

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 23, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Niverville Elementary School sixty Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Mary Wiens. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger). On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Decentralization Policy Transfer Notice

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is for the Premier (Mr. Filmon). Mr. Speaker, there is not a single Member in this House who is not supportive of a decentralization policy. We all know that too much decision-making is in the City of Winnipeg and not enough in our rural communities, but the heavy-handed and insensitive approach that this Government has taken has sent shock waves throughout the Civil Service of Manitoba. Eighty-five hundred Winnipeggers and their families are now wondering where they are going to be living next year because of this Government's uncaring and callous approach. Why has this Premier and this Government left 8,500 Winnipeggers and their families waiting in the dark over the Christmas period into 1990?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this is such nonsense that—you know you—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, first, here we have the Liberal Party trying to do all things for all people, trying to be all things to all people on both sides of the issue. They are the ones who said prior to the last election that they agreed with decentralization. They are the ones who have asked questions. They have asked questions about when we were going to decentralize. Their Leader sent out a communique very recently saying, why are we taking so much time? The fact of the matter is that we have made a commitment to decentralization in this province.

We are going to move services outside the City of Winnipeg close to the people. We are going to serve the people better by making those services provided for them in areas throughout this province, and we are going to do it in a caring way by consulting with the people before they are asked to move their positions

and make sure that they are involved in the entire process. Management levels of Government and indeed civil servants will be treated in a caring way and treated in a way that respects their rights and their responsibilities as civil servants.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we are not making blanket announcements outside in other areas of the province. That is why we are not going to argue here with the Opposition in this Legislature. We are going to deal with the people who are involved, the civil servants themselves, to make sure that this is done in a planned and orderly fashion—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Carr: If the Premier intends to be caring, Mr. Speaker, he is off to a brutal start and you can ask 8,500 Winnipeggers about that. Who are the 500 Winnipeggers who are going to be moved? What departments do they work for? What jobs are they? Why will the Premier not tell them now who they are so that the other 8,000 Winnipeggers will not have to worry about where they are going to live a year from now?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, to begin with, the task force about decentralization was announced in the Throne speech. The task force was appointed on June 6 by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) to identify potential candidates, sections of Government for being decentralized outside the City of Winnipeg. They had extensive consultations throughout with management people in Government to offer up suggestions as to what would be appropriate candidate areas.

So the management level of the public service has been totally involved. In terms of the host communities, the task force received presentations from countless municipal jurisdictions throughout the province and met with every single one that requested a meeting with the task force to see what they had to offer, to get their ideas about what might be appropriate services to deliver in northern Manitoba, in central Manitoba, in western Manitoba, in southern Manitoba, throughout this province, Mr. Speaker.

Under all those circumstances we wanted to ensure it was well-planned and that it would take place over a period of time so that any adjustments that would have to be made throughout the Civil Service and involving people would be made carefully and with consideration and in the best possible manner.

Tabling Request

* (1335)

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, that is not what thousands of civil servants are saying in Winnipeg

today. Our phones have been ringing off the hook this morning with nervous public servants in the city, and the Premier is talking about a careful plan. Where is the plan? What were the criteria that were used to make these decisions? Is he prepared to table that in the House today?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, let us begin by now saying that we have on the record where the Liberal Party is. They are opposed to decentralization of Government services. They are opposed to dealing in a fair and considerate manner with public servants. They want to have Government from on high impose solutions on problems and ignore the wishes and the will of the people who are going to be affected.

We are going to be working with those people. We are going to tell them about the plans that we have for decentralization and we are going to ensure that unit by unit they are given the knowledge that they will have to have of positions that are being moved. I might emphasize, Mr. Speaker, it is positions. Those positions are being moved. Those people have an agreement, a collective agreement that entitles them to certain rights and responsibilities and under those circumstances we will be dealing with them fairly as an employer in consideration of all those rights and responsibilities on both sides of the collective agreement, which is the only fair way to deal with it. Of course, the Liberals who have never had any management experience, never been in Government, and know nothing about that process, they know nothing of that process—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Carr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The only politician in this province who is making cheap political points is the Premier, who goes out to Brandon to make a blanket announcement like the one he did yesterday.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Carr: With a new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, and let the record show that the Liberal Party in Manitoba, in its campaign platform in the last election, supported a policy of decentralization, a compassionate policy that cares about people, not the clumsy heavy-handed approach of this Government. This Government's commitment to recycling is making announcements over and over and over again, which is I am sure what it intends to do with this policy. We would like to get some information out of the Premier. How were these positions chosen? Was there consultation with the rural communities? When will he make that public so all Manitobans can judge what he is trying to do with his high-handed approach?

Mr. Filmon: I cannot believe this Deputy Leader has obviously got questions written out and he does not listen to the answers. I said to him that the task force consulted broadly throughout the province. It received

dozens and dozens of written briefs and it met with every single municipal jurisdiction throughout the province that wanted to meet with them to offer the host community as being a base for future Government operations. They gave us all of their advantages and all the opportunities that they saw for decentralization.

Second, it was developed from within the Civil Service by going through department by department with the senior management and selecting through their knowledge and judgment what particular units of Government would be appropriate to be moved outside the City of Winnipeg. So it came from within the Civil Service, out to the task force as recommendations and those recommendations were gone through and sifted through for the appropriateness of the recommendations. We also dealt with the host communities, the potential host communities out there in the municipalities throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. The consultation has been extensive and the process has been a very positive one.

Transfer Notice

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, if all of these consultations have taken place and as much detail has been given to it as the Premier says, why do these people holding positions have to wait until March to find out where they are going to live next year?

* (1340)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have a number of issues that have to take place.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) is going through his histrionics as he usually does. Not understanding the issue, all he can do is bellow out there. The fact of the matter is we have processes that take place to respect the rights of our civil servants and to respect the collective agreement.

We also have leases that we have to deal with in terms of space currently occupied by Government, units of departments. We have an Estimates process that has to be gone through to ensure that this is carried through in a proper vein and that money is budgeted for the various expenses that have to do with moving these people. All of these matters have a process and take time. We are making sure that people have an opportunity to move at times that are convenient to them. We are spacing this out over the summer months, both this coming year and the following year to ensure that children do not have to be moved out of school, that movements can take place when people are not in school. All of those things are being done with the care and the consideration of the people involved in it, Mr. Speaker. We understand the problem. The difficulty is that the Liberals made promises when they do not understand anything of the process—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Announcement

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): The obvious question to the Premier is that if he is not ready, if it is going to take all of this time to dot the i's and cross the t's, why did he make the political announcement yesterday in Brandon, keeping 8,500 public servants waiting in the dark?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The i's have been dotted, the t's have been crossed, the analysis has been done. Now we have to deal with the people to ensure that it is done in the most considerate, careful and well-planned process, Mr. Speaker. Does the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) not understand that we occupy space in Winnipeg? We have to deal with the leases and the shifting of space requirements, Mr. Speaker. Does he not realize that we have to find rental and lease space in the host communities? Does he not realize that we have to ensure that the transfer of services is done in an orderly fashion. He does not understand anything of the process. All he does is get up and criticize—

Health Sciences Centre Emergency Department Upgrading

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, throughout this week we have been raising the issue of the problems in the health care system relating to extended care beds, but that is not the only problem that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is not dealing with. There are major problems in terms of emergency care in this province.

This morning I had the opportunity to tour the Health Sciences Centre to see, Mr. Speaker, first hand the problems in that facility, a facility that was constructed in 1911. I have a letter from the Health Sciences Centre staff pointing to the bugs, mice, the dirt, the overcrowding in the emergency facility in that hospital. What I would like to ask the Minister is, why was there no announcement in the capital budget of anything to alleviate the facilities there which combine the 1911 facility and two ATCO trailers? Why was there nothing for the Health Sciences Centre emergency ward in the announcement earlier this week by the Minister of Health?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I believe that the emergency section of Health Sciences Centre is in architectural design. Those plans are not completed, hence could not be committed to construction.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised at the Minister's response. He supposedly toured this facility, as I had the opportunity this morning, and why has there not been an announcement when in this capital budget, a five-year capital budget, there is no mention whatsoever of the Health Sciences Centre? I would like to ask the Minister what is going to be done to deal

with the fact that the patients who have to have operating procedures taken are at risk, because it can take as long as five minutes to get them to the operating room which is on the seventh floor. What is the Minister going to do to prevent any major disasters occurring at that facility?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I realize my honourable friend from Thompson is wanting from Opposition to solve every single Capital problem that he may lay his hands on in the health care system of Manitoba. It is too bad that he was a voice in the wilderness when in Government with an opportunity to do some of these projects and allowed his Government to freeze them for nine months of 1987.

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker, the redevelopment of that section of the Health Sciences Centre I believe folds under what they call the HC or the PC Project. It is a project of patient care or health care. I do not know what the latest terminology is.

That is a \$150 million commitment which includes a podium for service commitment, new emergency and other facilities at the Health Sciences Centre. Mr. Speaker, plans for that redevelopment, that very major redevelopment, are not completed. Those were part of a three-stage, three-phase development announced in 1978 that have not yet developed the plans to develop them. Those plans are in process with discussion between the hospital and the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

Health Care Facilities Extended Care Beds

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, it is scary to see that this Minister of Health does not realize what is happening in the health care system. Talking of emergency care, the Concordia Hospital yesterday had to shut down its emergency facility because of the lineup of patients in the hallway who need extended care facilities. That is taking place while Deer Lodge sits empty with 85 already constructed hospital beds.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health when is he going to deal with the increasing ramifications of the crisis in terms of emergency care and extended care in this province. When is he going to deal with that and stop talking about his plans and his health advisory networks. When is he going to deal with the real concerns in the health care system?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I realize my honourable friend has been Health Critic for some short two months and now has all the answers to health care in the Province of Manitoba. That is an incredible intelligence and an incredibly fast learning curve.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend the Member for Thompson that there has seldom been more co-operation between the facilities delivering health care in the Province of Manitoba and the

Manitoba Health Services Commission to develop those very plans that are now in either commitment to construction or will be in the very near future, either through completion of architectural design or through the tabling of the Health Advisory Network Report, which is going to tell us how to deal with staff and patient delivery services at Deer Lodge, Concordia, Grace and Municipals, a global concept of the system that has never been taken before and will result in resolution of problems.

Emergency Department Shutdowns

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I will tell you what the people in the health care system are saying, and I will quote from a letter I received, a copy of which the Minister will be getting, "I am outraged at the recent Government allocations for improved health care services." I would like to ask the Minister, finally, if he is also aware—I mentioned about the Concordia emergency room shutting down yesterday—is he aware that other emergency facilities have attempted to shut down and have only been stopped by the co-ordination of the ambulance service from doing so? Is the Minister going to stand idly by while Concordia Hospital and other Emergency Departments are closing down while the Health Sciences Centre facility is grossly overburdened? Will the Minister act to deal with the emergency crisis in this province?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, in the course of my honourable friend's question he indeed gave the answer. There has been for the entire month of November an excessive demand on the emergency services of the hospitals throughout the City of Winnipeg. That has resulted in an interfacility co-operation program to avoid the kind of problems that happened yesterday at Concordia. It has been working very successfully, because hospitals are co-operating with each other to resolve a problem which is caused by an increase in demand for beds in the hospital system.

* (1350)

My honourable friends, the New Democratic Party, want to leave the impression that there has never been a November lineup for bed placement. That happens every single year. This year it is being co-ordinated by the hospital administration to assure that patient safety is guaranteed.

Health Sciences Centre Emergency Department Upgrading

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): The Health Sciences Centre emergency room is one of the busiest in Manitoba. It sees about 60,000 patients per year. This hospital receives all trauma victims from Manitoba, accepting all burn patients out of Manitoba, and it has the highest activity in the city.

Staff members are not only dealing with all these patients, but also dealing with bugs, mice, dirt and extreme temperature variations, Mr. Speaker. These people freeze in the winter and overheat in the summer.

Can the Minister of Health tell us, how can he justify this by ignoring such an important issue as the emergency room of the Health Sciences Centre?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I have already answered that question when posed by my honourable friend from Thompson.

Surely my honourable friend from the Liberal Party is not suggesting that we build a new emergency at Health Sciences Centre without plans whereby to make that construction possible.

Mr. Cheema: This has been in place for the last 40 years. He has ignored the issue. The waiting room has a facility for five to six patients only, with no ventilation procedure and mice for company. Can the Minister of Health tell us, how can he justify that the critical patients' family has to wait in that room, and justify ignoring those patients? Can he justify that today?

Mr. Orchard: I have never defended outdated facilities at the Health Sciences Centre. Those outdated facilities in the emergency have existed for a number of years. They were part of a redevelopment project announced, a three-phase redevelopment project.—(interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) are carrying on their private conversation. If the Honourable Members would like to do so, you can do so outside the Chamber.

Mr. Orchard: In 1978, the then Government announced a three-phase redevelopment of the Health Sciences Centre. One phase was committed to construction and completed. The other two phases have never been completed in terms of architectural design and the plans therefore to undertake the construction.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot answer for the inactivity, why plans were not completed in the six years that Howard Pawley governed the health care system in the Province of Manitoba. The Manitoba Health Services Commission is working diligently with the administration and management of the Health Sciences Centre on the HC, or PC project, whichever vernacular one wishes to make. That is a \$150 million projected commitment and capital reconstruction at the Health Sciences Centre.

Capital Funding

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba are fed up with the political manipulation for the allocation of the resources for our health care. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) talks about the Health Advisory Network. He has created this phenomenon for his inefficiency.

Can he tell this House today, assure the people of Manitoba and the Health Sciences Centre that he will give the funds in the near future to make sure all those patients and families are protected? They are serving 60,000 patients per year, all the victims of trauma and the burn patients, not only for Manitoba but from northwest Ontario, from Saskatchewan also.

* (1355)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I can absolutely guarantee without equivocation my honourable friend the Liberal Health Critic (Mr. Cheema) that if we have the ability to direct the health care system for 15 of the next 20 years it will be completely renewed and completely revamped, it will be balanced, and there will be health care facilities available in rural Manitoba, something my honourable friend from the Liberal Party criticized in last year's budget. They want everything in Winnipeg and nothing in rural Manitoba.

Consumer Protection Fraudulent Car Repairs

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery). Yesterday, we saw an investigative report about an auto repair shop in Winnipeg. The report made a strong case that this shop routinely made fraudulent repair estimates. Can the Minister inform the House today what investigations have been on this particular shop and what measures are presently in place which are supposed to prevent this type of fraud being perpetrated on Manitobans?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I appreciate the question from the Member opposite. For six and a half years the NDP sat on legislation that could have been brought forward to protect the people. That legislation is now before the House and hopefully it will be passed by Christmastime.

We realize the deficiency in legislation was not there to make those sorts of investigations and to bring those people to accountability, and I hope with the support of the Liberal Party we will get that passed by Christmastime.

Consumer Protection Legislation Regulations Enforcement

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister is no doubt aware, laws are one thing, enforcement is another. What new enforcement initiatives will be put in place to deal with the new rules which this Minister is proposing? Does he have any ideas for enforcing the laws which may be in place?. If they are not in force, the fact is the people of Manitoba do not benefit from those laws.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): It is unfortunate that the Member—and it is a good question, but they do their research by the news media again—but this is very serious legislation and we are very proud to bring it forward.

