- or 12-year period?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, from the City of Winnipeg when the negotiations were going on, the City of Winnipeg has taken into consideration the increase in the growth. They said right now the trips by seniors are about 40 percent of the total transit. Now, they are saying that, by 1991, it will be 70 percent Handi-Transit. They figure it is 40 now, it will be 70 by then.

Those are the figures the City of Winnipeg has given us. The City of Winnipeg, they say they are confident to be able to handle it. Who is to say how long. That is why I am saying it was one of the reasons why we extended the amount. I guess we are here to disagree. I say we are concerned about the senior citizens or else we would not have extended the monies. We could have said at that time, 12.5 finished, you are finished July 1, goodbye. At least now we have given money so we can watch the program as it winds down. Those monies are provided. We did it because we are concerned, not because we are not concerned with that.

Mr. Rose: I do not think that is the point. I do commend the Minister for fulfilling 62.5 percent of his Party's promise to STS.

I want to get off that subject and get on to a new one. If my colleagues wanted to come back on it—it is similar along the same line. We are not leaving Transit. I do want to go on record. I wish the Minister's department, and I have said this repeatedly in the Chamber and I have said it here now, Handi-Transit has no mandate in the past, has no mandate at the present nor are there any plans for a mandate in the future for them to carry seniors minus disabilities. Therefore, I would like to know if the Government supports Senior's Transport and if he said they have only given money to STS to wind up their operations, how he would possibly foresee that we would have any Senior's Transport in the near future under any programs that exist today? Now, Mr. Chairman, if I could change the subject after I have made that statement.

Mr. Ducharme: I would like to reply to that. I say we will offer the same as the City of Winnipeg, a transit system to the seniors and to the extent of Handi-Transit to someone who cannot take the normal bus service. That is what we are trying to do. That is what the City of Winnipeg is doing under the extended transit system. That is what we are providing. I am just saying that anybody who cannot, a senior who cannot take the regular—and I am talking about the total City of Winnipeg. Let us not forget that. I think that is what was looked at by the previous administration and the City of Winnipeg. Let us look at what we can provide the seniors totally throughout the city who cannot take the regular transit systems.

Mr. Rose: On this area, one last question, will then from what the Minister just said and being he is providing 50 percent of the funding, will he now approach the City of Winnipeg to ensure they will start carrying seniors on their Handi-Transit routes which they are not doing at present?

Mr. Ducharme: I have not been given indication they are not providing for the seniors who cannot take the regular transportation system. I am not getting that. What I am saying to you is the program the City of Winnipeg proposed was they would provide transit to the seniors who could not take the regular transit system. That is the program. If they are not providing that program, all I am saying to you is that is the program that was put forward to us. That is the one we decided to fund.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Mr. Angus: Again, I might have a little bit of further background on this, as I coordinated a review committee of Handi-Transit and, for the Minister's information, Handi-Transit was brought in originally because of the high cost to the private sector providing cab rides to those people who were in wheelchairs and could not afford to transport themselves. Their cost per trip in those days was in excess of \$12 per trip.

Handi-Transit was brought in to try and alleviate and provide a very definite criteria for transporting these people. There were some regulations established with that, and that is they had to have a doctor's certificate,

Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, and they also had to have a priority of work and/or medical related trips.

The Senior's Transport System is a totally different concept, and for seniors to be bumped from a Handi-Transit system because they have to get a doctor's certificate when they are busy trying to hang on to their pride and trying to hang on to their own functions and dealing within their own home, to go to their doctor and say I would like a doctor's certificate so I can ride on Handi-Transit is absolutely ludicrous. Also, because they are not work trips, they are not related to work trips, it is so seniors can actually get out of their house and can go shopping and can be taken to do things of that nature.

I do not think the Minister can shuck off his hat and say the city has asked for this and just say he does not have any responsibility and to suggest nobody has approached me when this problem has been raging through Question Period. He has been authorizing money to read letters from Mr. Renton. Do not sit down and look at the return on investment dollars. You are supporting a Handi-Transit system which is costing in excess of \$23 per ride, and I do not know if you did any sort of comparison to the Senior's Transportation System and the dollar cost per ride they are providing.

The Minister did say the one thing is we perhaps are here to disagree, and maybe on this particular item we will disagree, because we are talking philosophical differences in how to address a problem. I think for the Minister to suggest "they have not approached me" as his only excuse or reason for not trying to deal with this in a front-up fashion, is absolutely irresponsible.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all I just wanted to throw on the record since we gave the cheque—I just want to indicate it is always a two-way street but, first of all, the information we have is the present system is \$8 to \$12 and for the brokers, that is the system we have been given and that is the information we have been given.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, will the Minister please tell me what sort of convoluted capitalist Tory logic suggests he should pay \$23.04 per ride to the City of Winnipeg when he can get the same service for \$8 to \$10 from a private sector non-profit organization?

Mr. Ducharme: What I am saying is we are providing it at a lower cost. We are. We are providing it at a lower cost and those same people who provided that cost and that study to us was the City of Winnipeg who the Member was a member of at the time, provided by the city and those are the costs we are operating under. I wish the Member, Chornopyski, I gave that information to him showing it was \$8 per trip or \$12 per hour indicating. I gave that information. Where he gets those other figures, I do not know. Those are not the figures that were given to us.

* (1800)

Mr. Angus: Earlier in this meeting, and I am sure Hansard will show it, I asked the number of trips that

were made by Handi-Transit and the amount of funding that went to Handi-Transit to provide the rides. The trips were 86,791, the investment was \$2 million and, calculating it out, it comes to \$23.04 a ride, so either you were misleading me then or you are misleading me now.

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, but that includes the people in chairs also, so not all the handicapped—(Interjection)—yes, not all the people use a brokerage system.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, perhaps we are finally getting some place. When you mix the two of them together, you have a total investment, a total cost of providing a service. Mixing the two and having seniors bumped and having them not being able to depend because they do not have doctors' permits, because they do not have work permits, because they are not scheduled in on those rides, you cannot just single out and say that, because a man has a cane, it is going to cost less per ride than if a man has a wheel chair.

The whole idea of the Handi-Transit service was to provide transportation to people who are physically handicapped, and it still is. That is still the reason that it is there. I do not believe that you are going to be able to provide a good service to people by watering the whole thing down.

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, the comment on that and saying there are seniors being bumped, there has not been anybody refused in the program so far. So let us get that on the record. Let us get that on the record there has not been anybody refused. That is right.

An Honourable Member: Why do you say to your knowledge?

Mr. Ducharme: The same knowledge that was provided by the City of Winnipeg, the same City of Winnipeg that the previous Member was a member of this when they decided not to continue this particular program. The Member was a Councillor at that time.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, it is almost six o'clock, so I hope we will be able to move on to some other areas when we get back at eight o'clock. The facts will show that people get bumped whether they are in a wheelchair or not. Just ask Theresa Ducharme if you get bumped or you do not get bumped. She will tell you. They get bumped on a regular basis right now.

Mr. Ducharme: Just a minute, are you saying that the information that I have got from the City of Winnipeg—wait a minute. You want to carry this out. You were a City Councillor for long enough. Are you saying—and I can only go by the information that I have got. They are saying to me with their stats that no one was refused in August and no one was refused in September. I can only go by the information they give me.

Mr. Chairman: The hour is now 6 p.m. The committee will recess until 8 p.m. this evening.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

We are presently on item 1.(c) Research, Planning and Evaluation: (1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for St. James.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): We had been speaking briefly about some of the studies that were under way. I think we talked about the study that the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond) is presently on, a committee that is travelling around the province. We had, I think, spoken briefly about that Wife Abuse Study that had been promised by the Attorney-General. I wonder if the Attorney-General might just, so we can have a grasp on the social research that is being done by this department, list what studies are presently under way in the Research, Planning and Evaluation Branch?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): The Research, Planning and Evaluation Branch of our department is presently involved with quite a large number of studies. If the Honourable Member would like me to go through them and put them on the record, I can do that.

Mr. Edwards: Perhaps the Attorney-General could simply furnish me with a copy. I see he is reading from a document a list of those studies. Would the Attorney-General be willing to furnish me with a list of the studies at this time?

Mr. McCrae: I can supply the Honourable Member with a list of the studies being undertaken by the Research, Planning and Evaluation Branch.

Mr. Edwards: Thank you, I look forward to looking that over.

Could the Attorney-General indicate who is on the Research Advisory Committee?

Mr. McCrae: The Research Advisory Committee for the Research Planning and Evaluation Branch is composed of the Deputy Attorney-General, the Assistant Deputy Attorney-General for Criminal Justice, and the Assistant Deputy Attorney-General for Justice.

Mr. Edwards: It indicates in the Activity Identification section of the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review that the Research Advisory Committee coordinates social research projects, or actually suggested and that then the Research Planning and Evaluation Branch designs, conducts and coordinates these projects. What is the relationship—and the Attorney-General has indicated that the Deputy Attorney-General sits on that, I believe he suggested, three-member committee, between that committee and the Deputy Attorney-General and the Attorney-General with respect to going ahead with social research

policies. How does that happen? Is the Attorney-General personally involved in approving social research studies done by the branch?