We will be taking whatever action is required after the legislation is passed. The legislation is not passed. We do not know what amendments might be heisted on it by the Opposition. Once the legislation is passed we will be watching. Whatever needs to be done our department will take that appropriate action.

Cost Analysis

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, this is reminiscent of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) bringing in drinking and driving legislation, saying there was going to be an educational package and then not doing it. This Minister is saying he is going to be bringing in some tough legislation. How is he going to enforce it?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, this caucus introduced that very Bill last year. The Bill has been on the Order Paper for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Edwards: Well, there is a rush to claim credit, but the fact is neither of those Parties have come up with any ideas about enforcement. That is the critical issue.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. James.

* (1400)

Mr. Edwards: I have a final question for the Minister. Is the Minister considering implementing—and I heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) yell it from his seat in the last question—a ghost car program, as is presently run in Ontario, that would randomly and anonymously spot check auto garages to ensure they are engaging in proper business practices? Has a cost analysis been done of—

An Honourable Member: Let us hear the question, Paul.

Mr. Edwards: The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) is a little disappointed I am not asking him a question today, maybe later on.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The origin of that

legislation goes back to 1975. The NDP sat on it all through the six and half years that they were in place. When we took office, the former Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs started to work to make sure it came through. When I took office in that department we brought it forward.

If the ghost car program is something that will assist us, we will be reviewing all of those options that are before Government. First of all, we are putting forth some of the best consumer legislation that this province has said is very sorely needed. Hopefully it will be in place by the end of this year. Those options that are required to enforce it will be taken.

Day Care Workers Standards Compliance

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): I would like to ask the First Minister a question based on a very serious letter that was sent today to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) from the Manitoba Child Care Association. That letter makes some very serious allegations. Basically it says, "In our opinion the current classification procedures of child care professionals, under the direction of your department, is in direct contravention of the current legislation."

I would like to ask the First Minister, given those serious allegations, will he forward this letter today to Legislative counsel to determine if legislation is being broken by his Minister of Family Services, her department and thereby this Government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I will await receipt of that notice, at least of that letter, and I will read it very carefully and be able then to respond.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I would like to ask the First Minister if he will go much beyond that, since he knows about the chaos in the classification system and the apparent non-compliance of legislation. Will he undertake a complete review of this perceived erosion of standards caused by apparent non-compliance of legislation? Will he make a commitment today to correct any policies by his Minister and her department resulting in the erosion of standards?

Mr. Filmon: Of course, we have all of these qualifications of perceived and apparent and all of these behind the question. Given that the information the Member for St. Johns brings to the House is not always totally reliable, I will await the receipt of that letter and review it very carefully before I respond.

Manitoba Child Care Association Class Action Suit

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): I have a final question to the First Minister. Given that this is such a serious situation, that the Manitoba Child Care Association is considering a class action suit on behalf of child care professionals, will the First Minister agree to their request if they proceed with that class action suit, that his Minister and his Government release all

relevant documentation under the Freedom of Information Act?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I have received threats from the Manitoba Child Care Association before. I will look at them carefully.

Let me say this, this Government will ensure that the highest possible standards in day care will be adhered to in this province under all circumstances for the protection and the interest of the children in care.

Free Trade Agreement Subsidy Negotiations

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Though I seldom exercise my right as a Member of this House to question Ministers, I rise today due to the concern and confusion created earlier in the week by a series of questions on the free trade subsidy negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). As I understand, as I would appreciate that all Members of this House understand, the ramifications and the importance of those negotiations, my question is, could the Minister please outline to this House the present state of those negotiations as they exist today?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Yesterday the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) delivered a rather vicious attack on my integrity during her questions with regard to free trade subsidy negotiations. Apparently she had telephoned the U.S. Trade Office in Washington to try and find out what the state of negotiations were. Well, Mr. Speaker, she was wrong yesterday, she was wrong the day before, and she is wrong today. In support—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Ernst: In support of my statement, let me table before this House the report of Mr. A. L. Halliday, who is the chairman of the Canadian Subsidy Negotiation Committee before the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. Let me read two excerpts of that, they are very short.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. I would like to remind the Honourable Minister that answers to questions should be as brief as possible. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Given the importance of this issue, I would ask the Minister if he could inform this House as to the channels of communication within Canada that the Government of Canada has established in developing our position in those negotiations?

Mr. Ernst: As most people who are in the business of politics and of Government in this country know, there

are certain channels to be followed when dealing with foreign Governments. The bumbling and bungling of the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and her agent the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) in going to Washington avoided all diplomatic protocol in this country. Those actions have embarrassed Canada, have embarrassed Manitoba, and on top of that may well have jeopardized the free trade subsidy negotiations.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Point of order.

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

Mr. Kozak: Mr. Speaker, the Minister is free to say whatever he wants in this House from his own ideological perspective, but my discussions—

Mr. Speaker: The point of order.

Mr. Kozak: —with our friends to the south related only to matters of public record—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. What is the point of order?

Mr. Kozak: —and 250 million Americans can analyze printed material as well as I can.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. There is a dispute over the facts.- (interjection)- Order.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). Given the importance of those negotiations to industry in this province, could the Minister please tell the House what position the federal Government has taken on the conduct of those negotiations in ensuring that the Canadian position is not jeopardized by forays into the U.S. by parties that are not part of those negotiations? -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member's question deals with a matter which is not within the responsibility of this administration, therefore, out of order.

Would the Honourable Member kindly rephrase his question?

Mr. Praznik: This issue is of great importance to industry within the Province of Manitoba. Could the Minister please tell the House if he is aware of what

stand the federal Government has taken with respect to the conduct of those negotiations to ensure our position is not jeopardized?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Minister of Industry and Trade.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, let me quote two excerpts from the report that I tabled just a few moments ago. First, this is the report of Mr. Tony Halliday, the Chief Negotiator for Canada. "We are currently operating under a mandate from Ministers which authorizes a set of preparatory activities—"

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson, on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): I realize that you have been trying to get the Member to address the questions that deal with matters within his responsibility. I distinctly remember the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) ask a question of awareness. I cannot see in any way, shape or form how the answer of the Minister has any relevance to the question from the Member for Lac du Bonnet, and I would ask you to call him to order because it is not in order, first of all, to deal with irrelevant matters, and second of all, it is an abuse of our scarce Question Period time, as outlined in Beauchesne's Citation 4 10(3). This is a complete waste of time. The Minister has already tabled this document. If he wishes to make a ministerial statement that would be the appropriate time to deal with the detail, not our Question Period time.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Honourable Minister quoting from the document has been asked to table the document.

The Honourable Minister is quoting from another document?

Mr. Ernst: No, the document that I referred to, Mr. Speaker, has been tabled in the House.

Free Trade Agreement Subsidy Negotiations Deadline

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): I am very sorry as a Manitoban today that the needs of democratically elected officials in this province are awkward for our Ministry of Trade and for this Government.

For the past two days the Trade Minister has told us we have 10 months to prepare to defend Manitoba's economic development programs in the Canada-U.S. subsidy negotiations. The Minister admits that a vast range of important programs, programs relevant to our economy, vital at both the federal and provincial levels, are open to question. Does the Minister deny that the deadline for an agreement will be reached long before

June of 1991, which marks the end of Congress' fast-track authority over the negotiations?

* (1410)

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): If the Member for Transcona, during his clandestine visit to Washington had taken the time to ask what was happening, and if his Leader had taken the time in her phone call to the trade office in Washington to ask what was happening, they would have found out. What they would have found out was 1990, according to the document that I tabled a few minutes earlier, 1990 is the year of preparation. No negotiations will take place before January 1, 1991. That is in the document that went before the House of Commons.—(interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Transcona.

Subsidy Negotiations

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): I would like to table an opposing view of the time frame for negotiations, that of the chairman of the House of Representatives Small Business Committee, who knows a great deal more than this Minister. Is the Minister willing to cooperate in placing 100 years of Canadian and Manitoban economic policies on the firing line in negotiations lasting only a few months?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the opinion of one person that the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) talked to in Washington I think does not compare to the opinion of the Government of Canada set forth before a House of Commons committee.

Mr. Speaker, the chief negotiator for Canada went before a House of Commons committee and there is his report to that committee. I have tabled that, not some opinion from the Member for Transcona or somebody he happened to talk to in Washington.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Transcona has time for a very short question.

Government Support Criteria

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): The person I talked to and the other people I talked to were not just somebody, Mr. Speaker. Will this Government announce today that its support for the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement is contingent on the successful defence of Manitoba's economic policies in the subsidies negotiations?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Member for Transcona is feeling embarrassed. He ought to feel embarrassed over this situation for he embarrassed his country and he embarrassed his province in Washington to talk to people about trade negotiations outside of the diplomatic protocol of both nations.

Mr. Speaker, any Minister of the Crown of Manitoba doing the same thing should also follow those diplomatic protocols and certainly even officials of the Government of Canada must follow those diplomatic protocols.

So I understand, Mr. Speaker, the Member's embarrassment and I think he ought to do the honourable thing and write a letter of apology to the External Affairs Department in Ottawa and a letter of apology to the Premier here.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. Speaker, in the Chamber would be Energy and Mines; and outside the Chamber, Health.

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 Health; and the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair for the Department of Energy and Mines.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HEALTH.

Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer): I call this committee to order to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Health. When we last met we were on item 6. Manitoba Health Services Commission, Administration \$19,990,800—the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Chairperson, I know the Liberal Critic will be here very shortly. The suggestion of the Liberal Critic, and I concur with that, would be that we deal with the Health Services Commission as one entity. There are a lot of questions obviously that will be raised, but if the Minister is cooperative on that I would like to start by asking some questions in terms of the capital project, and perhaps if we can deal on the first line item with all the MHSC.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out to my honourable friend that up until the Commission, any time I have suggested that we deal with the whole item, both Opposition Parties had said, oh, no, no, no, we have to go line by line. Now my honourable friends want to deal with all issues at once. I have no problem with that except that today, because we have been going line by line, I do not have any hospital staff here. I do not have any personal care home people here and I do not have any medical line people here that can handle the questions.

Thursday, November 23, 1989

If my honourable friend wants to have that kind of staff standing around waiting for the odd question here or there, I do not particularly think that is productive. We have wasted quite enough staff time throughout the department of the Ministry of Health already in the consideration of these Estimates. I would suggest to my honourable friend that any questions he wants to ask in capital, we can answer any of those questions.

I would prefer to have line-by-line consideration of the Estimates of the Commission, so that I can have appropriate staff here to answer those questions when they are on the Estimates and not away from their jobs for the next several days or however much time my honourable friends wish to take in debating the Commission Estimates. I would prefer to go line by line and we will answer any capital questions any time during the line by line consideration.

Mr. Chairman: Our practice in committee here has been to go line by line and we are on the administration line at this time. The Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: It is unfortunate the staff is not available. Perhaps we need to get some better communication, because based on last year's Estimates and the Minister remembers it well, MHSC was dealt with all in one sitting, as I understand it. I think he has reminded, certainly the Liberal Critic, of that on various occasions. I am not suggesting that is going to be the case this year, I very much doubt it, but I think perhaps if we can get some better communication, I am certainly more than willing—I have tried and I know the Liberal Critic has tried as well throughout considerations to be as co-operative as possible in regard to staff time and trying to communicate what line items we expect to be on and what line items will be coming up in the next few days. If the Minister wants to do it that way, we will do it that way, and begin with some questions on the capital. I do not know if perhaps the Liberal Critic has some other ideas in terms of procedures, but if the Minister wants to deal line by line, I guess we will deal line by line and begin with capital.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Chairperson, I just wanted to—I just came late, but I wanted to correct the Minister that we did not waste anybody's time, in the Estimates process. If the staff is here, we are trying as much as possible to make sure their time is used. I do not think in my view that we have wasted anybody's time, and I would like the Minister to withdraw those words, please.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I stand by the statement and there is nothing to withdraw.

* (1450)

Mr. Chairman: It appears we are in agreement to go line by line and to proceed with this on the administration line.

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

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, how can the Minister justify that we are wasting staff's time here? He has to withdraw this.

Mr. Chairman: A dispute over the facts is not a point of order. We will proceed with Administration.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I am not raising a point of order, I am just getting into the discussion. I find the last comments by the Minister to be very unfair to Members of this committee. On a number of occasions, either to the Minister or to members of his staff, I and the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) have tried to give the best indication possible as to when we will be on certain line items. On a number of occasions the Minister himself was able to tell staff not to be waiting in the committee to deal with various items. What staff are here or not here today are the decision of the Minister.

We were not contacted in terms of what we expected to be brought up today. Perhaps if the Minister was so concerned about the use of staff time he would try and communicate a little better with Members of this committee.

As I said, last year the MHSC was dealt with in one day. Today the Minister has obviously made the unilateral decision that it is not going to be, it is not required to call the various staff in. That is not based on any conversations with Members of the Opposition. If anybody has been sitting here unnecessarily, or has not been called when they should be called, the Minister should be the one that should take responsibility for that. If the Minister is not going to be co-operative, we will deal with capital and other items today. For the Minister to accuse the Opposition Members of wasting committee time is an insult. This is one of the most important departments in Government. We have spent the amount of time that is required, we have asked a lot of good questions in committee, Mr. Chairperson, and will continue to do so.

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): Yes, Mr. Chairman, I came in here to listen to the Estimates of the Department of Health and I have heard the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) do nothing but criticize the Minister unfairly. He is the most co-operative Minister and I think he is wasting the time of this committee and that is not the purpose of it. It is to discuss the Estimates of Health.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please; order, please. The Member does not have a point of order. On a new point of order, the Member for Kildonan.

Thursday, November 23, 1989

Mr. Cheema: With all due respect to the Minister of Northern Affairs, he came very late and he does not know what happened five minutes ago. We asked the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) something very reasonable. We have been co-operating with him. Now almost 80 percent of things are done and now the Minister is showing his real—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. The Member does not have a point of order. Can we proceed at this time then with line on Administration \$19,990,800.00?

On a new point of order, the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Chairman, I believe it is unparliamentary and the Rules do not allow for any Member of a committee or the House to make any comment as to whether a Member is present or absent in committee and/or in the Legislature. I would ask the Member for an apology.

Mr. Chairman: On the same point of order, the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: I was just—perhaps the Liberal Member, instead of saying the Minister did not know what he was talking about because he came late, should just rephrase and say the Minister did not know what he was talking about. That would be a totally accurate statement and parliamentary.

Mr. Cheema: I did not mean to offend the Minister but, Mr. Chairperson, before any person makes a comment he should at least have the background on what happened a few minutes ago.

Mr. Chairman: I thank all Honourable Members for their input. Can we proceed at this time to—there was no point of order.

Mr. Chairman: Can we proceed at this time to the line on Administration?