Mr. McCrae: The Attorney-General, in consultation with various executive Members of the department, identifies areas of concern, areas where it is deemed research is required.

In addition, the department itself, through various branches of the department, advises the Attorney-General's office and the offices of their superiors as to issues that would be the proper subject of research and evaluation. It is through that kind of approach, that is a coordinating approach for the division, that research projects are undertaken by the branch.

Mr. Edwards: I do not want to belabour this point. I am just wondering, the Attorney-General has indicated that the substance for projects can flow from the top down. Is approval necessary by the Attorney-General before social research projects are undertaken by this branch?

Mr. McCrae: The studies undertaken by Research and Planning is not strictly social research matters, research into social matters. There are also evaluations of programs that are undertaken by the various divisions of the department. Approval is not always required directly of the Attorney-General but, through briefings and through other methods, the department keeps the Attorney-General as informed as he can possibly be. They do a very good job of it, I might add, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I wonder if I might ask the Attorney-General, I notice from an announcement that he has changed the process for the Crime Prevention Foundation. In fact, he decided not to proceed with the Crime Prevention Foundation and is developing some sort of advisory group in crime prevention. Was there any research undertaken to assist him in making that decision? On what basis was it made?

Mr. McCrae: The decisions relating to the thrusts on the part of my department respecting crime prevention were taken as a result of a review of a consultant's report done for our department, done at least by federal initiative, and as a result of that report we found that there were certain weaknesses in the thrust as proposed by the previous Government. We felt that what had happened was that the previous Government had passed legislation and then had the federal Government hire a consultant to try to figure out what to do with the legislation. In my estimation it would have been better first to find out what the needs are and to find out what the problems are, and then to design a structure to meet the policy objectives.

In the case of The Crime Prevention Foundation Act, no one would be opposed to turning our attention to crime prevention matters in this province. It became a matter on the election of a new Government in this province to find out which was the very best way to proceed. We found that we had some dilemmas because of the amounts of monies budgeted for the purpose.

We found that the way the Crime Prevention Foundation was to be set up and with the budget set out for it not enough was set aside to allow the Crime Prevention Foundation to operate as it had been envisaged to operate at the time the legislation was passed. So now we are in a situation where we have to do some of that work which flows from the support for an initiative in crime prevention and that is what we are embarking upon now.

Mr. Alcock: The consultant's report that the Minister references, did it recommend against The Crime Prevention Foundation Act? Did it recommend against proceeding with that?

* (1620)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, you would understand that I have not memorized the consultant's report, but what the report seems to tell us is that, as envisaged, the Crime Prevention Foundation is not possible given the funding that has been given, so that we have to seek to get the most advantage we can out of every dollar available. That is why we are having some difficulty proclaiming The Crime Prevention Foundation Act in the form that it was set up for.

Without trying to waste any valuable time or dollars that are available to us through this year's budget, we felt that the measure that we announced last Friday would be a way at least to be able to support crime prevention activities, such as Crimestoppers, such as Neighbourhood Watch or Block Parent. In the meantime, while we are distributing a Green Paper and while we do make the consultant's report available to those who are interested in crime prevention, we want to do that so that others will understand the predicament we found ourselves in. We cannot make that available until we get permission from the authors of the consultant's report.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps I may misunderstand what the Minister is saying or I may have misunderstood the announcement. Is then the intention of the Government to proceed with The Crime Prevention Foundation Act after this review, or is that piece of legislation to be dispensed with and some new entity created? Let me just go a step further because I have had some involvement in the creation of that.

The intention was to create a body that was at arm's length from Government that was owned by the various voluntary organizations active in crime prevention. What I understand the Minister to have done is dispensed with that mechanism, with that vehicle, and replaced it with an advisory committee that he will appoint to himself.

As far as the money goes, it was also my understanding that a great deal of the operating budget of the Crime Prevention Foundation was to have been created by secondments from various departments who had a responsibility in crime prevention, the Attorney-General and Corrections, if I understand, and that there was a sum of money that was to be then identified for grants which was brought together out of other smaller

appropriations that had been scattered around the department.

So if perhaps the Attorney-General could just clarify for me and perhaps for those community groups that worked so long on getting The Crime Prevention Foundation Act in place, is it his intention now to, as we have seen in Community Services and a few other departments, pull control over these decisions into his office and to dispense largesse from his desk instead of allowing a group of community organizations to make those decisions?

Mr. McCrae: As Manitobans, we can only be very grateful for the work done by community organizations in attempting to come together and to get together to bring forward a thrust that would serve crime prevention activities well in the future.

The Honourable Member talks about resting from this arm's length relationship, some kind of Government control. I do not think that is a proper or fair characterization of what the Government in Manitoba is trying to do. The Honourable Member will recall, if he was watching during the election campaign, that we did make a commitment to put together an Attorney-General's Advisory Committee on Crime Prevention. Now, I do not know how or what would be the value of having such a committee and having a Crime Prevention Foundation each doing essentially the same thing or perhaps doing things that might conflict or be duplications of each other, so I think that one thrust is what we require.

On Friday, I announced that there will be an Advisory Committee on Crime Prevention established no later than January of this year, so the Honourable Member should be assured that we in no way want a delay. There is money there in this year's budget to be used for crime prevention projects.

We have decided that the committee will report through the Assistant Deputy Attorney-General responsible for the Criminal Justice Division and that we will ask the RCMP and the City of Winnipeg Police to name representatives to the committee. So we are not naming those representatives. We will be naming six other members. We are going to provide the committee with permanent staff by means of a senior analyst and by means of an administrative secretary, so that the people we bring into the Attorney-General's Advisory Committee on Crime Prevention will be the same kind of people the Honourable Member has been working with in setting up the Crime Prevention Foundation. We are not going outside to some other area or some other group. We think that the people who have been involved up until now are absolutely the proper people to be involved now and in the future. We want very much to work with those very same people in consultation as a result of the Green Paper that will be coming out.

The Green Paper is strictly a discussion paper; we want to consult. The fact is that the money was there. It seemed that just for the sake of quickly spending the money to proclaim some legislation that we have been told is not going to work out very well did not

seem like a very good idea. It did not seem that we would get the best use out of the money that is set aside for the purposes of crime prevention.

I look forward to a very positive relationship. I do not know that you could say that we are talking about Government using its strong and long arm. I believe what we have here is something that will be community based and will have the kind of autonomy the Honourable Member seems to be referring to in that committee. They are in a better position than I am to decide how best the money should be spent and certainly in a very good position to advise the Government

* (1630)

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Chairperson, well, I shall not belabour the point beyond making a couple of observations. I think the members of the police and the RCMP and other people in the courts and such will tell you one of the problems with crime prevention, you are relying on those bodies to operate crime prevention. To truly have crime prevention the community has to be involved and the community needs to feel a sense of ownership. I think we all agree on that.

I think the concern I have about the action you have taken is you are taking some of the responsibility and accountability away from the community and putting it back in the hands of the department, and not that they are not well-meaning and have the same kind of objectives in mind. I think it is important the organization that is supporting these organizations and distributing these funds be allowed to own that process, and it should not be departmental process owned by a few people in your department or a few people who advise the Attorney-General. I am sure you will appoint good people to those committees and I am sure you will get good advice.

I think there is a fundamental difference between the Neighbourhood Watch people who are completely volunteer, who work all over this city and the Block Parents—and, and, and—owning that process as opposed to being directed by yourself and your department.

I think it is an important distinction. I think it is one the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) has missed in her relationship with her community agencies and I am very disappointed and I am very sorry to see the Attorney-General appears to be headed down the same wrong road. I would really urge you to reconsider that and I would hope in the discussions on the Green Paper when it comes forward, we can reopen this topic and look at a process for getting control of crime prevention back in the hands of the people in the community.

Mr. McCrae: Well, the Honourable Member, Mr. Chairman, should know from his dealings with me since the beginning of this Session that I do not close my mind, that my mind is one that is open and one that is quite willing to receive the consultation we have talked about. We cannot proceed without that consultation. I am very aware of that.

Well, I know the Honourable Member's comments are made without the benefit of reading the consultant's report, and I can only say, perhaps if he had read the consultant's report his comments might be different. As I say, as soon as I am able to do so, I will be sharing that report with Honourable Members and with others involved with crime prevention.

So, on that basis, I suggest the Honourable Member's comments are premature and I hope to be able to prove him wrong, and I am sure we will be able to pick up the debate later on.

I do not think the Honourable Member would be suggesting we give up any semblance of coordination either. I suggest if we accepted his comments holus-bolus today, we might be giving up some measure of coordination which then would result in money going here, there and perhaps not wisely. That is all we are trying to do is do the best and wisest thing with public funds.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Chairman, the Attorney-General has mentioned he feels he is unable to release the report now. I guess my question is what is stopping him? Now he has made the decision and it is a timely decision he made last Friday and obviously we are in Estimates now, we would like to be able to discuss it. Who are the consultants, and why cannot he table it and share it with Opposition Members now?

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member for St. James is often wont to ask for things and perhaps hopes to receive them before the appropriate moment, and I would just like to make sure we do all the proper things that are necessary before that report is made available.

I have told the Honourable Member it is my intention, with the proper clearances, to make that report available. I have said that publicly so there is no intent now to hide anything. I know the Honourable Member thinks perhaps, since he may not be in this place for very long, he had better get hold of this material now.

I am telling you, relax. The Honourable Member has some time yet in his present position, and I think he should be patient, and that report will be coming in and I will share it with him.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Chairman, well, I will not be in this place very long. I guess that means I will be seeing the report when I change places, and I look forward to that. I will see it right away.

Mr. Chairman, there was quite a troubling quote that the press reported from the Attorney-General which said—and I guess I am asking the Attorney-General for clarification if this was a quote—"The province cannot afford to spend any more on the Crime Prevention Foundation."

Now is that specific to the foundation? What monies will be available for this committee? What monies have been allocated now? There was some confusion in this report about the \$12,500 being for the Foundation Centre. There was another \$200,000 that the prior Government allocated to it. What funds is this Attorney-General willing to commit to this new committee that he is suggesting?

Mr. McCrae: The amount in this year's Estimates, Mr. Chairman, is \$200,000.00. Now the problem with that is the report that I told the Honourable Member about is that with the proclamation of the Crime Prevention Foundation, first of all, the previous Government had been talking about \$250,000.00. Anyway, \$187,500 was allocated for grants; \$25,000 for Information and Education; \$25,000 for Research; leaving only \$12,500 for Administration and fund raising.

Well then, with that need of \$250,000 which did not even cover staff, the previous Government budgeted only \$200,000.00. So that created that problem. It made it a rather unrealistic kind of situation.

In the early days of this Government, in preparation for the Budget of August 8, time was somewhat compressed and the time that was required to study the consultant's report and so on was not available, so that the present Government budgeted \$200,000 as well. So that is the \$200,000 we want to make available in any event in this fiscal year, but we found that the planning just was not right, so we have to look at our budget to allocate how we are going to handle staff and how the money will be granted. But the whole idea is to take the \$200,000 that is budgeted for and to use the largest amount available, or the largest amount possible to be used in the community-based programs.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Chairman, the Attorney-General—and I am just going by reports obviously—mentions a link between the victim services and the crime prevention and looks for the coordination of those two new thrusts in the Attorney-General's Department.

Does that mean that ultimately he foresees the sharing of the resources which comes from the supplement to the fines, which are presently going to a fund for victims? Does he foresee that the two aspects, crime prevention and victims' assistance will share from that fund? Is that the future for the financing of crime prevention, or will it be separately allocated in the future?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I do not think it would be right for me to go on record today in terms that would be too strong or so strong that it would preclude a fruitful and proper consultation process after the release of the Green Paper.

I am interested in hearing from the people involved in community-based programs regarding crime prevention and victims' assistance as well, to see how the people in the field would like to see the dollars raised by the surcharge in the courts, which was earmarked for Victims' Assistance, and the dollars that are made available from the taxpayers of Manitoba, and to see what the people out there have to say about it.

So to say too much more about it could have the effect of prejudicing a fruitful discussion which flows from the Green Paper.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Chairman, while I certainly do not cast aspersions or suspect the Attorney-General's spoken commitment to crime prevention, I wonder how

this move and this new recommitment to crime prevention squares with the threaten to disband of the Community Committee for Crime Prevention in The Pas, the most crime-ridden city in this province.

Statistics show that The Pas is suffering from—well, the province is suffering from excessive levels of violent crime and all kinds of criminal activity. The Pas is the worst in this province. The Citizens' Committee on Crime Prevention up there has threatened to disband because RCMP members. Previously I think there was one RCMP member who worked half-time on crime prevention. Now there are apparently four RCMP members who are going to have something to do with crime prevention. In speaking to the citizen members of that committee, they have found that none of those four take any responsibility at all for crime prevention. They think, in fact, it has disappeared in terms of the agenda of the RCMP in The Pas. That is why they have threatened to disband. Has the Attorney-General, given this commitment, spoken to the RCMP detachment in The Pas? Has he spoken to the RCMP period about the commitment to crime prevention on behalf of the force in The Pas, surely one of the cities in this province that most needs that committee.

* (1640)

Mr. McCrae: I have frequent discussions with representatives of the RCMP. We could get into a philosophical discussion about crime prevention and assistance for victims.

I suppose the two do go hand in hand. I do not think the Honourable Member could deny that they should be viewed together and should not be seen to be competing for the same scarce dollars, yet both dimensions of the problem are real, very real. Let us remember that every crime prevented means one less victim that needs assistance. It is that kind of situation. I am sure the Honourable Member would agree with me that we have to have some kind of flexibility. I believe that our consultation process will help us find ways to be flexible and to ensure that adequate—well, I suppose the word "adequate" is a bad one in this sense. As long as there is one victim in this jurisdiction, there will not be adequate resources being pointed in the direction of crime prevention.

The Honourable Member refers specifically to The Pas. He refers to the RCMP. I think there would be some in this philosophical discussion who—in fact, there would be many—would say that one of the best crime prevention programs is to have a visible presence of police authority out there, in a sense reminding people that they are going to get caught if they are going to commit crimes. This is where I am especially proud that our Government moved in its first Budget to cancel proposed cutbacks by the previous Government with respect to staffing for the RCMP.

In terms of RCMP presence in our communities, our commitment was not to decrease the services available to the people but to maintain rural, so-called rural policing and to enhance it if at all possible and where appropriate. Where there are pockets of problems in our province, we do turn our attention to them. The

Royal Canadian Mounted Police are there for that purpose and we have frequent discussions.

Mr. Edwards: Specifically, I would like to know if the Attorney-General has spoken to Members of the Citizens Advisory Committee on Crime Prevention in The Pas, expressed his commitment to crime prevention, in particular with respect to The Pas so that they do not disband? They have threatened to disband. They are very upset at the lack of concern which is evidenced by there being no one member of The Pas RCMP Police Force who can say, yes, I am willing to help you with crime prevention.

If the Attorney-General has information which suggests that it is not in the benefit of crime prevention to have members of the police force specifically responsible for the liaison with community members and the Neighbourhood Watch Program and other things that are run by community members, let him say so. I have not heard anything except that it is very advisable and good to have officers in police forces specifically responsible for dealing with the community and promoting crime prevention activities and working as that liaison between police forces and crime prevention community committees. The Pas has a committee that is threatening to disband for lack of any sensitivity they claim on the part of the RCMP in that city. Has the Attorney-General made contact to simply reassure them, perhaps, that he is going to do something about it or try and do something about it?

Mr. McCrae: The community committee from The Pas may very well have something on its way to me expressing their concerns.

I can tell the Honourable Member that I had not a face to face meeting with the Members of that committee. What the Honourable Member tells me today is not something I have not been formally made aware of up until this point.

Mr. Edwards: I advised the Attorney-General of this many weeks ago in the House. That community committee has certainly made its feelings known to the City Council in The Pas.

Is the Attorney-General saying that he is waiting for a specific request from them to do something about it? They have threatened City Council that they are going to do this. He is not willing to take a proactive stance to the extent that he would get in touch with them?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the assertions made by the Honourable Member are disturbing. Of course we will waste no time in following the matter up not only through the RCMP but also through contacts with the City of The Pas.

Mr. Edwards: Did the Attorney-General, when he was coming up with this committee idea on crime prevention—I appreciate that he had a consultant's report and I assume that it had something to do with that decision—did he consult the Manitoba Police Commission which also has as one of its objectives to promote the prevention of crime?

Mr. McCrae: There have been discussions about crime prevention and future thrusts with the Manitoba Police Commission. As far as specifics, we will undoubtedly be hearing more from people involved with the Manitoba Police Commission, but yes, it has been discussed not so much in specific as in general terms.

Mr. Edwards: Seeing as this is part of the mandate of the Manitoba Police Commission and it is intricately involved with the administration of police forces in the province and the working of those police forces, does the Attorney-General envisage at least one member of the Manitoba Police Commission being on his new committee?

Mr. McCrae: When the time comes to appoint the committee, I will keep the Honourable Member's suggestion in my mind as a representation.

Mr. Edwards: Getting off the crime prevention topic, the Attorney-General on June 20 indicated that he would be doing a study as to The Summary Convictions Act and some amendments which might be made to that Act. The Dewar Report suggests a specific amendment but I suspect that there are more than that specific amendment that need to be looked at. Will this branch be doing that Summary Convictions Act study? If so, has it started? When can we look for completion? Does the Attorney-General envisage hopefully introducing an amendment Act in this Session?