Mr. Ashton: The Minister has indicated he will answer questions on capital. I would like to begin in that vein by asking the Minister, in terms of the Capital Program, if the Minister can give a breakdown—we are dealing here with the capital Estimates for '89-90, also budgetary projection for the five-year period April 1, 1989 through 1994 which is a standard practice in terms of capital. I would like to ask the Minister if he can give a breakdown in terms of what funds are being expended on projects already approved, what funds are being expended on new projects, and when those funds will be expended—how much in this year and how much in upcoming fiscal years?

Mr. Orchard: Is my honourable friend asking in terms of capital construction?

Mr. Ashton: Capital construction.

Mr. Orchard: I believe the figure on projects in process right now that were committed to construction last year,

and I am only going to deal with the major projects that were committed last year. I believe the number is close to, and these are just about \$54 million under construction right now.

Mr. Ashton: How much then is the figure for projects now approved for construction for this fiscal year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, some projects that were committed in last year's capital Estimates have been completed, for instance, the Erickson hospital and personal care home; for instance, an emergency outpatient expansion at Morden hospital. I am not sure of other ones, but the projections are that the major projects announced this week, given to my honourable friend Monday night and subsequently appearing in the Free Press as a story the next morning, are \$247 million in rough approximation, \$246.5 million.

Mr. Ashton: That is the figure for the capital expenditures total on those projects, or is that figure for this fiscal year?

Mr. Orchard: That is the total expected commitment of capital resource to complete the construction of the major projects that were part of, I believe, Schedule II in my honourable friend's capital Estimates book.

Mr. Ashton: Over what period of time are these projects going to be completed?

Mr. Orchard: The intention of Government is to have construction commence on these projects by the end of 1990, and depending on the nature of the project, the size of the project, some will be completed in early '91, some will be completed in late '91, and some will take until '92 for completion, some of the major projects.

Mr. Ashton: So essentially we are looking at the funds being flowed over three different fiscal years in the case of particularly the large projects?

Mr. Orchard: That is correct, and that is the same as what happened in every capital budget. That is the same as what happens, for instance, in Education capital, Highways capital. Mr. Chairman, that is expected to have the \$240-plus million flowed by mid-1992, no glitches in the tendering process, no unacceptable tenders.

Mr. Ashton: The Minister broke out the figure for those that are already in process, and I am just wondering if the Minister could give a breakdown between those projects that were already approved and those projects that are new projects.

Mr. Orchard: The projects already approved are those in Schedule I.

Mr. Ashton: The reason I am asking for this information is that in previous capital budgets that information has been part of the introductory comments. In this particular case that breakdown has not been given, and I think it is important that it be made quite clear to people as to what the overall figures we are dealing with are.

Essentially the Minister is giving the figure for Schedule I. I would like to ask what is the total figure for Schedule II. That is really the breakdown I am looking for, the difference between I and II, and the difference in II between those that have already been approved, because some of the projects have been previously approved, and those that are new projects as announced in the capital Estimates.

I go back to the '86-87 period, for example, and information was given on those currently under construction, which the Minister has given, those projects now approved for construction, and it breaks out a figure for those that were not previously approved. That is the breakdown I am looking for, that latter distinction.

* (1500)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I would refer my honourable friend to page 4 on the capital Estimates document wherein it discusses Projects In Construction (Schedule I). At the present time, there are 17 major projects with an estimated value of \$54 million which are advanced in the construction phase and which are expected to be operational within the next 12 months. I believe that is the breakdown my honourable friend was seeking and indicating was not part of the introductory remarks.

Secondly on page 4, next paragraph, Projects Approved For Construction, approval is provided to proceed to construction during the next year for another 28 major projects valued at \$241.5 million and a number of minor projects valued at \$5 million, total \$246.5 million. I believe that is the information my honourable friend sought and said was not part of the opening remarks.

Mr. Ashton: In previous Capital Programs, it was a breakdown of Projects Approved for Construction, Schedule II, in two categories, those that were previously approved and those that were newly approved. In 1986, for example, the figure for projects approved was \$255.4 million, and it was stated in the first paragraph that of this amount, approximately \$112.5 million are for projects not previously approved.

I am wondering if the Minister can provide a similar breakdown which is not provided in Schedule IV. Schedule IV provides the first amount of information, Projects Now Approved for Construction, but does not net out the already announced projects and new projects.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, Schedule I, immediately following page 5, capital Estimates: Pine Falls is a project currently under construction announced last year, sod broken approximately July, construction ongoing at present.

Vita is a project under way with I believe the foundations being poured or completed and poured.

The Gimli-Betel personal care home is a project announced last year, now close to completion in construction.

The Benito facility, combining personal care homes and acute care hospital beds replacing an outdated hospital is now under construction, sod turning in July of this year, expected to open possibly early spring.

The Neepawa-Eastview Lodge is a project currently under construction.

The Erickson hospital is a construction project of a personal care home combined with acute care hospital beds replacing an old, outdated hospital in Erickson, and it was committed to construction in 1981. It was sod turned in approximately June of last year. The ribbon was cut on that facility at the first of this month.

The Virden hospital is a replacement of the old hospital in Virden, which is under construction right now, sod turning, as a result of accepted tender, in August of 1988, now with the roof on it.

Manitou, a new personal care home, acute care hospital facility, approved for construction in 1981, subsequently shelved and frozen, now being under construction, opening next year, sod turning June, 1988.

Morden hospital, sod turning early July 1988, completed and functional.

Foyer Notre Dame, upgrading the facility to accommodate program change, construction under way.

Fred Douglas Lodge in Winnipeg, a significant increase in the number of personal care home beds, sod turned mid-1988, under construction.

Health Sciences Centre, Phase II and III of emergency power upgrade, in construction; upgrade of equipment, operating room 2 and 10 for cardiovascular surgery and cystoscopy, in process of renovation.

St. Boniface, an expansion of the Z block to accommodate UNISYS administration and training, I believe completed; radiology upgrade and equipment, St. Boniface Hospital, equipment purchased, installation ongoing.

Sharon Home, upgrading of the dietary, sod turning in July of this year, construction underway.

Tache, renovations to accommodate maintenance. Those are projects under construction.

Mr. Chairman, let us now go to Schedule II, and I will take my honourable friend through the proposed construction projects totalling \$246.5 million. If my honourable friend wants to go through them line by line, we can, but I am sure my honourable friend can read what the new projects are, where they are and the explanation. If he needs any clarification as to the explanation as to what those projects do, I would be more than pleased to provide that to my honourable friend.

What my honourable friend is seeing, I think, reasonably clearly laid out in the Capital Program are: (a) those projects approved last year and currently under construction in various stages of completion, and; (b) Schedule II, which are projects for which architectural drawings and design were either completed in the last 12 months or have been completed for sometime and

have been committed to construction so construction can commence within the next 12 months.

Following that, Schedule III are projects which are now moved to architectural planning and are in various stages of architectural planning or will be within the next 12 months.

Then I can take my honourable friend to Schedule IV, which are projects for which, by and large, design has been completed. It is awaiting a decision of the Health Advisory Network Extended Treatment Bed Review for decisions on what construction ought to be proceeded with.

Schedule V indicates those projects for which functional programming has been approved this year, or is in process from past years, the Health Sciences Centre major redevelopment, including the emergency rooms that my honourable friend mentioned is part of that major redevelopment in projects approved for functional programming.

I refer my honourable friend to Schedule VI, Facilities for Future Consideration as Projects. Those are projects, as listed there, for which the communities and/or the sponsoring organizations have approached Government to say, we believe we can meet a need, or we need Government to consider an upgrade of our existing facilities. That is Schedule VI.

Does my honourable friend have any questions of clarification?

Mr. Ashton: All I have been asking for is the same type of information that was provided in 1986, and I believe it was provided in previous reports. It relates not to Schedule I, I made it quite clear, it relates to Schedule II, Projects Approved for Construction. That was to get some indication how many had already been announced by the Minister and how many of them were new projects, because I go through the list and a number of people I know in the health field have been commenting that a number of the projects that were already announced in previous years, that distinction was recognized.

* (1510)

As I said—I will just read it again from the 1986-87 Five-Year Capital Program. It listed the projects now approved for construction, which is essentially Schedule II in the new document. It listed the amount which was for projects not previously approved. That is the breakdown I am asking for. It was provided by the department and the Minister as a matter of course in 1986-87 and in previous years, and I would just like the Minister to provide that same breakdown as well. If he cannot do it at this point in time, I am sure we can have that information provided to us at a later date. A number of these projects, the \$245 million, have already been announced.

I think one key thing that people in the health field were looking for was that breakdown which had been provided previously and is not a part of the '88 document. Will the Minister, if he cannot provide that information now, provide it to us at our next committee hearing?

Mr. Orchard: That information is provided in the capital approved budget.

Mr. Chairman, the projects in construction, I cannot take you through every one of them—that is Schedule I—I cannot take you through every one of them and tell you when they were approved for construction. I do believe that Vita was approved for construction in 1981 and languished for seven NDP years. I know Manitou was in that category. I believe Benito and Erickson were also in that category.

I cannot answer for what held-out promises were made to the health care field by the previous administration. I am not answerable to that. I am simply giving to my honourable friend projects that were committed to construction by this Government last year and which are under construction right now. Some of them, as I indicated last year, were in communities that had waited 10 years for construction to commence after being promised and promised and promised. We initiated those construction projects, they are within Schedule I.

Mr. Chairman, I take my honourable friend to Schedule II. Schedule II tells my honourable friend what projects, throughout the Manitoba health care system, it is the intention of this Government to commence construction on within the next 12 months.

My honourable friend in Government may have announced some of these projects 10 years ago or 15 years ago. I do not know, because they never commenced construction. The commitment we had made here Tuesday of this week is to commence construction in the next 12 months on the projects as appearing in Schedule II.

I cannot answer for what promises my honourable friend might have held out as a Member of a Government that promised much and delivered little. I am simply laying out the capital budget of this Government that we intend to commence construction on in the next 12 months.

Mr. Ashton: I am amazed at the extent to which the Minister is evading the answer on this question. I am not asking about Schedule I.

In 1986 there were the same listings that were given as currently exist today, but a breakdown was given from those projects now approved for construction of those projects that were not previously approved.

In case the Minister has forgotten, in 1986-87 there was a continuation announced of \$234.7 million, which was under construction. That is the equivalent of the \$54 million figure in this particular document. There was also indication of \$255.4 million now approved for construction, this is the current Schedule II. That information, yes, is included in the Minister's document.

In the first paragraph of the 1986-87 document there was a breakdown of the amounts not approved previously. The Minister is not giving that information now. I am not just talking about items that were approved by previous Governments. One point that had been raised—I know one thing that is frustrating to people in the health care system is that a number

of the projects in Schedule II have already been announced. I heard this, today, at the Health Sciences Centre, people were saying, how many more times is the Minister going to announce the same thing.

I think if the Minister wants to be open and factual to this committee that he should undertake to provide a breakdown of how many projects were not previously approved and appear in this document. I think that is only fair. I am not just talking about projects approved by a previous Government, I am talking about projects approved by this Government, either this year or last year.

I do not see why the Minister—and they talk about being an open Government—is not answering my request for a breakdown for figures that were provided by the then Minister of Health, Larry Desjardins. I believe the Minister was critic at the time, Health Critic in 1986-87. He can correct me if I am wrong. He was the Health Critic, and he was given that information as a matter of due course.

I am asking it from the Minister, and I would like to ask him once again, will he provide that information, the breakdown of those projects newly approved and those projects previously approved which are under Schedule II? I am not talking about Schedule I whatsoever, I am talking about Schedule II.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, these projects are approved for construction, all of them for the first time by this Government.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—the Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Well, the breakdown, using the same criteria, was not given before the Minister—a number of these projects are not new projects, they are valuable projects, I am not saying that, as of themselves, but if the Minister wants to continue to use those global figures there is very little we can do about it.

What I would like to get some indication from the Minister then—if we should move on to other areas to try and get answers. There are figures in terms of projects approved for architectural planning. What I would like to ask the Minister is, what the cost figures are for the Schedule IV projects; Concordia Hospital, Grace General Hospital and Phase I of the major redevelopment of the Winnipeg Municipal Hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Just over \$60 million, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ashton: Sixty million dollars for each project?

Mr. Orchard: Just over \$60 million.

Mr. Ashton: Is that a total of the three projects or is that for each?

Mr. Orchard: I believe that was the question you asked was, what are the cost of those three projects, and it is just over \$60 million.

Mr. Ashton: The total project would be over \$60 million.

I would like to ask the Minister—and we have dealt with this in the context of the Health Advisory Network before. Now we are seeing the growing pressures on the system that are growing daily from the fact that the Schedule IV projects; the Concordia Hospital, the Grace General Hospital, the Winnipeg Municipal Hospitals have been put on hold while the Minister awaits the decision of the Health Advisory Network. What I would like to ask the Minister is: when is the Minister going to make a decision on these projects? Quite simply, when will these hospitals know what to expect, if anything, from this Minister?

Mr. Orchard: Well, you see there is an asterisk on Schedule IV, and that asterisk indicates that once the Government receives the Health Advisory Network review on extended-treatment beds announcements may follow in the balance of the fiscal year. That is the desire of Government, to make announcements given workable recommendations from the Health Advisory Network.

Mr. Ashton: I have seen the asterisk, it says “may” follow. You will have to excuse us in the Opposition if we are a little bit skeptical. The Health Advisory Network was budgeted for \$500,000 last year. We did not realize, I am sure, in committee—I am sure the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) did not realize—that was a “maybe” figure. I think people, in discussing in the Health committee last year, would have expected far more to be happening with the Health Advisory Network, given the vital decisions that are resting on its report.

So I would like to ask the Minister—rather than saying “may”—will the Minister commit himself, today, to a decision on these three projects by the end of this fiscal year?

Mr. Orchard: It is fully the intention of this Government to make appropriate decisions flowing from the Health Advisory Network to resolve the committed construction projects, one before Government for approximately 20 years at Municipals involving a 400-plus bed redevelopment at Municipals.

Might I remind my honourable friend, when he is wanting a commitment from this Government—a decision that in the 20 years that Municipals redevelopment has been an issue before Government—my honourable friend's Party was Government for 15 of 20 of those years and made no such commitment.

Mr. Chairman, the other two projects have been before Government, I believe, since 1985. It is fully the intention of this Government to resolve the issues of those three facilities plus the 88 beds that we have available for immediate service in the system at Deer Lodge when the Health Advisory Network gives us, hopefully, guidance and recommendations in terms of the types of beds we ought to have in the system, the numbers of those types of beds they believe would be appropriate in taking the Health Care system into the next century, and hopefully where the most appropriate location for those beds ought to be.

Mr. Ashton: In other words, the Minister will not commit at the end of the fiscal year. I would like to ask then,

if the Health Advisory Network does recommend the approval of these projects, will the Minister—after using the Health Advisory Network as a reason for not making a decision—will he abide by the recommendations of the Health Advisory Network? If they say build the three projects, will the Government build them?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend is now living in the Liberal land of “if”. I cannot prejudge what will be part and parcel of the recommendations of the Health Advisory Network. If I knew what their decision was I could answer that question, but I do not have the Health Advisory Network in front of me and any of their recommendations.