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member spoke earlier of making a move at some point. Sometimes I wish he could be Attorney-General for a day—

An Honourable Member: For a week. More than that.

Mr. McCrae: Just for a day. He would find out then that some of his questions are a little off the mark. In any event, the committee regarding The Summary Convictions Act, I announced, I think it was June 9, that work on The Summary Convictions Act would be undertaken.

There is a committee composed of the director of Constitutional Law who is chairing the committee. The Acting Deputy Minister in charge of Courts, Mr. Marvin Bruce, is on that committee. Magistrate Parkin is on that committee and members of the Bar Association and the Law Society are represented on that committee. That committee is expected to report by the end of February. Unless the Honourable Member expects this Session to drag on for some time past that point, then I would suggest that legislation would not be forthcoming in this Session.

Mr. Edwards: I look forward to that report.

I wonder and I do not want to make this another question necessarily, but perhaps this may have been a—I mean not that the Constitutional Law Branch would not have something to say about this, but perhaps this should have been the subject of a full work over by the Law Reform Commission. I suspect that they certainly have their dock and I realize they have been working on their own Act, but perhaps they might have

been a better body to do a full work over of The Summary Convictions Act which I suspect needs more, and this is just editorial comment, than the mere amendment suggested by Mr. Justice Dewar.

However, the Family Law White Paper is another paper that I would like to ask the Attorney-General about. I realize that the prior Government, I think, had commissioned this White Paper. Has the Attorney-General taken a look at that White Paper and what is the status of it?

Mr. McCrae: I think the Honourable Member, in his references to the make-up of the committee looking into The Summary Convictions Act, he does not know the person involved as chairman when he makes the comments he does or else he would not make those kinds of comments.

With respect to The Provincial Court Act, I had occasion to meet as late as this morning with members of the reconstituted and independent Law Reform Commission which this Government reconstituted. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) suggests that was a good move. It is not the only good move that has been made by this Government since May 9 when it came into office.

I do not share the pessimism of the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) when it comes to the make-up of the committee looking into The Summary Convictions Act. Indeed, the people involved that I am aware of are quality people and who are in a very good position to make recommendations regarding changes that might be necessary to The Summary Convictions Act.

Indeed, The Provincial Court Act is under review by the Law Reform Commission. I cannot think of a better body to ask to do that work. I think the Honourable Member answered his own question when he suggested that the Law Reform Commission does indeed have its own docket of work to do. The newly reconstituted Law Reform Commission is highly motivated and enthusiastic about the work that they are doing and they are being asked to do.

The Honourable Member asks about the Family Law White Paper put forward by the previous Government. I think the Honourable Member should understand a little bit about the previous Government and a little bit about White Papers, but I can tell the Honourable Member that the items contained in the White Paper, a number of them will form part of the legislative program of the Progressive Conservative Party.

I am happy to say that we have the Access Assistance Program. I believe I have a note coming over to the Honourable Member about the timing of when that program will be up and running.

I would suggest to the Honourable Member that he should watch to see the legislative proposals coming forward from this Government in the area of Family Law. I am quite proud to be associated with a Government which was the author of a program in maintenance, for instance, which is the envy of the rest of the country.

The Honourable Member raised some questions the other day about our Maintenance Enforcement Program and I have somewhere here a response for him on the matter of delays that he referred to there and telephone answering and so on.

The Honourable Member should be reminded that the Progressive Conservative Government, the previous one in this province, for all the lumps it has had to take, really set the pace in this country in regard to Maintenance Enforcement.

* (1650)

Mr. Edwards: The Family Law White Paper that the Attorney-General says he is taking some direction from started in 1986, I think. Is he willing to table that? If he is using it as direction, I suggest that while it was done by the prior administration, I am not suggesting that he is entirely committed to it as an Attorney-General or Government, but he is obviously looking to it for direction. May we have a copy of that paper?

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member will well-understand, appreciate and I suggest sympathize with me when I suggest that the agenda of this Government is not in all respects the same as the agenda of the last Government. Otherwise, why did we have an election?

Mr. Edwards: Exactly my words. I said he is not bound by the White Paper or the previous agenda. I would just like to see the White Paper. An enormous amount of work went into it for various groups. The Attorney-General is obviously looking to it for some direction and I would certainly like to take a look at it. I think all Manitobans would. It was a combined effort of many, many groups. A lot of consulting was done and I think it is an important document perhaps for all of us to take a look at.

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member has also asked a number of questions about family court services across this province and made suggestions about how we might implement a unification of the family court across the province.

Now, unlike the Honourable Member, I have not had an opportunity to dig into all of his campaign literature. He did avail himself of the opportunity to look at mine, and I am quite proud of the commitments I made. I think the commitments I made are realistic and did not go beyond the realm of what is realistic, unlike what we have been seeing from the Honourable Member and his colleagues since this House began sitting on July 21.

We have heard a number of, shall we call them initiatives, which, if followed through, would leave us in a worse position than we were in when we took over on May 9. I do not know but I would hazard a guess that the unification of the family court province-wide was probably not part of his campaign literature. He comes along at this point and reminds me of something that I committed to as a Member running in a constituency outside the City of Winnipeg and after

seven months wonders why that commitment has not been followed.

The Honourable Member is relatively new, the same as I am. I have not been around here all that long either, Mr. Chairman, but he should understand that when—and I should say I will be looking—maybe he would like to share with me his campaign literature so that we could go over it together. I wonder if he made those commitments with a view to carrying them all out within the seven months. I really should sit him down and ask him about that one of these days.

I know the way I feel about family court services. There are far too many families who are in far too much difficulty without having to be burdened with an official system, a court system and a family services system that tends to drag out and drag out and make our family problems worse than they were when we started.

When it comes to renovations, for instance, to the Brandon Court House or indeed renovations to the Minnedosa Court House, I see the Honourable Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) here again today takes quite an interest, has recently taken more interest in the Minnedosa Court House than ever before, because she does not like to be reminded about her lack of commitment to rural Manitoba issues when it comes to matters like replacing the roofs on court houses. Then, of course, the Member for Ellice does not have much respect for our rural population who have to use the roads either. She suggested that we should take money away from the budget of the Honourable Minister of Highways and also the budget of the Honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Albert Driedger) who is the same Minister.

I do not know what she has against the Honourable Member for Emerson or against people in rural communities, but I am suggesting that certainly we have to be concerned not only about family services but family services as they relate to the people of Winnipeg who make up some 60 percent of our population, but when we are doing that we should not forget those in rural areas of Manitoba.

I tell the Honourable Member it is a little late for him to come along now and start preaching to me about family services outside the City of Winnipeg. I have been living and working in the system for many years outside the City of Winnipeg, and the Honourable Member does not need to preach any sermons to me about that.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Chairman, firstly, the Attorney-General has four very high ranking civil servants here today. I would like to give them a little work and I would hope that we can refrain from political harassment in going back and forth.

With respect to the seven months that he has been in, I think his constituents—and I have been out there talking to them, that explains for the rural questions last week and there will be more to come—suspect that he has come in here and has blinders on, just like everyone else who seems to come in and be in Government.

As it was quoted today, the Perimeter Highway is the Berlin Wall and that is how they feel and all they

are looking for is another commitment to an expanded court house. That is what he promised and that is what they want. They want some agenda to get that court house in Brandon because they need it. They want a second Queen's Bench judge. They are looking to the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) to commit himself to those rural issues. He will not. He did not.

He will be pleased to know that the responses he gave have gone through me all over western Manitoba and I look forward to some responses to those because I do not think they were answers at all.

In any event, the conciliation services which are presently available, I believe in Brandon and Winnipeg, are not available in centres like Dauphin and The Pas. The Attorney-General said that he got a report. I believe that Mr. Justice Hamilton sat on that committee that looked into the expansion of conciliation services or how they were doing in the province. Would the Attorney-General be prepared today to table that report? He has said that he has received it and he thanked the committee. They have obviously done a thorough job. I would like to see that report.

I would like to know what it suggests. I suspect it suggests the expansion of conciliation services to the great benefit of Family Law litigants who could use those services and avoid court, which I think for all of us who know anything about the Family Law system is preferable and desirable if at all possible. Where is that report about the conciliation services? If he is not prepared to table it, what does it say?

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Neil Gaudry, in the Chair.)

• (1700)

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member started out by saying let us go easy here. Then he went into a tirade against me and about how my comments have been distributed to people in western Manitoba.

I would thank the Honourable Member for making those comments available to anyone in western Manitoba concerned about justice services, because western Manitobans feel that they have not been well-served over the last number of years. The Honourable Member is right when he identifies their concerns. Heavens, I identified them long before the Honourable Member did. We are working as diligently as we can to find the funds, to make them available to do the things that people need to see done with regard to justice services in western Manitoba. The only trouble with the Honourable Member is that it is not safe to listen to him only one day. You do not really get a true picture of what the Honourable Member would be putting forward. Now so far, the Honourable Member has not got into discussion about Land Titles. I look forward to discussion about Land Title services in the City of Winnipeg.

I recall, it was not so long ago, the Honourable Member suggested that we spend \$12 million at the Land Titles Office in Winnipeg to solve a problem there. That was patently an irresponsible suggestion. The Honourable Member knows that now, but that did not stop him from making the suggestion.

So the Honourable Member also would suggest that we announce things before we are ready to announce them, before the planning has been made, before a coordinated approach has been worked out, all the while suggesting that no work is being done. He says no work is being done because no announcements have been made. The Honourable Member could not be more wrong, but he has been wrong before. We have come to know that about the Honourable Member and his approach. To think that he would spend \$12 million when something less than \$200,000 was enough to solve the problem that we all identified tells me that I do not want the Honourable Member making my decisions for me because we could not make very many. We would run out of money too quickly.

Mr. Edwards: Without getting into an abuse war, which we have been through before, which I think that response merits, but without getting into it, would the Attorney-General be prepared to answer my question about the conciliation services, about the report which dealt with them and which he has admitted he has received and read and is a good report. Let us have it.

Mr. McCrae: The committee that brought forward the report was composed of, I believe, a representative of our court service. I think Mr. Bruce was involved with that report. I believe that Ms. Diamond, Director of Family Law in our department, was involved. Associate Chief Justice Hamilton of the Queen's Bench was involved. I think Mr. Justice Oliphant from Brandon was involved in preparation of that report. I know a lawyer in the City of Brandon who specializes in Family Law by the name of Mr. Singleton was involved. All of these people who have backgrounds that prepare them and qualify them to be involved in such an exercise were involved.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

I appreciate the work that they have done. The matter of expanding the family court beyond the City of Winnipeg, the unified family court, is one that I see as an urgent one, one that I see that should be worked on diligently and has been worked on diligently, not only by the people I have mentioned but also by people within my ministerial office.

The Honourable Member should keep his shirt on and watch the universe unfold as it should. I think we are very attentive in our department to matters of vital interest to people in Manitoba. The Honourable Member wants to see announcements made, he wants to see things released before they should be. I am trying to be non-partisan here and kind to the Honourable Member in my response. I think the Honourable Member should allow the proper processes to be followed and not try to get an otherwise commendable process off the track.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Chairman, without getting into the Attorney-General's response time, and I believe he is greatly overworked—I am not saying he does not work hard, I think he is overworked and I have said that from Day One—and thankfully I think he has some very

good advice in his department, and I think that has allowed him to certainly meet emergencies. But in terms of the progress of justice issues in this province, I do not see any of the commitments, far be it from the specific commitments of the campaign of the Attorney-General, the commitments of his Government in the Speech from the Throne are being handled, in my view, in a woefully inept fashion.

Specifically let me get to the promise of open Government. We have now seen the White Paper on Family Law. It will not be released. The Consultant's Report on Crime Prevention, will not be released. The Conciliation Services Report will not be released. And I can hardly wait to see the list that the Attorney-General has promised he is going to forward to me so that we can find out just exactly how closed this Government intends to be. I am not sure what they are afraid of.

Mr. Chairman, specifically let me ask, is it on the Attorney-General's agenda to expand conciliation services beyond Brandon and the City of Winnipeg? Is that part of his pledge as Attorney-General, part of the pledge of his Government?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, the Opposition kept the Minister of Community Services before committee studying her department's Estimates for something over 50 hours. And if the Honourable Member did not think during that time to ask the question about conciliation services, well, I can only say that maybe the Honourable Member should have done more homework or something, but his work is deficient in that regard. If he is really interested in that he should have been asking the Honourable Minister of Community Services about conciliation matters.

The Honourable Member talks about the length of answers. The length of the answer, Mr. Chairman, is directly proportional to the provocative nature of the question. The Honourable Member should understand that before he asks provocative questions.

He talks about a Government that is not following through on the principle of open Government. Nothing could be further from the truth. Does the Honourable Member think a report like the Dewar Review is the kind of report that any Government is anxious to get on with releasing? No, I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, it was not an easy thing for me to deal with or to release, but it was the kind of thing that had to be done and was done, which demonstrates an open attitude on the part of the Government.

Did we have to rush to move quickly to proclaim The Freedom of Information Act? No, we could have sat on it for three-and-a-half years like the previous Government did, but we did not do that, Mr. Chairman. We moved along with that so that people who want information that they are entitled to have can get that information.

And is the Honourable Member suggesting, or seems to be suggesting, that little has come out of this department through the hard work and dedicated effort of people working directly with me from Mr. Guy, Mr. Perozzo, Mr. Sinnott and Mr. Pilkey, right on down through the Government; and certainly including the

Land Titles Office and all of the staffpeople there who worked so hard to try to improve services for Manitobans? I think the Honourable Member does a disservice to every single individual in the department when he talks the way he does about the way, the style of Government that Manitobans are getting out of the Department of Attorney-General.

The people in my department have done their level best every step of the way since I came along, to be cooperative not only with the Honourable Member and his Leader in answering questions that they asked, but also to improve services as quickly as we could in those areas where we felt those improvements were urgent, and we have done that.

I see the family court situation in Manitoba being an urgent matter. Anything that is provided in the City of Winnipeg and not provided outside the City of Winnipeg, it is an urgent matter for me as a new Attorney-General to see what I can do to make sure those services are provided.

The Honourable Member, as I say, should keep his shirt on. But he forgets when he asks his questions how quickly we moved to restore to an independent status the Law Reform Commission of Manitoba. He forgets how quickly my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), responded to the legitimate demands of the people out there for a maintenance of RCMP policing services in this province as opposed to a cutback.

Those are just a few little examples of not only open Government but also very responsive Government to the needs of the people of Manitoba. So I really do not take kindly to the Honourable Member's comments. They are not deserved, not by me and certainly not by the people who work for my department.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to pass this item?

* (1710)

Mr. Edwards: I remind the Attorney-General, I specifically congratulated his officials for doing a very good job. I specifically said that if he will remember. He is obviously talking to them before he listens to me. Mr. Chairman, I have cited three reports the Attorney-General has refused to release. He says I should have asked the Minister of Community Services about Conciliation Services. Is he saying he does not accept that as a responsibility, it is not a concern of him? He is obviously—he suggested— (interjection) I think the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) says I have to give allowances, he has a new Deputy.

He has a good Deputy now, he had a good one a month ago and I was the first to say both of those things. And I was the first to say the Attorney-General did not have to be a lawyer.

Will the Conciliation Services Report—and let me add another report—what about the Winnipeg Beach Report which gets into the details that he said in the House? Will he table it? He keeps coming up in the House and saying, oh, here are some excerpts from

the reports which happened to serve myself. Let us see the report. This is open Government. Where is the Conciliation Report? He is the Attorney-General, he should take responsibility for that branch—true—of Community Services, but which plays an integral role in the workings of the Family Law system in this province.

It is obviously of interest to him, he has read, he has thanked the commissioners. I would like to do the same. I would like to read it.

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member refers to a report about Winnipeg Beach. Well, I do not know where he got the idea that I had some voluminous report. I have frequent contact with the Law Enforcement area of my department and I am kept up to date.

As far as reports, perhaps the RCMP have some statistics that they were able to share with the mayor and council of the Town of Winnipeg Beach, but I could tell the Honourable Member what was the upshot of the meeting held on November 10, 1988, a three-hour meeting, Mr. Hill, our director of Law Enforcement Services in this province met with the mayor and council of Winnipeg Beach regarding the closure of the RCMP detachment and that meeting was held on September 10, 1987. Also in attendance were Assistant Commissioner Henry and the Honourable Member for Gimli. The Assistant Commissioner and Mr. Hill, the director, presented a statistical analysis of offenses recorded since the detachment was closed as compared to the years 1982 through to 1987.

After their presentations the mayor and council acknowledge that since the detachment closed, (1) total criminal cases are down; (2) break, enter and thefts are down; (3) response times are adequate from Gimli; (4) the hours of police coverage is increased by four hours per day; (5) few public complaints have been received; and (6) the RCMP at Gimli are reasonably accessible by telephone.

The Honourable Member should understand that, and maybe he knows this coming from this part of the country, Winnipeg Beach is a full eight miles from the town of Gimli, where the kinds of services we have talked about from where those types of services are delivered. I remind the Honourable Member that Reston—the Honourable Member seems to want to get the people of Winnipeg Beach into some kind of fight with the people from Reston. I do not think that is a very useful thing to try to do when it comes to assisting to bring about some kind of unity in our province, but the town of Reston is some 25 miles away from the nearest detachment so that might help explain. Now, if the Honourable Member wants to build a new detachment in Winnipeg Beach, let him say so.