* (1520)

When I have those recommendations I will respond in very short order to those that may well include reconstruction at all three facilities, if that is an appropriate response to the Health Advisory Network, but my honourable friend is asking me to commit to something that may not be recommended. I cannot react to a hypothetical “if” question.

Mr. Ashton: I will put it more simply if the Minister wants. Will the Minister abide by the decision of the Health Advisory Network? I have just outlined that - (interjection)- Well, okay then if the Minister is not going to answer we are getting the answer from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). The answer is, no.

Essentially we have been waiting for this much wanted Health Advisory Network, and as was, I think, raised in committee at the beginning of this discussion in the general context, the Health Advisory Network could come in with a recommendation for all three facilities to be constructed, and the Minister could turn around and say no, which really I think begs the question why the Minister has been putting such great emphasis, using it as such a large excuse in terms of the Health Advisory Network.

If that is going to continue to be the policy of the province I would like to ask then, dealing with Schedule V projects, what is the time frame for Schedule V projects? We mentioned earlier in Question Period, both Opposition Critics, about one particular need in the Health Sciences Centre. What is the time frame of the Schedule V projects, Projects Approved for Functional Programming?

Mr. Orchard: That is a varying time frame, Mr. Chairman. Some of them may well have the functional programming approved and within agreement of system needs with the Manitoba Health Services Commission in rather short order, others may well take longer.

Mr. Ashton: The lack of clarity in terms of that is going to be cold comfort for some of the individuals who have been stunned by the fact that their particular facilities have not been included in terms of this year's capital programming.

I find it interesting looking at the overall situation in terms of the Capital Program, because the Minister

must have done quite a selling job, in terms of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in trying to suggest there was far more in it than is actually turning out to be the case.

What we are finding day after day this week are the omissions from the capital project. If the Minister wants to go back—you know it is interesting how he will gloss over what happened for a number of previous years.

I think the Minister should take the time to look at what was approved for capital projects over the last number of years. I am not just talking about the last 18 months in which we have had I believe the \$95 million figure that was mentioned by the Minister, but even going back to 1986-87 when the ongoing construction itself was a quarter of a billion dollars, when projects were approved were of a similar magnitude.

What the Minister is going to have to deal with, in terms of capital projects in their generality over the next period of time, is a growing concern, a growing frustration. We have seen it from the Concordia General Hospital, we have seen it from the Grace General Hospital, we have seen it from the Winnipeg Municipal Hospital, we are seeing it in terms of Deer Lodge.

We are looking at a situation where the Minister is going to have to move and a “may” is not good enough as far as people in those facilities are concerned because the whole system is getting affected. The Minister is going to have to move as soon as possible. It is not acceptable that the Minister is putting so much attention on the Health Advisory Network and then at the next breath saying, well, even if they go and recommend all three facilities, still overrule them. So we are in that situation, Mr. Chairperson.

We are also in a situation, where in the terms that they scheduled five of the projects that are for approved for functional programming, there are once again indefinite time lines. I would appreciate a detailed breakdown, if the Minister can give it, in terms of the time frames for the facilities that are listed, because I do not think that the general answer is going to satisfy people in those facilities and in those communities.

I think that is very important because this is not just a document that reflects the 1989 fiscal year. It is, as all Capital Programs are, a five-year capital project document for the next five years. I think there are some very real questions being asked this week, following the release of this particular document early in the week, by people in many of the facilities that are either not approved, for whatever reason, are in the various other categories of architectural planning, or in terms of awaiting Government review, or approval in terms of waiting approval for going further than functional programming. I think it is important information for the Minister to provide.

As I said, the information that was provided in previous documents was perhaps somewhat less self-congratulatory, somewhat less exaggerated, but was more detailed and was more useful information.

It is fine for the Minister, and he is an expert at this, to make announcements and then further announcements and then further announcements of

the same project. I was at the Health Sciences Centre and they were cynical about this Minister. They went through this project, listing, and they said, well, he has announced, he has been cutting ribbons in the psychiatry facility on a regular basis since he has been a Minister.

That is the Minister's option. If the Minister wants to recycle announcements of capital projects, if the Minister wants to recycle announcements of the Trust Fund, if the Minister wants to recycle the Health Advisory Network, we will give him the recycling man of the year, person of the year, whatever award he wishes us to create for him.

I do not think he should attempt to pacify, as he did today with questions that were raised and as he has done throughout this week, facilities that are not part of this document, by this smooth talk about how they just have to wait for the Health Advisory Network, how they just have to wait for the various other project-approval stages.

I have a whole series of questions in terms of specific items. I realize the Liberal Critic also has a number of items too. I just want to say that in terms of what we are seeing in the capital construction project as the week progresses, we are seeing that the Minister still has not dealt, still has not dealt with a number of major problems in the system. What we are finding is that they are having an accumulative effect.

I was talking to people today, staff of the Health Sciences Centre, and they are saying things are backing up through the system. When the Concordia Hospital does not have approval of the facility listed in this document for 60 extended treatment beds there are patients backed up in the hallways, so the Concordia Hospital does not accept emergency patients who are then sent to other hospitals, such as the Health Sciences Centre, where there is overcrowding already.

This is all taking place while we have an 85-bed facility already constructed that the Minister still has not acted on. It is already constructed. You know the Minister likes to have it—he does not like to have it just both ways, he likes to have it three or four different ways. He tries to suggest there was not major construction under the New Democratic Party. That is not true; it is factually inaccurate.

* (1530)

Mr. Chairperson, he likes to suggest that it is just a matter of time in which we are dealing with it. I am suggesting to the Minister that the Concordia Hospital, the Grace General Hospital and the Winnipeg Municipal Hospital do not have that time, the Health Sciences Centre do not have the time for the Minister to get his act together in terms of the Health Advisory Network or whatever else the Minister needs to get that into place.

The Minister said earlier in Estimates to myself that I do not have to make decisions. Well, the Minister I think also feels he does not have to make decisions on some of the major projects that we are faced with in this capital budget. He has become the ostrich

Minister in terms of the Health Advisory Network. He has put his head in the sand. When the Health Advisory Network brings in its report we will deal with the problems.

The people, the grass-roots people out there are saying the Minister has to deal with it himself personally. They are totally cynical about the process of the Health Advisory Network, Mr. Chairperson. They are asking some very serious questions this week about where we are going in terms of the health care system, because it is beginning to back up. The lack of a decision on the Deer Lodge and the Concordia, they are both affecting each other. The lack of a decision on Concordia is affecting emergency rooms throughout the city.

The Minister today talked about this great coordination that is in place to prevent hospitals shutting down. The Minister should know that hospitals—it is only because they are being told they cannot close down that they are not doing that. If that was not in place, we would see not only the Concordia but several other hospitals on an almost daily basis closing down their emergency facilities. It is all because of the backlog in the system. I would ask the Minister, I would ask him in all seriousness, in all fairness, if he would provide that information, if he would provide a commitment first of all in these three projects, not to have maybe have a decision by the balance of this fiscal year but to have a decision by this fiscal year. That is decision-making.

I would ask the Minister if he would also give a message to the other facilities, the ones that have been approved for functional programming as to when the decisions will be made. They are growing cynical about whether this Minister will in fact make the decisions in those particular areas. All the soothing words, all the rhetoric is not going to pacify the people who are out there on a daily basis.

I talked to them this morning at the Health Sciences Centre and we have been talking to them all through this week at the hospitals in this city and across this province. They are asking some very serious questions about the priorities. They are also asking very serious questions about the inaction of the Minister. There is a feeling that the Health Advisory Network process, if it had any legitimacy, which it could have, if the Minister had put these decisions on a fast track. They are saying it has very little legitimacy because of the delays of this Minister because he has put his head in the sand and he is putting off major decisions without any kind of time lines whatsoever.

We already saw earlier in Estimates this action plan for 1990, the Government promise in terms of health is rapidly disappearing. We are seeing less than a month and a half now, we have covered less than 40 days now before we do reach 1990 and we do not even have some of the basic decisions. He is only just beginning to get the Health Advisory Network together. He is only just beginning to get the Promotion Trust Fund together. He is only just beginning to deal with the capital needs of various hospitals. He has been too busy out there cutting ribbons, three and four and five times over, recycling announcements instead of dealing with the health realities that are out there.

Thursday, November 23, 1989

If he would start talking to the grass-roots providers of medical care in this province, start talking to the patients, he would find there is quite a different story than he paints in this committee. It is sad, it is unfortunate, that this Minister has done this consistently and people are saying this week, they are saying to Members of the Opposition, they are saying to the patients, the health care providers are saying to the patients, they are saying this has gone on long enough. They have no confidence left in terms of this Minister and his Health Advisory Networks and his Health Promotion Trust Funds, when he cannot get them even in operation. All he can do is recycle announcements. That is not good enough.

We are going to be demanding accountability from this Minister, not maybe a decision on those three hospitals, we want a decision by the end of the fiscal year. We want information on the other projects that are listed in this document. We want more than just listing them, we want to know what the time frame of this Minister is. This is a five-year document. We want to know where this Minister is going to be in year one and year two and year three and year four and year five.—(interjection)—That is if he is still Minister. I thank the Members for reminding me that this Minister might not be Minister for five years. I apologize to the people of Manitoba for suggesting that unfortunate—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please; order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Minister.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend was first elected in 1981 and not only has he learned nothing, he has actually retrogressively progressed. My honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and I apologize to the people of Manitoba for his new appointment as the Health Critic and his obvious lack of knowledge, because he does not understand the process that was followed whilst he was in an NDP Government from 1981 on.

There were commitments on functional planning which were made. Those have no particular time frame. They will be undertaken over a period of time. They are subject to substantial discussion and consultation between the Commission and the facility proposing.

Let my honourable friend whistle in the wind all he wants. He has gotten the most complete information that has ever been tabled in the capital Estimates in the one that is before him. The problem is he does not like—oh, well now my honourable friend who asked all the questions appears to be leaving. I would hope he has the decency to stay around.

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

Mr. Ashton: I do not know if it is against Beauchesne's to refer to possible future absences of Members, but I should explain to the Minister I do have a meeting with the CMHA. I will be attending that for a number of minutes. I will be reading the Minister's comments

in Hansard. I mean no disrespect to the Member and this committee, but I do have a meeting which is already scheduled with the CMHA. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm) will be sitting in on the committee on behalf of the New Democratic Party. My apologies if the Minister takes any offence to this, but I will read his comments in Hansard and I will read them in detail.

Mr. Chairman: The Member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Orchard: It is unfortunate that my honourable friend does not have the ability to stick around as critic, because I so much enjoy his lack of knowledge in the system demonstrated every time he makes a point.

Mr. Chairman, the NDP in general and my departing friend in particular, are constantly talking about—we are talking to them at the Health Sciences Centres, or we are talking to them at the Concordia or we are talking to them at the Misericordia or some other institution. We never know who those "thems" are. For instance, we do not know who the "thems" were that the Leader of the New Democratic Party was talking to when he asked the question about the drain pipe, the Doer drain pipe at the Misericordia Hospital, that allegedly was leaking radiation, I believe was his question.

It was a drain pipe that was installed undersized to drain water, and at the time that my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democrats (Mr. Doer) after talking to them at the Misericordia, the time he was posing his question in the House, the drain pipe had been fixed for three weeks. My honourable friend said he was talking to, my honourable friend the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), was talking to some "thems" again at the Misericordia Hospital and a sewer broke, Doer's sewer broke. What had happened is the sewer had plugged up, and in attempting to unplug the sewer at the Misericordia, it broke.

When the sewer is broken you cannot flush toilets. My honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, in complaining about his sewer pipe, was saying that people were carrying waste pails and dumping them someplace else, and that was a wretched thing to do. According to the question of the Member for Concordia, the Leader of the New Democrats, the alternative was to leave them in the rooms with the patients.

Now surely the New Democratic Party policy is not that when a sewer breaks you leave pails sitting around in the rooms with the patients, but that is what one would conclude. As my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, who got his information from "them" at the Misericordia, was talking, the sewer had been fixed. The difficulty was they did not put his name on the section of the pipe, Doer's sewer, fixed at his request.

I apologize to the MLA for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm) for having to take this information back to his colleagues, but his colleague talks about "them" at

the Health Sciences Centre who say I have been cutting ribbons at the Health Sciences Centre on the psychiatry building. Well, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is misleading the House deliberately or without knowledge, because there has never been a ribbon cutting at the psychiatry facility at the Health Sciences Centre.

There have been a number of ribbon cuttings of ophthalmology upgrade, of bone marrow transplant, and I could go on and on, all up and running, serving the people of Manitoba in a better fashion. I make no apologies for participating in those ribbon cuttings; they are very good events for the people of Manitoba.

My honourable friend, the Member for Thompson, as Health Critic for the NDP (Mr. Ashton), asks for some decision-making, he says people want decisions. The people of Manitoba got \$241 million, a quarter of a billion dollars worth of decisions this week on capital projects. They know where they stand, and they know that this Government, once committed to construction, will proceed with construction. My honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), again has been talking to those illusory "thems" at the facility who say, well, you know, that simply is not good enough, we simply do not know.

* (1540)

I want to tell you, I think I read comments from some of the administrators at those various facilities who were very, very pleased with the decisions, the initiatives, the commitments by this Government, knowing that they are going to be carried out for the betterment of patient care at each of their respective facilities. Obviously, the individuals quoted in the newspaper were not the phantom "thems" that the NDP so constantly refer to as having talked with.

My honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), wants decision-making, and maybe my honourable friend, the MLA for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), because he sat around the Cabinet Table—unfortunately, the Member for Thompson did not, or maybe it is the other way around—but maybe my honourable friend, the Member for Dauphin, could ask how tough the decision was in 1987, after the Session adjourned with approval to proceed with capital budgets, how easy the decision was by the NDP Cabinet under Howard Pawley, the Member for Dauphin as a Member of it, to freeze the capital budget and not undertake any construction, not undertake any construction from mid-1987 until we were elected on May 9, sworn into Government on May 9, 1988, how easy a decision was that?

In all the time that my honourable friend, the Member for Dauphin, was sitting around a Cabinet Table deciding to freeze capital budgets and not provide new construction in the health care field, his \$30 million bridge to nowhere was being built in Selkirk over top of houses as a tourist attraction for the people of Manitoba. How easy was that decision made around the NDP Cabinet Table, to do absolutely nothing in construction of health care facilities but to freeze them?

Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), says this co-ordination

between hospitals is a bad thing. I am pleased that he put that on the record, that hospitals in the City of Winnipeg for the last number of months, in co-operation with the Manitoba Health Services Commission and their respective managements, have been co-operating to assure that the greatest level of patient care is available with fluctuating patient loads at the emergency. I am really pleased that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has put the NDP position Party policy down, that kind of co-operation is not good among the hospitals and Government in the Province of Manitoba. I can understand from whence he wants to make that statement because there was none of that kind of co-operation when the NDP was in Government.

The NDP created an atmosphere of animosity, them and us, hatred and vilification of anybody delivering quality care in the system in Manitoba. There was no co-operation between Government and the various facilities. That co-operation now exists because staff at the Commission are charged with the responsibility to lead that co-operation throughout the health care system in this province and it is working. The NDP policy says no co-operation between hospitals. That is outrageous, Mr. Chairman, that is genuinely outrageous. Not even my honourable friend, the Liberal Health Critic, would make that kind of a statement because he knows the level of co-operation between management in the hospitals is a very positive direction that is working to iron out problems that come up from time to time.

My honourable friend, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), will read these remarks as he has indicated. I want him to read, because he took the time to mention Concordia Hospital. My honourable friends in the New Democratic Party, and bear in mind Concordia Hospital has been in the old constituency of a former Premier of this province, Mr. Schreyer.

There was an approval in 1966 to build Concordia Hospital, a new facility, replacing the existing one in Elmwood. The proposal was for one of 200-plus beds. Approval was changed in 1971. Now 1966 I believe was the years that Premier Roblin was in office. I do not know who the Health Minister was but there was approval provided to Concordia to build 200-plus beds.

There was an election in 1969 and the NDP came into power. Subsequently, in 1971 the approval for Concordia Hospital was not given at over 200 beds, it was reduced to 133 beds by an NDP Government in 1971 led by Premier Schreyer, in constituencies held by New Democratic MLAs, some of them in Cabinet. In October 1974, construction was completed on Concordia Hospital at just over 130 beds.

In 1980-81 in the Capital Program tabled by the Honourable Bud Sherman, there was a proposal with approval for architectural planning to add 136 beds to Concordia Hospital. The NDP came into power in 1981 and in May 1982 they approved to add those 136 beds plus an expanded emergency and operating department in 1982. In 1983 they had the bed tower remaining in functional planning. Then in 1984 they approved some ICU expansion, some emergency upgrade and some not-for-admission surgery but there were no additional beds approved in 1984. This is during an NDP Government's time. Having received plans to build a

200-plus bed hospital in 1966, November 1985 approval was given by letter to—or May in 1986 by letter to Concordia to go to 60 extended-treatment beds.

Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the MLA for Concordia (Mr. Doer), is strangely silent as to why the Schreyer administration in 1971 virtually cut the plans for Concordia Hospital in half, why they cancelled an approved plan in 1982 for 136 more beds. Now they say it is a dire emergency that has to be acted upon when they have been Government 15 of the last 20 years that Concordia redevelopment has been before Government.

That is the kind of cynicism that will keep the New Democratic Party as a third Party Opposition Party, as a rump of the Legislature for years to come. The board and the executive of Concordia Hospital know who has cancelled and pared back and cut back on Concordia Hospital in terms of its beds, and it is every time an NDP Government has been elected.

Mr. Chairman, I have had substantial discussions with the executive director and the chairman of the board and others at Concordia Hospital. We are prepared, because we recognize that Concordia Hospital is an undersized hospital. It is the smallest community hospital in Winnipeg. We are prepared with appropriate recommendation to commit to construction. We are prepared to do that, because we believe it would be right if it is recommended to do so.

Mr. Chairman, that does not answer why commitments were made at two other facilities and never proceeded with, so we are seeking that answer as well. Hence, Schedule IV, Misericordia, Concordia and Grace. Decisions will flow from the Health Advisory Network that is provided for in this capital budget.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, while we are on the capital expenditure, I raised this one question in the House today and the explanation was given to the Minister. In fact I worked at Health Sciences Centre and in fact today again I visited. I did not meet with them, but I met with the nurses, doctors and the orderlies and patients and some of the other people who were outside the Health Sciences emergency. The Minister is well aware of the situation. I was told that the Minister was there sometime maybe six or eight months ago.

* (1550)

The situation at the Health Sciences emergency is deplorable. When you enter through the trailer you go to the desk. The desk is a very small area, then on the right side of the desk there is a small room to house two patients, patients mostly are violent and with difficult mental conditions. That room is a major cause of disturbance for the reception desk as well as for the patients who are coming in for a simple registration.

Then you go to the next, on the right side of the desk there is a small room which could house not more than four to five people at any given time. There are a number of holes in those walls all around. The ventilation is extremely poor. I was told that they are putting in mice traps in that area and that place is for

the families of critically ill patients. It think it is very unfortunate that situation exists.

Next step you go to the observation unit. There are five beds only. This hospital is a major hospital, 60,000 minimum patients coming not only from Manitoba, from Northwest Ontario and Saskatchewan for major trauma cases, all the burn patients, and some in very critical conditions. This five-bed observation unit is very, very inadequate. Even the space between two beds you cannot even hardly walk and I think the Minister knows about the situation. When you turn right in the same building the room for the resuscitation for about five to six patients and that room is again very inadequate.

Then the other major problem comes that the O/R at the seventh floor and the emergency room and the trauma and everything is handled on the first floor. The time taken from the observation unit to the seventh floor could vary from time to time. All these conditions are really deplorable and not only—it give a really bad image that such a teaching hospital with all the abilities to deal with the situations and today the physical structure of the building is not acceptable to any person. I am sure the Minister would agree with that but how are you going to solve the problem here?

As the Minister indicated that they have a so-called H2 project where it is going to turn over the whole section and that will also include the emergency section. Can the Minister clarify today and give assurance to the people at the Health Sciences Centre that something will be done in the near future, or the planning should be there to make sure that this important part of the services are protected, and patients and families are given not only the best care there they are receiving already but under a very compromised situation and I think this is overdue? We know that the financial situation, after spending \$240 million, it may not be possible this year but something must be done in the near future.

I will give the Minister a chance to clarify so that I can tell not to those "them" but to all those concerned individuals that the Government is moving in the right direction.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I have no argument with the inappropriateness of the emergency entrance at the Health Sciences Centre. It is simply not a functional emergency and has not been for the better part of two decades really because prior to 1975 trailers were brought in as a temporary measure. Let me take my honourable friend step by step through this because I think it is important to understand what kind of commitments have been made in the past.

We came into Government in 1977, and I recall the announcement that Bud Sherman made as the Minister of Health. It was a three-phase redevelopment of the Health Sciences Centre, inclusive of this area. Planning began and design began and I think ground broke on the first project which was Children's. Second and third phases were to take in and have this area of the hospital revamped. It is the HA project in which this is a part of, I indicated PC or HC. I was not sure of the vernacular but the HA project was part of the phases announced in 1978.

Thursday, November 23, 1989

Now, Mr. Chairman, because today my honourable friends in the New Democrats are pointing their fingers at this Government who should have resolved that because we have been in Government for 18 months, I have to give you a very political answer. The plans and the redevelopment of that emergency department went nowhere from 1981 to 1988. I simply tell my honourable friend I was an MLA during the whole time, but I certainly was not in Government. There was no progress made in terms of developing the second and third phases at the Health Sciences Centre by the NDP. There was not progress.

The situation is not a good situation. We have as part of the functional programming the major redevelopment of Health Sciences Centre as part of the Capital Program. It was last year because we recognized that as being a very critical area for redevelopment. Having said that, it is a major commitment of resource for that redevelopment because you start with the emergency basically at the ground level.- (interjection)- Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have that information. Let me tell my honourable friend that had there been a solution to the emergency department at the Health Sciences Centre ready for construction this summer, it would have been part of this capital budget. I would have committed and had the complete support of my colleagues in Cabinet and Treasury Board and in Government to move with that redevelopment, but the plans have simply not been developed and as soon as they are developed they will be committed to construction. I can give my honourable friend that guarantee. If it were not for dedicated staff there, many, many tens, if not hundreds of dedicated staff, that Emergency Department would not work in those kinds of conditions. The physical layout is bad as my honourable friend has said, et cetera. That is recognized, it has been that way for 15 years.

I made the comment in Question Period and I will repeat it here today because I am dead serious. If we have the opportunity to guide the health care system for 15 of the next 20 years, there will be a significantly improved health care system for the people of Manitoba. I simply say to my honourable friend we cannot repair every difficulty in the health care system in 18 months and two capital budgets; it will take a number. I simply tell my honourable friend, with this specific project of emergency at Health Sciences Centre if plans were available we would have committed construction. Such plans, unfortunately, have not been developed to date.

Temporary solutions are very, very difficult to achieve. One of the things I suppose we could do is add more trailers, but I do not think that is a reasonable approach to do and we have not pursued that as a logical alternative. We want to develop permanent plans that will fit into the context of a redevelopment of the Health Sciences Centre. When such plans exist and are available this Government will move on them posthaste.

I thank my honourable friend for his observation because he is correct. He is correct, it is not an acceptable area of care in a complex the size of the Health Sciences Centre.

Mr. Cheema: The other day the Minister announced the capital expenditures and certainly in the House there

are certain issues that we are definitely concerned with. In the press and publicly, we have otherwise applauded the Minister moving in the right direction. That is being rational. You cannot criticize if things are happening in the right direction because you are in Opposition.

I asked him the question very specifically in the House because for him, or for any Government, right now is a good opportunity to look for the direction in the 1990s and the year 2000. How are we going to save tax dollars in the long run?

One of the things that could be done and one aspect is the ambulatory care at Health Sciences Centre. Seven Oaks has an out-patient surgical expansion that they are going through. They are using the obstetrical floor which was unfortunately abandoned by the previous administration. This could be expanded in the other community hospitals. I was disappointed not to see any plan in the capital expenditure even in the long run if the Government has any solid plan to divert the resources towards more ambulatory care.

* (1600)

You just have to look at the other jurisdictions and any smart Ministry of Health in Canada is moving towards that. I think Ontario is one of the examples. The executive director of the Manitoba Health Commission must be aware of all those changes they are making. I will ask the Minister now to reconsider, or if he has a plan, can he explain to us the plan for the ambulatory care facilities for the future so that the money can be saved and we can continue to provide the best possible care to which we are all entitled? In Manitoba we are certainly not doing as bad as compared to other places.

Mr. Orchard: First of all, let us not say that it is only because Government commits money at the Health Sciences Centre to a renewed ambulatory care area that ambulatory care is not going on at the Health Sciences Centre and at other hospitals. It is very much a component of each and every hospital. Not-for-admission surgeries have been routinely performed at every Winnipeg hospital, inclusive of and including many rural hospitals that go for not-for-admission surgical procedures where there are minor surgeries. I know that happens. That is the way the system is moving.

I guess our mistake is that we did not cut enough ribbons the first time there was a not-for-admission surgery done at Carman hospital, or at Misericordia Hospital, or at Seven Oaks Hospital, or at Concordia, or at Victoria, or at Health Sciences Centre, or at Grace, or at St. Boniface. Then I think maybe the NDP just accused me of cutting too many ribbons. I mean, it is going on.

What is proposed in terms of the redevelopment at the Health Sciences Centre is a redevelopment of ambulatory care into one central area. I think my honourable friend, having worked in a hospital, a significant amount would agree it makes an efficient use of space, resource, and personnel. That is the redevelopment at the Health Sciences Centre. Many areas wherein they provide ambulatory services will

now be centrally located in the redeveloped area. That will provide, we hope, a significantly improved level of patient care and an opportunity to expand the amount of ambulatory care not-for-admission procedures to be undertaken with a revamped facility.

We are stuck quite frankly on whether we save money, because some of the projections made by the Health Sciences Centre are that with this redevelopment project in ambulatory care, costs will go up, not down, as my honourable friend and I expect. I generally expect that the costs ought to go down if you proceed to more not-for-admission procedures and more ambulatory care.

We are proceeding with the reconstruction from a patient-care aspect at Health Sciences Centre, but we are doing it with the latest figures we have. Once completed there is going to be an additional operating cost of almost \$3 million a year. We have yet to finalize that because that is part of budgeting in years down the road. Hospitals throughout the city—Victoria has a very, very ambitious not-for-admission surgical program, and I think a pretty successful one, too. It was spearheaded and led by the medical staff there in conjunction with the administration and in discussion with the Commission.

I think it is unfortunate that if we think just because we announce an ambulatory care project at the Health Sciences Centre that magically ambulatory care appears. It has been there all along. It is a growing trend in the system. What we are doing with this redevelopment is putting a significantly improved capital environment, or work environment in place to make the project able to expand and offer a wider variety of services.

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

I accept my honourable friend's advice because it is sound advice in terms of moving towards as much ambulatory not-for-admission care as possible in our institutions. It is that kind of direction which will reduce the hotel demand component of the hospital system, which my honourable friend knows is a very expensive portion of health care in the Province of Manitoba.

There is no question that we may be behind the U.S. system in general in terms of our average length of stay and the not-for-admission procedures that we do in Canada versus what is done in the U.S. Clearly we emulate in our medical system often those kinds of advances. What was an average length of stay in the U.S. probably five or six or seven years ago is where we are today. We are simply a little bit behind, and no one argues with early discharge, for instance, of surgical patients. It used to be, I am told, that when one had open-heart surgery there was a 14-day plus recovery period. Now to my amazement those individuals are often discharged in as little as eight days, and sometimes even seven days which is a phenomenal change in the use of the hotel function of the hospital, if you will. All of it is still probably delivering better quality care, so more beds and more use of beds in the system is not necessarily indicative of higher quality health care services.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, when I was asking the question I am definitely well aware of some

of the ambulatory care facilities, but the plan for the future has to be there. If anyone is arguing with the Minister of this administration that it is going to cost more money, that is wrong. The initial cost is going to be there when you are expanding the system, but eventually it will save you a lot of money and that is very clear.

I think the ambulatory care facility at Health Sciences will definitely be helpful for the recertification of some of the programs. It was expressed by the Urology Department that the ambulatory care facilities was one of the requirements for the Royal College and I think that is a positive step. That would be very helpful.

I will go to my next question about the Concordia Hospital. We have heard, definitely in the media and certainly I have talked to the people—I have talked to the executive director at the Concordia Hospital. The problem is twofold there, it is not only one. Only one problem has to be brought to the attention—and provide extended care beds, that would relieve the whole pressure, but that is not going to do the whole job. The problem is that you are serving a 100,000 population and it is the population of Transcona, Elmwood, North and East Kildonan, and East St. Paul.

This hospital is on the 59 Highway and in the summer the load increases dramatically. After Health Sciences Centre, they are the No. 1 hospital that has the maximum emergency care. The space in the emergency unit and the observation unit is not adequate. Providing 60 beds will solve the problem but not to a large extent, and we are going to see this problem again.

I think what we have to look at is the angle of providing more space for the observation unit, plus giving more room for the emergency care. On an average, the statistics from the Health Services Commission are clear, 25 personal beds at Concordia are occupied by chronic-care patients so by giving 60 beds you may relieve 25 beds, but in the hallways and observation unit space is not going to be decreased. I think that has to be looked at. I think we should look probably at both angles rather than looking at one.

* (1610)

The Minister has said recently in reply to the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that the extended care committee will bring the solution by the end of this fiscal year, but in reply to my question at the beginning of Estimates the Minister said that the extended care committee will bring the solution or bring the recommendation by the end of this month.

That was the reason I did not particularly raise the question about the extended care facility in the Question Period, because we have already done it. I was the first one to tell the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) about the Deer Lodge situation and how we are going to reallocate the resources. Can the Minister confirm today that the extended care committee will bring this recommendation by the end of this month?