Mr. Edwards: Well, I do not see a need actually to go beyond this particular Appropriation now because he is suggesting all kinds of things which may come later, but he is obviously willing to talk about them. Let him talk about them now. The Attorney-General suggests, am I wanting to pair Winnipeg Beach and Reston, am I wanting to insult his Deputies? He keeps lobbing these things out. They have absolutely no merit at all. He does it purely out of some desire to get into scraps.

Mr. Chairman, does the report that the RCMP did on Winnipeg Beach, does it take into account the number of complaints that were laid by people? Did the number of complaints go up or down? He suggests that the actual complaints were down. Does he see a reason? Maybe the people in Winnipeg Beach just are not calling the cops anymore because they do not believe they can get there in time or they do not believe they can do their job. Perhaps that is the reason. Did he investigate that at the meeting? Let me go back.

Will he table the report that the committee did on conciliation services expansion? If he will not table it, will he tell us what it concludes about the expansion of those services province-wide?

Mr. McCrae: I will respond to the second part of the question first. As I told the Honourable Member before, there is a time to make announcements, there is a time to take actions, and you do not do those things until the time is appropriate, the time is right. So the Honourable Member knows my position about that. I have not refused to do anything. All I am saying is that there is a proper time and the Honourable Member will, I am sure, be quite pleased with whatever announcements are made when they are made.

The Honourable Member refers to "not calling cops" or whatever expression he chose to use. The fact is it is as hard to prove how many calls have not been made as it is to prove how many jobs were lost because of the payroll tax brought in by the previous Government. We have never been able to quantify how many jobs were lost and it is the same kind of debate we have had with regard to the free trade arrangement between Canada and the United States.

No one, I suspect, knows in absolute terms how many jobs will be gained and how many will be lost. The only thing that all the studies show, even the studies made by the New Democrats previous to us, there would be a net gain in employment opportunities as a result of the trade deal. But with regard to how many calls have not been made, I am sorry, I do not know how many calls were not made. It is a patently silly question.

The Honourable Member asked, have there been more complaints or less complaints today? All I can tell him is perhaps when we get into that area of the Estimates dealing with the RCMP contract, we can be more specific, but all I know today is that few public complaints have been made about the matter of the Winnipeg Beach Detachment changes.

I can go on and tell the Honourable Member, if he would like me to do that now, something more about the Gimli detachment or, if he would prefer, I can wait until we get to the RCMP area of the Estimates, but I will tell him that two additional highway patrol officers will be added to the Gimli Detachment which will assist in policing the Winnipeg Beach area.

In light of all of the things I have said before, I think we are following through on our commitment to maintain and, if necessary, to enhance police services in our province.

Mr. Edwards: If two are being added to Gimli, why does he not send them down to Winnipeg Beach and

restore the police detachment? What is not hard to prove is that Mr. Mercier went out to Winnipeg Beach and told the people and told the City Council, we are going to restore RCMP services.

What also is not hard to prove is that this Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) is not going to do that. Now, Mr. Mercier, true, he did not win, but at that time he was the Attorney-General's critic. He went out representing the Opposition at that time. He made that commitment. Mr. Helwer has been out there extremely sympathetic. He realizes the need.

The truth is that there seems to be something against Winnipeg Beach. They are going to put new people into Gimli. Why do they not restore the detachment at Winnipeg Beach as their representative a year ago promised? He promised. They want to hold him to it.

He says there are no complaints. There is only the town council out there that has made repeated representations asking for the restoration of RCMP services, asking for this Government to stand up and do what it said it would do in Opposition.

Mr. McCrae: We are going to have to find out what it would cost to restore a detachment to Winnipeg Beach and feed that into the Progressive Conservative computers so we can keep up with the Honourable Member. It is very hard to do, when it comes to spending promises, to keep up to Members opposite, but we are running hard, Mr. Chairman, and we are able to keep track. So we will find out how much it would cost and add that to the Honourable Member's list of commitments.

The Honourable Member, if elected, he would certainly be an interesting fellow, would he not?

The Honourable Member has now said, what have you got against Winnipeg Beach? So what I said earlier about comparisons between Winnipeg Beach and Reston and other areas of the province, I stand by because the Honourable Member has done it again in his attempt to pit one part of our province against another, for whatever reason I leave to your imagination because his House Leader is sitting beside him. If I said what is on my mind right now, I know the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) would be on his feet objecting and talking about imputation of motives and you name it. The Honourable Member referred to the mayor and council of Winnipeg Beach. I am advised the mayor and council have acknowledged that total criminal cases are down and that break and enters and thefts are down, and that response times from Gimli are adequate. These things have all been acknowledged by the mayor and council.

* (1720)

I know when I ran in the 1988 election campaign the commitment of the Government was to maintain and enhance where necessary police services in rural Manitoba. That is exactly what we are doing and the Honourable Member should take note of that. I suspect the people of Manitoba already have taken note of that.

Ms. Judy Wasylcyia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Chairperson, just a couple of questions on studies under Research

and Planning, I will try to keep it brief. I hate to come in the way of this feud that is going on.

The first question relates to some of the questions that were asked at the end of the session on Thursday pertaining to battered women and wife abuse cases. I know the Attorney-General referred to a study being done by the Department of Community Services. I am a little concerned given I understood that study deals with—if it is the same one I am thinking of announced by the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson)—the broad range of women's programs and how much impact they are having generally.

In this context when a particular case occurred back in June of this year, the Anderson case, where we expressed some concern about the light sentence of a man who had fairly viciously assaulted his wife, the Attorney-General indicated to me he had hoped to be able to have his department review the specific case but also the broader issues around abuse and battered women following specifically under his department, legal matters pertaining to sentencing, length of sentencing, and so on. I am just wondering if in addition to the work that is being done by the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) or at least coordinated by her, if the Attorney-General is looking at the broader question of legal sentencing and so on around spousal assault cases, and if so does he have anything to report at this time in terms of comparative analysis of sentences, effectiveness of the system with respect to sentencing and so on.

Mr. McCrae: Yes, I remember, Mr. Chairman, the Anderson case and the response to it. I remember being asked to instruct my department to field the case and I remember meeting with the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis) at that time in an earnest attempt to try to face these issues and to try to do something that might make a difference. I remember though making a decision not to appeal based on the merits of the case. As a result of that particular case, I have had meetings with the Assistant Deputy Attorney-General for criminal justice. I have had meetings with judges and numerous discussions including discussions with the Honourable Member.

There is a person working in the Research, Planning and Evaluation Branch of our department who is working with the interdepartmental committee on women's issues. That is part of the contribution my department makes. It is a very difficult area. The practitioners in the courts will tell you it is a difficult area to deal with when the policy regarding going ahead with charges is sort of a response. In some cases, I am informed it does not work out as well as we would all like it to work out.

Certainly in regard to the case referred by the Honourable Member, it gave the issue some prominence but the victim in the case had ideas of her own and the accused in that case had consented to and had taken an active part in counselling services for himself so he could be more useful to his family in the future. So these are very, very difficult matters, but we continue to monitor family cases, family violence cases, and I think some of the questions raised in this House in this

Session dealing with family violence of various kinds, wife abuse, child sexual abuse and child abuse, those kinds of questions do a service to the system in our province in the sense they sensitize the Government, they sensitize the Attorney-General.

Any time when cases are brought to my attention which cause concern, I respond as quickly as I possibly can to inform myself and to make sure the proper decisions are made with regard to charges, with regard to appeals, so we can do everything we can in terms of prevention and in terms of dealing with offenders because offenders, in the way they are dealt with, does have a deterrent effect if they are handled properly.

I cannot make comment on individual cases when they come before the courts, but I do work with my department in an attempt to keep the department as sensitive as possible to these issues because I feel family violence, whether it is a growing phenomenon or seems to be growing because we know about more cases, it does not matter to me, as long as there are any cases of the kind of violence referred to by the Honourable Member, I will continue to be sensitive and continue to work with the Honourable Member and others to deal with these matters as humanely and as sensitively as I can.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Thank you, I appreciate that response.

Just one follow-up in this area, could the Attorney-General indicate whether or not he is in the process of reviewing this whole area and is prepared to table any results of that review whenever the information has been gathered—and I am thinking specifically of the one issue we have just mentioned, which is the question of sentencing—with respect to spousal assault vis-a-vis or in comparison to other types of assault as one sort of area that could or should be reviewed; the second being any statistics related to changes since the time when it was decided the police would be able to lay charges in terms of the overall impact on dealing with this problem; and finally, any statistics that would be helpful in terms of the victim and the victim's difficulties in testifying, or refusing to testify, would it be possible to perhaps get an undertaking from the Attorney-General of whether or not a review of all of those areas is under way, whether or not he is prepared to review them and, if so, provide some information to the House on this broad area?

Mr. McCrae: I apologize to the Honourable Member for the time taken to consult my officials on this matter. First, I can tell the Honourable Member the department very carefully is monitoring sentences on a day-to-day basis to be sure we are responding properly to circumstances that arise.