Mr. Orchard: No, it will not be by the end of this month. It will be in December.

Mr. Cheema: Is the Minister saying the statement he made two weeks ago was not a correct one or there has been—what is the reason for the change now?

Thursday, November 23, 1989

Mr. Orchard: No, the information I gave my honourable friend was accurate as given to me. I simply gave my honourable friend what their best guess was when they were going to report. My honourable friend might be able to go back to Hansard, in May, and I think I probably was saying something around the end of October was the expected time for report when my honourable friend last asked. As a matter of fact it was the third week in November and I give myself that extra week of time by saying the end of this month. They are indicating that they will not have the report ready until December now.

Let me tell my honourable friend I am frustrated over the length of time it takes. I do not particularly enjoy sitting in the House having people ask, when is the Health Advisory Network report coming down? I would like to say the thing was tabled and we have decisions to make because that is what I like to do. When one asks a group of experts to undertake—and recall the risks that I was telling my honourable friend. I do not control the agenda over there, because there is no majority from the department is a member of any of the task force or any of the committee.

We cannot force them to make a decision, either of our liking or of our timing, but the issue is of significant importance to the system. I am prepared to take my weekly shots from the Members of the Opposition, not my friend, my honourable friend is always most kind to me. I am willing to take those shots in the hope that the report will be a thoughtful and complete one when received.

I have indicated to my honourable friend the other day, we intend to take action on the report when received. No Government—as my honourable friend from Thompson wanted a guarantee that we were going to implement every recommendation. I mean, it is obvious he has never been around a Cabinet table or around the decision-making of Government because no Government can make that guarantee unless they are prepared to absolutely and completely mislead the people to whom they were speaking.

Mr. Cheema: The Minister is a man of experience in political life but if you watch the news and you listen to the media, the public perception right now is that those 85 beds are empty, and how much it is costing the taxpayers of Manitoba when we have Concordia Hospital. The problem did not develop in a day, but it has been there.

I think it is very dangerous for any political Party but certainly even for Opposition, the real Opposition, the Liberal Opposition, more difficult because we want to make sure the taxpayers' dollars are used properly. At the same time, how long can you wait for the decision to be made? It has already been about six months since those beds were ready, 85 beds. I think the Minister should probably tell those members to facilitate as soon as possible.

The other thing is: are we smelling an election? All the announcements are made and now this may not be very positively received. If we wait until summer and then the holiday time and maybe next year the Premier

(Mr. Filmon) is going to draw up the date and that is it. I want assurance from this Minister that the report will be ready, at least by the end of this year, so that a decision can be made so we do not have to go through this time after time.

The Minister should be able to calculate that, multiply 85 by \$300 whatever, it is a lot of money. Taxpayers' dollars are being wasted. I can see, as Opposition Health Critic, that many tax dollars are being thrown away. I want the Minister to tell me today—give me an exact date whatever, today or tomorrow if it is possible.

Mr. Orchard: That is exactly the assurance I would like to give my honourable friend. My honourable friend talks about the dollars that are being wasted because some 85 beds are being occupied in Concordia or wherever in the system, and that all we have to do is move those patients to the 85 beds at Deer Lodge and we are not wasting the money at Concordia or anything.

Mr. Acting Chairman, does that presume that when you staff those beds and feed those patients at Deer Lodge, you do not have costs? Well, of course you do. We are into a debate that is not even worth being in because (a) there is budget approved for the operation of those beds at Deer Lodge. So money is not the issue. Appropriate use is the issue, and I have gone through this time and time again, and I will go through it again.

My honourable friend wants to be a responsible critic and a responsible Opposition Member. I give him credit from time to time; he actually is, not all the time.—(interjection)—I mean, he has insulted me a couple of times, you know. Anyway, I do not mean to make light of the issue.

You have to appreciate the context of Deer Lodge Hospital. Deer Lodge Hospital is probably with the redevelopment, emerged as one the premier rehabilitative and seniors facilities in Canada. I do not think there is any question about that. It has been a significant investment, not by the Province of Manitoba, it was how the capital dollars came through the federal Government through an agreement that was struck in 1979 and 1980.

So when my honourable friend the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) says, "we built the Deer Lodge Hospital," again he is either deliberately or otherwise trying to mislead the people of Manitoba because that was the federal Government's capital contribution. We supervised the construction, but it was not our capital dollars.

Our responsibility is to operate that facility and operate those beds. That is the largest cost in health care. Capital decisions are the easy ones because you can make them today, the bills do not come in for a year or two or two and a half years later, the additional operating costs do not come in for an extended period of time, so you are a hero today.

As I said before last year, I would be the most popular Health Minister in the Province of Manitoba simply by announcing a billion dollars worth of capital projects and everybody would be happy, with few exceptions,

until the bills come in. I want to share with my honourable friend just one figure. We have committed \$246 million worth of capital construction projects this year. The operating costs that will be accruing to the system in 1991-92 with completion of those facilities are \$60 million, inclusive of principal, interest and extra-operating costs because of increased function, because 185 are new personal care home beds. The \$245 million are not costing us anything while the construction goes on, but there is \$60 million of additional costs awaiting us in '91-92.

* (1620)

When Deer Lodge was built with the federal Government's dollars, not the provincial Government's dollars as was alluded to by my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer). We assumed the operating costs. Those 88 beds can serve as personal care home beds, they could. They could be chronic beds, they could be rehabilitative beds, all of them take a different staffing mix.

We want to follow the advice of the Health Advisory Network as to what is the most pressing immediate need because those beds are there and waiting and can be, and the budget is there for them to be staffed and serving patients. So to me it makes sense to wait an extra short period of time to make the correct decision to solve with 88 beds, immediately available, the most pressing problems in the system because decisions made at Municipals, Concordia and Grace are probably 15 months minimum, two years probably more optimum, away from being available to serve a single patient.

So that is why the beds are not occupied at Deer Lodge. They have been budgeted for because we expected, and I believe that there is sufficient budget to operate as of April, so that those budget dollars are there. It is not a money issue. It is a use issue. We want to make the best use of those beds because they can immediately offer relief to the system that is backed up upon occasion with patients.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Minister has given me a lot of explanation. Some of his explanations are acceptable, but can he explain to me to one thing? He has said that the Municipal Hospital is in front of a lot of administration in the past, a lot of studies have been done. The funding for the architectural planning has been already spent. When everything is clear now, why did he not put the Municipal Hospital under the Schedule IV when we had the need there? Can he explain to those patients who have been there for a number of years and the families are there, I mean, what message would he send to them why he has put off the decision?

Mr. Orchard: To make the right decision, because you know the redevelopment of Municipal Hospitals has been before Government for 20 years and no one has made the decision. I cannot answer why for 15 years of 20 years there was no decision made by the New Democrats when they were in Government, I cannot explain that. I have difficulty understanding them when

they speak, let alone trying to read their minds. I cannot answer that.

I am simply telling you why we put the Municipal Hospitals into the Health Advisory Network review of extended treatment beds to know what is the most appropriate steps the system should take. Bear in mind, and I go back to my statement to my honourable friend, the easiest thing a Minister of Health can do is announce a capital project, spend two years building it, and then hope you are not around for the wrath when the operating costs come in. If you make the wrong decision on new facilities, you are building, as we did this year with \$245 million of capital commitment, \$60 million annual operating cost in the system.

So the capital decisions are very easy to make. The difficulty is coming up with the operating cost annually when they are in service. So, Mr. Acting Chairman, I cannot answer why for 20 years no decision was made on the redevelopment of Municipal Hospitals. I am prepared to answer based on information which I hope is sound information from the Health Advisory Network when they table the report. Then we will make decisions and we will announce them to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us when last year the question was asked regarding Municipal Hospitals by the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), the Minister has indicated that the decision will be made and a number of studies by the previous administration and by the Municipal Hospital Board has been done, what is his personal view about this hospital? Does he think that this hospital, the viability is there? Is he planning of abandoning the whole Municipal Hospital? I am not trying to put a trap for him, I am simply asking his own views. As the Minister of Health, what are his own views on this hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Personal views are not ones that have entered into my capital decision-making. I have tried to make capital decisions based on the needs of the system and the most effective future commitment of scarce resource and health care to the people of Manitoba.

I take a look at a \$40-plus million redevelopment, almost \$50 million redevelopment at Municipal Hospitals. I know that when that is undertaken there will be operating costs on that in the neighbourhood of additional probably \$10 million to \$15 million dollars a year, every single year in addition to what we currently spend. Then I say to myself, how many services will the NDP or the Liberals demand of Government in Question Period today or tomorrow? When are they going to ask for more services here, all a commitment of money? I say to myself, if I make this decision on Municipal Hospitals and I commit us to \$15 million of additional operating costs when they are on line, where does the money come from? Both the Liberals and the New Democrats are saying we need more of this and more of that and more of the other. We need, more, more, more, but nobody is talking about where the money comes for more.

The taxpayers of Manitoba said enough was enough with the squanderous spending of the previous

Thursday, November 23, 1989

Government and the deficits that they wrought upon the people of Manitoba, because before I get the \$15 million to operate a redeveloped Municipal Hospital, if that is what the cost is, the first bill I have to pay is the extra \$450 million of interest from Howard Pawley's deficits. That is the first bill that is paid. It is called statutory debt and you have no other obligation but to pay the interest first and foremost.

It does not matter if people die on the street, the financiers in Zurich and Tokyo and Hong Kong that my NDP friends lunched and dined and wined with while they were borrowing all that money from them, they do not care if people die in Manitoba because there is no money for health care, they just want their interest. That is the first bill that is paid. It is statutory and it increased by \$450 million a year from 1981 to 1988 under Howard Pawley and the NDP.

You asked me: where does money come from for more health care services? Ask the bankers in Zurich if they will give us a little bit of our interest back. Ask the bankers in Tokyo if they will give us a little of our interest back. Ask the bankers in New York to give us a little of the interest back, because after all those NDP people were fine people when they were down there borrowing our money. They loved them. The most popular group of Manitobans ever to hit the world travel scene were NDP Finance Ministers borrowing millions and millions and millions.

The general purpose debt of the Province of Manitoba in 1981 was \$1 billion. In 1988 it is \$5.2 billion. Who was Government? Howard Pawley and the NDP and that is why we are paying \$450 million annually not in increased patient care at Municipals, Concordia, Deer Lodge, Health Sciences Centre, St. Boniface, or any place in rural Manitoba, we are paying that money to financiers outside of this province and it is the first dollar we pay.

That is why, Mr. Acting Chairman, I tell my honourable friend, the MLA for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) and the Liberal Health Critic, that I try to make the best damn decisions possible, because the future of health care depends on it. We cannot afford mistakes in capital investment. We cannot afford mistakes in programming. We cannot afford to squander money and drive deficits up so we pay more and more interest, denying more and more people services in Manitoba. That is a pattern that almost foundered this province under Howard Pawley and the NDP and I simply will not be part of it, part of any repeat of those years of squandering spending.

* (1630)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, a final question for policy. Out of the capital expenditure, if the Minister of Health was aware and I am sure he has gone through a number of times, the commitment was made during the election campaign and also during his repeated answer that we have to look at the most cost-efficient ways of delivering the health care system.

My question is in this capital expenditure I do not see any ways of having services concentrated in the

rural communities, say in one area. I do not see that. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) clarify: do we have any plans to consolidate the services for more than primary care, say in a given area, for example Swan River or Dauphin? What other services are we going to provide so that we can ultimately save taxpayers' dollars?

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Orchard: Let me refer my honourable friend, and I know that this project will be drawn as a political initiative, because it happens to be in my constituency. I refer my honourable friend to Schedule III, the Morden-Winkler Hospital. The proposal is to build a regional hospital there and in doing so to close two hospitals, one in Morden and one in Winkler. The location between the two communities, their areas of growth in Manitoba where service demands can be more effectively delivered in that area with a regional hospital concept. Now, Mr. Chairman, what that is envisioned to do for the system is to remove a substantial amount of pressure on the Winnipeg hospital system.

At any given time in the City of Winnipeg a substantial number of patients are coming from rural Manitoba. I find that, being a rural Manitoban, totally unacceptable. It is a complex problem. Part of the solution to that problem is adequate facilities for the delivery of acute care outside of the City of Winnipeg.

I will give you an example. In 1977 when I was first elected, Carman Memorial Hospital was a very time expired facility. There was a proposal to do some fire safety renovations that had been before the previous Government for up to five years. There was a cost estimate of putting a new roof on Carman Memorial Hospital, but it was in a flood prone zone. It was going to cost within \$500,000 of new construction. We negotiated with the Carman Hospital Board the proposal of building a new hospital in a flood free zone of the community. That was done and the size of the hospital was reduced so that it went from I believe 35 beds to 25 beds. The community did not know whether to accept that because quite frankly they said: we need all of our beds, because beds were what the whole system of health care was built around. We built that facility of 25 beds.

At the time we committed to build it, a surgeon was contemplating permanent establishment of practice there. Without that new facility that surgeon would be probably practising in the City of Winnipeg, because the facility is there, the surgeon has remained in the community, has undertaken probably the highest level of surgical procedures in any hospital of 25 beds, maybe even in all of western Canada.

The facility—my honourable friend the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) says: is that good? I say it is excellent because the people who used to go to Winnipeg from as far away as Crystal City now receive their services in Carman. Maybe my honourable friend, who does not have an appreciation of rural Manitoba, the Member for Logan, does not believe that is good. I believe that is good.—(interjection)—My honourable friend is now bailing herself out of an unfortunate statement.

Basically, Mr. Chairman, that is where this capital budget is very clearly committed to providing province-wide access to health care in the acute hospital system. That is why we provided a complete redevelopment at the Virden hospital to do the same thing hopefully that we have done in Carman for those residents in that vicinity of Manitoba. The Minnedosa hospital has been committed for a capital redevelopment with the same purpose in mind.

My honourable friend asked: what about the regions outside of there? Let me give you some examples. In Erickson we just cut the ribbon to open a replacement hospital, personal care home, public health facility. That replaced a 16-bed hospital, I think, 18-bed hospital with eight acute care beds and 18 personal care home beds plus public health facilities, diagnostic services, but, Mr. Chairman, no surgical theatres. The surgical theatre that was present in Erickson had probably not been used for the last number of years.

The communities of Erickson and Minnedosa cooperate. The physician I believe lives in Erickson and will operate in a new facility out of Minnedosa. Those two communities now, with these two capital budgets will have an excellent service, excellent facility in Minnedosa for which to serve a 30 mile radius of communities and the population therein with an excellent care facility. At the same time, the people of Erickson have an acute care hospital to deal with medical problems, illnesses, pneumonias, et cetera, recovery from more serious illness so they can do it closer to home because the medical facility is there and it is a quality one. As well they have 18 personal care home beds needed in the community for seniors panelled for personal care. That is the direction we are taking and we are moving very, very rapidly in that direction.

That, Mr. Chairman, was the philosophy behind the Capital Program last year that my honourable friend's Party took exception to and was not happy because there was too much emphasis on expenditure of capital in rural Manitoba. I know my honourable friend has changed his mind on that, but his Leader maybe has not yet, and I hope she has. That is the direction that we are taking in terms of service provision throughout rural Manitoba. It will help the Winnipeg system in the long run if we intercede and provide services closer to home in the Minnedosas, the Virdens, the Carmans, the Morden-Winklers, and the Steinbachs, rather than have those patients come to the Winnipeg system.

If you want to talk regional development and diversification and decentralization, this department is well on the path of doing that by providing health care services closer to where the people of Manitoba live. These two capital budgets reflect that completely.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, that is going to be a very valuable point not only, as the Minister said, to ease the shortage of beds in Winnipeg but to give the services to the individuals would also attract the professionals who can work in an environment where they have all the associated services available. That is one of the things that was lacking in the past.

I think this is probably the right direction—most probably, this is the right direction that keeps the

physicians, the nurses, the physiotherapists, the occupational therapists and you name it, all the professionals—if I missed one of them that does not mean they are less important than the others. I think that is very positive.

I want to correct the Minister. I do not think we have ever made a statement that we are against those kinds of services. If the statements sometimes made on a particular situation can be used politically either way, the Minister should realize enough by now that we are in favour of those kinds of services. I want him in the future to spare us of that kind of political statement.

My final question for the capital expenditure is: can the Minister of Health tell us if the expansion of the personal care home beds in all the communities will be as close to the vicinity of the existing hospitals as possible, or not?

Mr. Orchard: The policy that has been long-standing in terms of personal care home bed placement is that if you are not going to be juxtaposed to a hospital facility and you are going to be free-standing, the minimum size is 30 beds. If you are less than 30 beds, it has to be what we call a swing facility. In other words, the eight acute care beds or the six acute care beds, plus personal care, public health and diagnostic services as adjuncts to the facility—that is what we did in Erickson. Benito is nearing completion of construction. Maniitou is well on the way. That will be primarily what Vita is doing, the reconstruction at Vita is what Pine Falls—the personal care home is juxtaposed to the hospital in Pine Falls. That is the direction we are moving in. That is what we are trying to do, in communities where there are existing hospitals—

* (1640)

In some of the communities the hospital's time expired. That was the case—and I will speak most personally of Maniitou. The Maniitou hospital's time expired back in '77-78. We made a commitment to juxtapose with renovations to the old hospital building, personal care home beds. This is one instance where I say fortunately the plans were dropped. We lost the election and we could not carry on with that. The next administration did not have any interest in reconstruction in Maniitou and the plans were dropped.

In the long haul it delayed the process and the availability of personal care home beds in the area. I want to tell my honourable friend that it allowed us to now construct a swing facility which I think is a much more effective use of health care facilities. Where we had built, I believe it was Baldur, personal care homes onto an existing hospital and ended up a few years later—Wawanesa, I guess is the example. Replacing the hospital and the costs were significantly higher than building one new facility with the purpose specifically to handle both acute care and personal care.

The personal care home policy has been to freestand only at 30 and above, preferably larger than that, because of obvious economies in terms of administration and management staffing, dietary and other common areas; and where smaller, they ought

to be in terms of the hospital redevelopment project, either placing them adjacent to a hospital or replacing an existing hospital as we did in Erickson, Benito and Manitou with a swing facility. I hope that answers my honourable friend's question.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, during our last year's rural visit, we visited Swan River hospital, and we met with the executive director and the staff. We were extremely pleased to see at that hospital how they are working in a close situation in the same building with the other services.- (interjection)- Swan River. I think that is a very good example even though some parts of the buildings are quite old, but I think that the executive director was quite pleased with the way things were progressing.

In the future, wherever the capital expenditures are going to be spent maybe next year or the year after that, I think that point should be kept in mind, to keep all the services as close to the hospital as possible or maybe in the same vicinity. That would not only save the tax dollars, but again create an environment for the professional worker and the patient to feel more comfortable in dealing with the situation.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend makes a good point. I would like to tell my honourable friend that today I participated in a site location sign unveiling for the new Sun Centre in Brandon. We have done just exactly that.

You might recall, the Sun Centre was the really outdated AFM, Alcoholism Foundation facility in Brandon, which has been before Government for a number of years for redevelopment. We are going to centralize in one building, management services, out-patient and in-patient treatments into one new Sun Centre. The location is going to be immediately north of the Brandon General Hospital on Brandon General Hospital property.

The reason for the choice of that facility is just as my honourable friend indicates, that if there is a need for emergency services you are very close to professional care givers who can be there on very, very short notice. It builds the partnership, the co-operation of facilities that are in out-patient treatment as well as extended treatment detoxification with the hospital to build upon each of their experts.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the Minister for going through all the capital expenditures in detail. I have questions regarding the Administration Programs.

One of the main objectives of the Manitoba Health Services Commission is to ensure that the Manitoba residents get all the services in the hospitals, personal care homes and other medical offices, and other specified services.

We in the Opposition from time to time hear complaints, we get letters and some of them even—last week one special problem was brought to the attention of the Minister in the House. Some patients or some residents are concerned that a few services are not covered. I will give the Minister a few examples.

Can the Minister maybe check with the staff: how many complaints do they receive on an average for the insurance services which are not covered or fall in that grey zone?

Mr. Orchard: I will have to get the staff to put together a best estimate on that, but I will tell you what I will try to do. Maybe what we could do is deal with the formal requests for investigation of out-of-province services, because that is the majority of the complaints.

There is a fairly long-standing policy in terms of accessing services out of province, and the issue my honourable friend is referring to is the one of one of my former colleagues' constituents. The Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) brought up an individual's circumstance. It involved procedures undertaken in Minneapolis as I recall.

We have actually bent the rules and made special exemptions for the individual to the tune of, covering costs, \$1,900 in addition to what we would normally cover because of extenuating financial circumstances for the family. The issue in that case was of a family who had commenced treatment in Minneapolis when they were resident in Saskatchewan, moved to Manitoba and continued those treatments in Manitoba without knowledge of our system or how it operates and subsequently presented us with bills that we could only cover portions of according to the regulations.

I realize it is a very emotional and a very heart-tugging issue in each case, but you simply cannot throw the floodgates wide open if you will, because the American system is for profit and should we not have rules and regulations in place I am quite sure that a number of institutions just south of the border would probably be advertising for patients in Manitoba and we would have an uncontrolled situation of bills coming in. You simply cannot do that when you are attempting to provide an insured medical service with no barriers to access in Canada, a significantly different system than what is offered to our friends in the U.S.

The rules of access to that system and compensation to that family were followed. All of the payments were made to the family that could be made, that ought to have been made and additional to that was a \$1,900 compassionate reasons payment made to assist in reducing a \$3,800 bill for one aspect of the care and treatment.

What I will do is attempt to put together those kinds of circumstances and get a handle on those formal requests a year because I think I would be unable to give you the number of phone calls or whatever but we will do the formal ones where we have had some involvement of senior staff at the Commission to resolve complex issues.

Mr. Cheema: I think by going through that procedure and having the statistics together it will be helpful so that some of the problems can be resolved and at least some information can be given even though the brochure from the Manitoba Health Services Commission is very clear. It indicates that you have to have permission and you have to have a doctor's signature and get permission before you seek treatment.

Some of these circumstances are very unfortunate and we do not have those services available in Manitoba and people sometimes do not have access to the Health Services Commission directly. They end up going south of the border without knowing what it is going to cost them. I think that should be resolved because it is very difficult for some people to pay \$10,000-\$15,000.00. We certainly do not want a system like in the U.S. that sometime you have to sell your house to pay for your health bills.

* (1650)

The other point of the Minister is well taken because we understand that you just cannot open the gate and let everyone go there, but services which are not provided in Manitoba, they should be covered, especially in circumstances of this individual where the family has to visit a number of times. It was not one visit, they had to go a number of times to receive those services.

Mr. Orchard: I am sorry, I missed the last part of the question.

Mr. Cheema: I will repeat for the Minister's benefit again. I was saying that some of the procedures which are not available in Manitoba, we have no choice, those services must be covered, the people are residents of Manitoba, they pay the taxes, they deserve equal quality of health care. Services which are available in Manitoba and they are definitely at less cost than across the border and there we do not have any problems but circumstances like this individual when they have to visit a number of times, it is not one visit, they have to go and it is the cost for their transportation and the other expenses are also paid. It is having a great impact on this family and certainly I think the Minister has indicated that they will look into the situation.

My next question is that I have a very unique case I think that will give another example of how things are sometime perceived in a different way. There is an individual—I will supply the whole file to the Minister of Health. This individual was seen by a dentist and this person has a problem with the temporomandibular joint. The individual was seen by a dentist and seen by a physician. The dentist says this is more like a medical problem and in some aspects may be a dental problem. The Manitoba Health Services Commission says they are not going to cover this cost.

This is one of the examples, and this case or a similar case in that situation deserves attention. I think some changes have to be made to make sure that there is some flexibility given to the Manitoba Health Services Commission, the executive director, or the other members of the board, to waive those situations and maybe add into the manual which does not have those services. I am willing to provide the information to the Minister so that the consideration can be given.

Mr. Orchard: I appreciate my honourable friend giving me that information, but, Mr. Chairman, there are really two different categories of service and the most difficult ones are the ones in which we are dealing with, U.S.

provided services. I want to tell my honourable friend that the procedures that the young man was receiving for which we have made extenuating payments were available in the province. It was not as if the individual had to travel to Minneapolis to receive that service. That again gets into that area of personal choice.

Should the taxpayers of Manitoba be asked to support an individual who chooses to have services available in Manitoba delivered in Mayo Clinic, for instance, because that issue comes up constantly. Ever since I have been Health Critic that has been coming up to me as an Opposition Member and most recently as Minister. We cannot build a level of medical expertise here if we refer processes or procedures that we can do in Manitoba out of province. Yet where we do not, every effort is certainly made to make sure there is no financial penalty for services unavailable in the province and that is inclusive of transportation costs. I would appreciate receiving my honourable friend's information.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister has not addressed my second issue which is an issue dealing with another individual. Then many people who are in that state—

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Chairman, I cannot deal with an issue that I do not know what the issue is. I thought my honourable friend was going to give me the information so that we could deal with the issue when we have the information.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Chairperson, that is fair, but I was just giving him some explanation. That is not one situation, I think a number of individuals have the same problem.

This is for an individual who is suffering from migraine headaches and has a painful moment in the temporomandibular joint and is seen by the dentist, and I have the copies from the dentist, and seen by the physician. The physician says this is a medical problem. Some aspects of the problem are definitely with the dentist now, but the Manitoba Health Services Commission says it is a dental problem and they will not cover the expenses.

This individual ended up paying all the expenses and I think it is unfair. It is not this patient's fault that he has something which is dealt with by two individuals, whether it is a dentist or a medical doctor. I think this situation needs attention so that some changes in the rules can be made. I can definitely provide the detailed information.

Mr. Orchard: I would appreciate if my honourable friend would provide that information and I will give him an indication the next time we meet.

Mr. Cheema: One of the other main functions of the administration is to try to provide the best services possible at all levels, starting from the primary health care, to the hospital, to the transport and everything else.

Can the Minister of Health tell me why we have a disparity between the four parts of Winnipeg, the

Thursday, November 23, 1989

Concordia Hospital, as I explained earlier, Seven Oaks, Grace and Misericordia Hospital. The emergency rooms are always overburdened even with the help of the ambulance services and the co-operation within all the departments, and they are diverting patients. That can go along to some extent, but ultimately it may be a problem. It may be a problem in the future that somebody with a heart attack on the way to one hospital may collapse, and that will not be good news for the Minister of Health.

I am aware of a situation at Seven Oaks Hospital. I did not bring it to the attention of the House. For two days the hospital was diverting patients, and the director for emergencies was doing his job very properly. I am sure the Manitoba Health Services Commission is doing everything possible, but I think there is definitely room for expansion or making some kind of arrangement that the hospitals experiencing more emergency care should be given extra resources, or the reallocation of resources should be done so that we do not end up with a disaster.

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend's observation is a real one in some cases, but I harken back to the kind of system that is in place and the inter-facility co-operation so that they avoid these kinds of difficulties. I think it is fair to say that the instance, and of course one always picks the most graphic and dramatic and heart-tugging example to use, but I think the issue of a patient suffering cardiac arrest being diverted in an ambulance from hospital to hospital is indeed a very rare one. When diversions start, it is my understanding, between hospitals is in individuals who can be safely taken that extra five minutes or 10 minutes to the next facility. They do that for the specific and clear reason that, should someone with a cardiac arrest come in, there is a place for them, and they can be dealt with safely and effectively. The issue of the diversion of those kinds of patients is indeed very, very rare and has been very rare for a number of years.

At Concordia yesterday I understand that there was no acceptance under any circumstances for about a three-hour period of time until they had some more sanity restored to their hospital system, but that is fortunately a very rare circumstance.

* (1700)

Mr. Cheema: I may have given the Minister the worst possible example, but what I am telling him is common knowledge. It is not on the decline but it is getting worse, the patients are diverted more. Even sometimes before they come to the emergency room they are redirected to the other hospital. What is being done to make sure that there is some expansion if required at the hospitals which are diverting more patients than the others?

Mr. Orchard: In part the answer lies—and I find this as frustrating as my honourable friend does, not as frustrating obviously as the care givers do—to the commissioning of those 88 beds at Deer Lodge, because part of the back-up in emergency is simply

because the beds are unavailable for those patients in emergency who ought to be placed in a bed, for which a bed has been ordered.

Not everybody who comes to emergency is eventually admitted. As a matter of fact, a small percentage are scheduled for admission.

When you have some chronic and long-term patients in the hospital—in Concordia's case, I believe they are rated to have 20 in the facility at any given time and they have exceeded that. I believe there are 29 possibly on Wednesday. When you have those extra nine beds and the flexibility of those removed, you do not have the flexibility in the emergency, because it backs up to the emergency as one can fully understand.

The commissioning of those 88 beds at Deer Lodge will certainly help, but it will not completely resolve the system. There will always be those kinds of difficulties, as there always has been those kinds of difficulties from time to time in the hospital system in the City of Winnipeg. They are there and they will continue to be there, because no Government in 20 years has come to the conclusion that they can afford to resource a line-up free emergency 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. There are too many other demands in the system that say you put your resource there.

That is why there are two things that are important, the commissioning of those 88 beds and the decisions that will flow at Concordia, Grace and Municipals. Those are important decisions, particularly the Concordia one, because that is up to 16-new beds. Equally as well, it is important from the standpoint that the co-operation between the major facilities continues, because that co-operation has worked in allowing an effective and very safe way of sharing resources within the hospital system of Winnipeg. I think it has been quite effectively undertaken over the past number of months and the kind of co-operation that it is critical the health care system in Winnipeg enjoys with the management of the various facilities, because we cannot afford an era of non-co-operation between facilities and Government.

Mr. Cheema: I am sure we will have a lot of questions on Monday, and it definitely looks like we may wrap up on Monday. I just wanted to add one comment: after going through the report for the Manitoba Health Services Commission, some of the questions and answers are self-evident from the book, and we will not go into any of the details. I think the staff and the Commission deserve a lot of credit for the number of major achievements for the last 20 years. It is very impressive. Thank you.