Second, the federal Government is looking at other jurisdictions and how other jurisdictions handle the matter of laying charges in situations which are difficult, and that information is something that can be shared with us. The Honourable Member should be aware—and I am sure the Honourable Member is acutely aware—of some women who have found themselves in some difficulty for not testifying when they were called

upon to do so, and I recall not too long before the election, the former Minister of Community Services, I believe it was that Minister and the Attorney-General at that time, intervened to assist a woman who found herself in that situation. The Government today is equally sensitive now as the Government was then about spouses who are victims and who do not show up for court. Those people are not being charged as has happened, albeit it was not intended, I think to happen. The system of allowing the victim to become an accused is unacceptable as far as I am concerned.

* (1730)

The federal Government is also involved in evaluating matters involving family abuse and wife abuse, so there is information being shared. In addition, the Womens' Initiative presently in operation will be advising my department of any matters that come up in its deliberations which have any bearing or effect on my department. I can assure the Honourable Member we will respond in a very appropriate way to that.

So those are some of the things my department is doing. If there are issues I am able to share with the Honourable Member, I would be pleased to do that. I know the Honourable Member's interest in this matter. Also, I suggest some, one could say, specialist stabilities in regard to this matter because of the interest the Honourable Member has taken.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I think all of us on this side of the House would appreciate receiving any results of any ongoing reviews in this area as it is such a changing and evolving area. I look forward to receiving that.

On another matter that is also changing and evolving on a daily basis, and forgive me if any questions have been asked in this area in this set of Estimates to date, but it relates to the Family Law White Paper which I suspect the Attorney-General would have also thought I would ask some questions on. The question is specifically where are we at with this process and the release of the Family Law White Paper? I raise the question not only because I am anxious to see the results of that process but also in reference to a response the Attorney-General provided to me at a similar inquiry back in August of this year when I asked about the status of the Family Law White Paper.

The Attorney-General responded in a letter dated August 18 that the White Paper that was being prepared by the previous administration is in part obsolete because the Government has decided to proceed immediately with the Access Assistance Program. I had understood the Family Law White Paper process to be quite separate from the whole question of Access Assistance. In fact, the policy paper that was circulated almost a year ago now entitled "Family Law Legislative Program," which was to generate public discussion and have the dialogue that would lead to the writing of the White Paper, dealt not specifically with Access Assistance but dealt with the general state of our Family Law legislation and in fact listed a number of areas but not, as far as I can recall, specifically went into the specific area of Access Assistance.

So my question is where are we at with the White Paper? When can we expect to see it tabled? Is it ready

now? Is there a reason for it being held up? Is it gathering dust somewhere? Are there changes being made to the whole terms of reference of this White Paper given the comments made by the Attorney-General himself in that letter of August 18.

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member may have missed the previous discussion that the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and I had about the Family Law White Paper. So I will not take up a lot of time answering this except to be as brief as I can.

My understanding of White Papers is that White Papers are the legislative intentions of a Government in office. I told the Honourable Member for St. James and I will repeat it for the Honourable Member for St. Johns that there is a new Government in Manitoba. I do not know that it would be fair to ask the new Government to adopt without reasonable study of the issues involved, a holus-bolus White Paper prepared for a previous Government. There has been a change not only in Government but I assume in various directions.

As Government House Leader, I am involved with the Legislative Review Committee of Cabinet and to discuss the White Paper in detail would be to discuss in detail the way we approach this particular Session and the way we looked at our directions for the future. The proposals in the White Paper are there for the Legislative Review Committee of Cabinet and the Cabinet and the caucus of the new Government to review and to make decisions about.

A little while ago the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) asked for some new legislation to come forward in this Session without having done the groundwork required, and I do not think the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) would like to see us bring forward legislation on which we, as a Government, have not done the groundwork.

So I can tell the Honourable Member that all proposals in the White Paper are being reviewed by the new Government and the Honourable Member might be pleased to see some aspects of that White Paper come forward in the form of legislation. Indeed, I believe the Access Assistance Program was part of that review and that was part of this Session. So I think the Honourable Member will likely be pleased when she does see what flows from that.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Just a final question before I—I know I have a couple of colleagues present who would like to ask some questions under this Research and Planning section. A final question on the White Paper. I can appreciate what the Attorney-General is saying and I am sorry I missed some of the dialogue that was going on around me. I certainly appreciate the fact that a White Paper is a signal of a Government's intentions vis-a-vis legislation and therefore must be treated in that context.

However, there was a process that was begun publicly. There was a paper for discussion. A lot of women's groups and other groups participated in that process

and made suggestions. I think it would be very useful for all of us to at least receive the results of that public consultation process and be aware of the concerns being raised by the different groups in Manitoba's society. So I would ask the Minister if he could at least provide us with the results of the comments and submissions that were generated in response to the paper called "Policy Paper - Family Law Legislative Program" that was circulated, I believe, in January of '87.

Then secondly, given the Attorney-General's comments about legislative intentions, could the Attorney-General at least then tell us if a process is going on to look at this whole question of updating legislation pertaining to marital property, and if so, what the terms of reference are with respect to looking at the area? What public consultation process is in place if there is one, and whether or not there will be a similar process involving a White Paper and so on? So then at least we are clear about where this Government is coming from, what we can expect, when we can expect to review this area, when we can begin to think about looking at all of the updating and upgrading that is required with respect to Family Law.

Mr. McCrae: I realize, accept and appreciate that significant work has been done and I, for one, would not want to see all that valuable work wasted. I think, as I said in my last answer, that the Honourable Member, if she is patient, will probably be pleased with most of what she sees coming out of all that work.

I think it also would not be proper to go too far out on a limb without having adequate and full follow-up discussions with my colleague, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Oleson). Those discussions have begun but they will not be complete until we come forward with our legislative package for the next Session.

I think, as I say, the Honourable Member should bear with us until she sees what we bring forward in that Session.

* (1740)

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): I would like to ask a question of the Attorney-General. I do not know whether it is an appropriate time frame.

An Honourable Member: It is.

Mr. Harper: With regard to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. For some time now, I have been requesting and tabling petitions requesting the Attorney-General to fund the Native organizations. I know that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) received a letter from the Native organizations themselves.

Chief Louis Stevenson, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Manitoba Metis Federation, Indigenous Women's Collective, Winnipeg Council of Treaty and Status Indians and the Tribal Council from Island Lake wrote a letter on November 9 indicating they wanted to meet with the Premier (Mr. Filmon). I believe the meeting took place and I was just wondering whether the

Attorney-General would be providing a positive response, whether he has or not. I am just asking a question of him today whether there will be a positive response in funding the Native organizations.

Mr. McCrae: I must say, Mr. Chairman, much has been said about this issue. Much has been done by this Government on this issue. It may never be satisfactory to everyone, but certainly I think the commitment of our Government to the Commission of Inquiry into Justice as it pertains to Native Manitobans, I do not think there is any question about that commitment.

I have to wonder about the Honourable Member taking the very serious step of suggesting that the Minister be removed from his responsibility. I remember these kinds of things and they tend to hit home with the Minister. I know perhaps the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) has never had anyone ask for his removal—(Interjection)—Did that happen? Well, maybe it did, but I am sure it must have been for a very good reason. I am also a forgiving kind of person and I know that the Honourable Member was pretty badly misguided when he made those comments. Certain things happened not too long after, not too many minutes, shall I say, after he made his demands. His demands had to do with what he called a gag order which clearly did not exist. It was a figment of somebody's imagination. Maybe it was the Honourable Member's imagination. I am sure the Honourable Member, on reflection, would recant and remove that demand. I am sure at some point, either privately or publicly, he will apologize to the Government and to me personally for making such demands.

In any event, the Government of Manitoba is very much committed to the inquiry. As the Honourable Member knows, the Government of which he was a part, a Government which had an opportunity to make decisions about the inquiry, either did not listen to the Honourable Member or the Honourable Member did not speak up at the time it would have been appropriate to fund adequately the Commission of Inquiry. If I am wrong about that, the Honourable Member can correct me, but I do know that after the election was over, the funding for the inquiry had to be more than doubled in order for it to do its work. I really wonder about the Honourable Member coming along now making the comments that he does. He had an opportunity.

With regard to funding for groups coming before the inquiry, the judges have identified the five main groups that it wants to hear from. It has identified the areas of concern that the commission itself has. It was just a little over a week ago, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Minister responsible for Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) and I had a meeting with various leaders of the Native community. I said, when I came out of that meeting, that it was a very positive meeting and I think that is about as much as I can say today.

I see the Honourable Member smiling, so I take it he is feeling some remorse for some of his comments and will probably put his real thoughts on the record now.

Mr. Harper: I know that we had committed some funding to the Native people in terms of the inquiry

separately from the commission. The chiefs and my fellow Indian leaders know that and they can tell you personally the discussions that we had when we were negotiating for the inquiry. As a matter of fact, they initially wanted three judges to be involved in the inquiry as the negotiations went on. Unfortunately, we were in the time of an election and I am sure that if we had tripled the funding, there would have been an outcry for providing that kind of money and saying that we were buying off Indian votes, but certainly we had made a commitment to the chiefs that we would be looking at further funding. I hope the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) will provide funding for the Native organizations. I heard the meeting was positive.

The commission funding, I know, is totally for the commission itself, but there needs to be funding available to the chiefs so that they can make alternative proposals in terms of the justice system. Maybe they are providing a youth court system or else a community-based court system, but they need to hire researchers and legal people to present that. I am sure that many of the elders in the community, people are not really aware of the whole process of the judicial system in Manitoba.

They also need to be briefed so that they would understand that, and that is the reason why the chiefs and the other Native organizations have been requesting funding for the separate funding. I know that the commission must be independent and they cannot really work jointly together because otherwise the objectivity of the commission would not be there. That is the reason why I am asking the Attorney-General to provide separate funding to the Native organizations, so they can do the research and recommendations separately.

I am glad that he mentioned that he did not go far to say that there would be funding available but there are positive feelings in there about maybe providing more funding to the Native organizations. I appreciate the funding to the Justice Inquiry to the tune of \$1.5 million for this and I think I am sure we look forward to the recommendations of that inquiry.

The other thing I wanted to ask a question of the Attorney-General is that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on November 3 indicated that he wrote a letter to all the staff, including the Deputy Minister and the Ministers, indicating about the gag order and that everybody was free to make presentations before the inquiry. I am just wondering whether he would be providing a copy to the Opposition because I never received a copy of the letter.

An Honourable Member: The gag order.

Mr. Harper: The gag order, yes.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, just the first part of the question first. The Honourable Member talks about a commitment to funding made by Members of his Government; there is no evidence for that. I will take the Honourable Member's word, of course, for that, that he made commitments, but making commitments and following through are two different things. The Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) knows all about that.

Mr. Edwards: The Attorney-General knows all about it.

Mr. McCrae: That is right, the Attorney-General knows all about that, too.

The thing is, what the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) paints for us is a picture exactly of what the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) would do wrong every day of his life if he ever had the opportunity to be on this side of the House.—(Interjection)— Right, it is referred to in the Dewar review, and I am referring to it today, the matter of perhaps compressing things into a short time frame.

The Honourable Member says he does not like to be accused of buying Native votes or whatever and I am not doing that, but I am saying that in the middle of an election campaign, when all three political Parties in this province, is hardly the time to be formalizing the details of how you are going to run your commission. That is what the Honourable Member's Party did wrong. That is what the Honourable Member for St. James' (Mr. Edwards) Party would do wrong day in and day out if they ever had the opportunity which, thank God, they will never have.

It is the best illustration I can give to the Honourable Member for St. James. Commitments were made, some things were written down through Order-in-Council, some things were just so-called commitments made. It is not good enough. The Government that won the election on April 26 is the Government that has to make these things happen and that is exactly what we are trying to do.—(Interjection)—

* (1750)

In spite of the harassment of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) as I am trying seriously to respond to the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) to his very, very serious questions, in spite of all of that, Governments have to be responsible and this is something I would like the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) to keep in mind when he is asking his questions. He wants us to commit to things before the time is right. He wants us to commit to spending \$12 million, for example, in the case of the Land Titles Office in Winnipeg. The Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Evans) suggests that insurance benefits should be available to those, even those who do not pay premiums. That is the kind of suggestion we get from Honourable Members in the Liberal Party and that is the kind of pressure they put on us. But we have to be strong and resist the kind of pressure the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) does apply because he usually does not know what he is doing. That is the problem with the Honourable Member.

The other thing about the question put by Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), and I wanted to say is I found the meeting with the Native leaders recently to be so positive because I was able for the first time really to say face to face to those people, I need some help as the Attorney-General in this province. I am doing my best every day in spite of

efforts by the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) to put this inquiry off the track somehow, I am trying day in and day out to preserve the independence of that inquiry.

The Member for Rupertsland would recognize the importance of the independence of that inquiry even if the Honourable Member for St. James and his Leader would not understand that, but that is their problem.

So I went to that meeting with a genuine interest in getting some advice from those Native leaders and some help and assistance on how we can manage this whole thing without the appearance, let alone the fact, but the appearance of the Department of Attorney-General in any way interfering with the progress of the Commission of Inquiry. So I am sure the Honourable Member will have received some reports from some people who attended that meeting and may share with me my optimism and will understand when I tell him that it was a positive meeting.

The Honourable Member talks again about that so-called "gag order" and I am not sure if I tabled the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) memorandum or not. If I did not I would be happy to make it available to the Honourable Member. But the so-called "gag order" issue results in some interesting developments. We are told that somehow the Government of Manitoba was intimidating. I mean the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) suggests that off-duty police officers can somehow have the effect of intimidating people and thereby reduces off-duty police officers to second-class citizen status in our province. I do not agree with that. I think she is wrong. I think she some day will come to learn that she is wrong about that, that off-duty police officers are human beings just like the rest of us.

Regardless of their size, I will not be intimidated by off-duty police officers or on-duty police officers for that matter. With regard to the Premier's memo, I will certainly make that available to the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) often tells me that what goes around, comes around, is what he tells me. I see now that one civil servant who attended the inquiry and made his—

Some Honourable Members: Pass! Pass!

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The Attorney-General does have the floor. I am having some difficulty in hearing him. I understand that all Honourable Members from all sides of the House would be interested in participating in the Estimates but the Attorney-General does have the floor.

Mr. McCrae: Just very quickly, Mr. Chairman, I want to point out that what goes around, does indeed come around. The suggestion was made by the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and even by the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), that somehow civil servants were being gagged and not allowed to come forward.

Well then after the Premier wrote his memorandum which was distributed throughout the Civil Service, one

civil servant did come forward and he has been the subject of suggestions that he should not say what he says and should not be able to keep his employment, and you name it. So that it works both ways when people come forward and say certain things, they are going to be criticized. But as far as the Premier is concerned, as far as I am concerned, there is no such thing as a "gag order," never was and never was a civil servant, as reported by the Winnipeg Free Press, who was intimidated. The person who claimed to be intimidated was not a civil servant and the Honourable Member should understand that too. There is no "gag order" and we will share the memorandum with the Honourable Member and I hope that will satisfy him about the freedom of the civil servants, off-duty police, on-duty police officers, anybody in this province who wants to come forward can do so.

Mr. Harper: Can he provide a copy of that letter to me today so I can look at it? I have not seen the letter, whether it is actually confirmation of the "gag order," or whatever. To me there was some indication that there was some activity going on why the Premier wrote the letter and I want to see that letter first before I make further comments on it.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to make that available to the Honourable Member at the earliest opportunity.

I see it is almost six and I am wondering though if I will be able to fish it out of all those filing cabinets in my office. Perhaps I can have it available for the Honourable Member after the supper adjournment. If not, I will certainly have it for him first thing tomorrow.

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask a few questions. I recently had the opportunity to go into the community of Pelican Rapids and they were under the impression, I guess they had been told by a previous Attorney-General when there were hearings and meetings, I know it was a previous Government, the Attorney-General, Roland Penner, at that time told them there would be courts held in Mafeking and I was under the impression that there was an additional judge put in place which would serve the Swan River area which would allow one of the judges to hold hearings either in Mafeking or in the community of Pelican Rapids.

I think, judging by the experience that they have had in holding hearings in both the communities of

Easterville and Grand Rapids, it has been a positive experience, it has been a cost-saving for the people who have to travel to the courts. I think it would be a good idea to hold it in a much closer proximity to where these people live, rather than having them travel all the way to Swan River. I am wondering if there is any progress being made in holding those hearings in Mafeking or in Pelican Rapids.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Honourable Member's indulgence and perhaps ask him to permit me to answer that question at eight o'clock. I know this matter is a matter of study, if you like, by my department, but with respect to specifics I prefer to answer at eight o'clock, if that is okay with the Honourable Member.

Mr. Harper: Sure.

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

Mr. Harapiak: I have a few other questions. I thought I was just going to hold, or bring back, or call it six o'clock now, but I have a few other questions that I would like to ask. So if you are not going to call it six o'clock I will continue.

I guess one of the other areas that I would like to touch on briefly is the whole area of the Communications staff that is being removed from The Pas, and I think that the Attorney-General should look very closely at this because they were serving that area well and I think that when you remove that many employees from a small community of that sort it has a very negative effect on it. I think those people were serving, under the area of Moose Lake, Cormorant and Wanless and all the surrounding areas, it was serving them well. With modern communication methods we have now I think that they could have continued to work out of The Pas just as well as being transferred to the community of Thompson. I know that the final decisions are made now but I think it is a little ironic that at the time when you have the new facility opening up in The Pas which should have greater access to the people from those communities to the RCMP, at such a time it is being closed down and we are not able to have that close contact with those people.

Mr. Chairman: The Hour being 6 p.m., I am now leaving the Chair and we will return at 8 p.m. tonight.