Mr. Orchard: I thank my honourable friend for that comment.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Hour, committee rise.

SUPPLY—ENERGY AND MINES

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): I call this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber to order to consider the Estimates of the Department of Energy and Mines. We will ask the Honourable Minister (Mr. Neufeld) to make his opening statement.

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Do you want me to wait until the critic for the New Democratic Party arrives, or shall I start now? Start now, okay.

I am pleased to present my department's Estimates for year 1989-90.

These Estimates embody this Government's commitment to develop Manitoba's energy and mineral resources in ways which bring maximum benefits to Manitobans.

A major objective is to attract investment, and the employment and business opportunities which accompany such private sector activity.

A related objective, equally important in the long term, is environmental protection.

The term which many would apply to this marriage of environmental protection and private sector encouragement is "sustainable development." And, indeed, it is fair to say that the challenge of sustainable development is one my department has accepted enthusiastically.

The department is organized into two divisions which deliver programs and administer legislation. These are the Energy Division and the Minerals Division, and a support division called Administrative Services. In my opening statement, I will highlight the plans and objectives for the Energy and Mineral Divisions for the coming year.

ENERGY

I will begin with Energy. All will agree that energy plays a central role in the economic lives of Manitobans. How energy is produced, and how it is used are issues which are key to our economic and environmental futures. Therefore, the cost-efficient management of energy demand and supply are legitimate areas of Government concern and involvement.

Three strategic factors condition our energy objectives:

- In the first instance, Manitoba's annual energy bill is over \$2 billion. We anticipate a steady growth in the cost of this energy.
- Secondly, we project that Manitoba's energy and demands will grow steadily. As Manitoba is dependent upon extra-provincial sources for 75 percent of its energy supply, one implication of this factor is a growing leakage of energy dollars to other jurisdictions. Rather than fueling economic development in the province through the purchase of made-in-Manitoba goods and services, these energy expenditures will be spent elsewhere.

- Thirdly, but no less important, are the environmental issues attached to growing energy consumption. The supply of fossil fuels is finite, and hence these fuels should be used efficiently. The use of fossil fuels has been linked to the "greenhouse effect," the gradual warming of the planet which will produce various climatic changes.

* (1420)

ENERGY OBJECTIVES

How should the Government of Manitoba respond to these challenges? Our view is that the Government cannot and should not attempt to meet these challenges alone. We are but one player in a large cast of actors on the energy scene. The needs and actions of other players, citizens, large and small businesses, and other levels of Government have to be taken into account. Our actions have to be focused and strategic. They must support co-operation among the various players. They must provide an incentive for initiatives that are more appropriately taken by others. Moreover, existing provincial programs must be reviewed, revamped where necessary, and rejected if they are not delivering the results Manitobans expect.

Based upon all of these considerations, our energy objectives for the Department of Energy and Mines are as follows:

- To encourage the environmentally sustainable development of Manitoba's petroleum industry;
- To work, in co-operation with private industry and the federal Government, to encourage the development of Manitoba's alternative and renewable energy sources;
- To encourage cost-effective energy management in our homes, businesses, factories and public institutions;
- To work with our colleagues in Canada's federal and provincial Governments in coming to grips with the problems and opportunities presented by the "greenhouse effect" and other global environmental issues.

PETROLEUM

I will deal now with petroleum. As I have just said, one of our major objectives is to foster the sustainable development of Manitoba's petroleum industry. Now I am sure Members are aware that Manitoba's oil patch has seen better days. Since the world oil prices plummeted in early 1986, exploration and development in Manitoba has also dropped off. Similar reductions in oil activity have also occurred in Alberta and Saskatchewan. However, with the recent interest in natural gas, the overall activity decline in these provinces has been less pronounced.

Manitoba does not have the geological potential of the provinces to the West, nor do we have the fiscal resources to offer the industry comparable incentives. Our response to this state of affairs is as follows:

We have initiated a comprehensive review of our Royalty Taxation and Incentive Regimes. Our

objective is to maximize petroleum development while minimizing the cost to the province.

We are also working to make it easier to do business in Manitoba. I am sure that Members are aware that in the years past, the oil and gas production tax was administered by the Department of Finance. At the same time, Energy and Mines was responsible for collecting Crown royalties. This split responsibility resulted in needless duplication so responsibilities for oil and gas production tax has been transferred to the Department of Energy and Mines. With Energy and Mines now the sole agency responsible for collecting petroleum revenues and with new and standardized procedures for the collection of royalties and taxes, there is greater efficiency and less administrative duplication. The petroleum industry has indicated that it approves of our efforts to reduce the red tape.

In a similar spirit, we are planning major legislative reforms. Members are probably aware that our petroleum industry is regulated under The Mines Act, parts of which are 40 years old. Legislation governing the petroleum industry will be removed from The Mines Act and new legislation specific to the petroleum industry is being developed. Our objective will be to make it administratively simpler while at the same time strengthening environmental protection provisions.

We are also striving to make the services we provide to the industry more efficient and effective. The department collects and maintains extensive technical data related to oil and gas exploration. This information is made available to assist anyone who is interested in petroleum exploration and development in Manitoba. Most of it is filed on paper and has to be retrieved manually. To speed up access time and to make it a more useful resource, the department is computerizing and microfilming these files. This is a major task, but the payoff in increased efficiency will more than justify the current effort.

Finally, we are working to help make petroleum development environmentally safer. This will be reflected in our new legislation. Recent initiatives in this area indicate the direction we are taking. For example, oil and salt water contamination of agricultural land sometimes happens as a result of petroleum production. Through research and pilot projects, the department has demonstrated that this soil can be reclaimed. We are implementing a program which requires operators to take ongoing action to reclaim spill damaged sites. We are confident this program will accelerate the return of already damaged sites to agricultural productivity.

ALTERNATIVE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Petroleum, as Members are well aware, is a fossil fuel. Like coal and natural gas, petroleum is a non-renewable resource which cannot be counted upon to

meet the energy needs of Manitobans over the long term. Furthermore, the combustion of fossil fuels contributes to global warming, a topic I will return to in a moment.

For these reasons, we are committed to stimulating the development of alternative and renewable sources of energy. One of the most effective ways Governments have found to meet this objective is to fund projects involved in the research, development and demonstration of alternative energy technologies and techniques.

This approach remains a priority for us, and we are negotiating with the federal Government to conclude an Energy Efficiency and Diversity Agreement. Because such an agreement will lever federal funds and eliminate duplication of effort which might otherwise arise, it is a high priority item for my department.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Any strategy for sustainable development has to incorporate initiatives for making the most cost-effective use of the resources we currently have. In the energy sphere, we call this energy management. The two goals we have are:

- 1) to eliminate waste, and
- 2) to achieve more results while using fewer inputs.

Energy management is something that can be practised by every member of our society. While some techniques and technologies are fairly sophisticated and expensive, most are not. Great improvements in energy efficiency can be realized by people who have the knowledge and the motivation.

For these reasons, we place a high priority on programs which provide energy consumers with practical, cost-effective advice on how they can use energy more efficiently, and which inform them of the benefits they can expect.

Our Home Chec-Up Program for the residential sector and the Manitoba Energy Audit Program for the industrial, institutional and commercial sectors are worthwhile examples in this regard, and will continue to be priority items.

* (1430)

I should also note that the seminars the department provides for retailers of energy conservation materials and for householders, and other energy information programs it conducts, are fine examples of what we need. However, other programs in the Energy Management Program area have not met our expectations.

Members are aware that we terminated the Business/Community Chec Loan Program at the conclusion of the last fiscal year because it was not meeting established objectives.

I would be remiss if I did not inform Members that the Chec Loan Program, which provides loans to homeowners, is under review to determine if the resources that it consumes are being used in the most

effective way. In due time, I will inform Members of the results of this review and any decisions which result.

I will conclude my remarks about energy management by saying that my departmental staff, in co-operation with the staff of Manitoba Hydro, are engaged in some very fundamental research to forecast Manitoba's energy requirements over the next several decades.

The objective of this very complex task is to provide the data we shall need to develop a long-term strategy for efficiently managing our energy future. In turn, efficient energy use and cost-effective development of energy resources is critical to our sustainable development economic growth.

GREENHOUSE EFFECT

Manitobans have a growing awareness of the problems associated with the "greenhouse effect," the gradual warming of the earth that is associated with the use of fossil fuels. As the earth's average temperature increases, the climate will change. This will have impacts on our environment and economy that we are only just beginning to understand.

Manitoba is a member of the Federal-Provincial Energy and the Environment Task Force. As such, we are involved in a network of research on a national scale which is dedicated to analyzing the potential impact of the greenhouse effect and devising strategies.

A particularly important project involving the department is the study to determine the level of carbon dioxide emissions in Manitoba. I am pleased to note that Manitoba will be hosting the 1990 Federal-Provincial Conference of Energy Ministers, and we hope to report progress in our joint efforts to understand and respond to the greenhouse effect.

MINERALS

Let us turn our attention to the Minerals Division. Under the Federal-Provincial Mineral Development Agreement, signed in 1984, the Geological Services Branch has fulfilled its mandate to provide scientifically current data and encourage the industry to effectively assess and utilize the province's mineral resources.

Over the five-year term of the MDA, geoscientific activities have concentrated on the Lynn Lake/Leaf Rapids, on Flin Flon/Snow Lake and southeast Manitoba mining communities threatened by diminishing resources.

Forty-six provincial projects were active this last year including 21 mapping and 21 mineral investigations. Discussions regarding the renewal of the Canada-Manitoba Mineral Development Agreement are continuing with my colleagues in the federal Government, Mr. Epp and Mr. Mayer.

The Government initiatives delivered during the first five-year term have been especially well received. My department will persist in its efforts to see that the mineral industry is successful in diversifying and strengthening its operations during the years ahead.

Within the Minerals Division, the Mines Branch works to ensure that the provincial mineral resources are

explored, developed and extracted in a manner which provides maximum benefits to Manitobans.

In 1988-89, there were 52 companies and 33 prospectors active in minerals exploration in the province, and this year the number of companies has increased to 58.

Last year's non-fuel mineral production was valued at a record of \$1.6 billion.

Other indicators of the industry's health are exploration activities valued at \$40 million, the opening of a \$70 million nickel/copper mine near Flin Flon, and the start-up of a \$100 million plan to redevelop the underground Birchtree Mine and develop a new open pit mine, Thompson Open Pit South.

As mentioned earlier, we are currently undertaking a major revision of legislation governing the mineral industries; and to this end, it is planned to introduce a New Mines Act during the current session. The revisions to the Act are required to provide a sound legislative framework for the further development of the mineral industry in Manitoba, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

Still for a few minutes on potash. While the potash market has not grown as much as previously anticipated, work is continuing to keep Manitoba's potash deposits at the forefront for development.

Several major corporations in India, Korea and the United States have expressed interest in long-term contracts and secondary investment. Our task continues to be to secure a lead developer to bring the project to fruition to meet the market requirements of the late 1990's, rather than the mid-1990's, as previously envisaged.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct your attention to the department itself. The department of Energy and Mines is a small department with a complement of just under 200 staff. For the fiscal year 1989-90, we anticipate expenditures of approximately \$13 million dollars.

On the energy side, we have gone through a departmental reorganization. The previous petroleum division is now part of the new energy division and the resources and functions of the former policy, planning and project development division now comes within the policy branches of the resulting energy and minerals division.

The changes have made the managerial structure and, therefore, the department more efficient.

Also, effective September 1, 1989, we undertook a further limited restructuring of the department. This involved dissolving communications and community relations as a discreet division. Ongoing communications and community relations activities have been absorbed into the operating divisions. As a result information management has become integrated with other management functions.

Part of the mandate of the Manitoba Energy Authority is to attract energy intensive industries to locate in this province.

Last year the MEA concluded a feasibility study with Dow Corning of Midland, Michigan. They are interested in the commercial use of plasma technology for the manufacture of silicon products using Manitoba's abundant supply of silica sand and hydro electricity. Now the town of East Selkirk is seriously considering its part in such a plan.

Along with these exciting new possibilities, Energy and Mines will continue to address the development and maintenance of Manitoba's petroleum and mining sectors.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my departmental staff for all their hard work and dedication.

I hope all Manitobans will share the excitement and optimism we feel for the future of this province's economic growth. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I will now call on the critics for the department, beginning with the critic for the official Opposition.

* (1440)

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

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): It is a common tradition for a Minister when they have read an opening remark like that and a courtesy for them to provide written copies of those opening remarks to the Opposition Critics. I have just asked the Minister if he would be prepared to follow that custom in this House and provide them.

Mr. Chairman: Is the Minister prepared to provide copies? The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for that well written public relations document, for reading that into the record. My thrust of questioning will centre around three specific areas. The actual investment of taxpayers' dollars and the accounting of the taxpayers' dollars, in order to accomplish what are worthwhile goals, will be one obvious area.

Second, Mr. Chairperson, will be to ask the Minister to rationalize and or justify the political thrust in defending the investment of these dollars to accomplish what thrust he has made. The third will be on the department, the personnel, and the initiatives that are being alluded to as to how they intend to try and carry out the admirable goals.

Mr. Chairperson, I may have missed it and if I did, I apologize, the Minister's opening remarks, which I hope we get a copy of shortly, did not seem to allude to the needs of people in terms of the employment.

He briefly mentioned the efforts at Lynn Lake. As he knows that was a very contentious and very difficult

series of negotiations for him and his colleagues and very greatly affected a large number of people. I am sure that will be a thrust of some of the questions that we will have. I would hope that at least from our Party's aspect, we will keep those to a minimum.

However, there are other situations that have been developing in areas like Flin Flon where the Government by regulation has been requesting mining companies to reduce the OS2 emissions, and companies are clearly coming back to the Government and saying, we are going to need some help in reaching these standards. So there will be some specific questions on that, Mr. Chairman.

I request the guidance of yourself, Mr. Chairman, or the Minister. I have a personnel matter that I wanted to bring up, and I am not exactly sure how to do it. I do not want to publicly embarrass any member of the staff, and the questions involve severance pay and then reinstatement of the individual. Whether or not he was allowed to keep his severance pay package and then when he was rehired, whether he was required to give any of it back. Those types of questions.- (interjection)- Well, with respect to the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) it may be his and/or his Party's desire to embarrass individuals. I know that in former levels of Government that I participated in, we had in camera opportunities so that specific personnel individuals would not be hurt or maligned, or information which can sometimes be considered confidential is kept within a specific discussion and not generally revealed for public opinion.

I am not sure if there is a vehicle in this Chamber for that, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps I can take your guidance on that, and if there is not perhaps the Minister would entertain to discuss it with me privately. If it is something that I feel should be brought to the floor of the Chamber, then obviously that would be the course I would have.

Having said that, Mr. Chairman, I would like to get onto the process. I am sure there is an awful lot of room for constructive participation in the Estimates process. I am sure that the well qualified and knowledgeable administration will be able to assist the Minister in defending the policies that have been put in place. Initiatives for the new Mine Act are well received on this side, the specifics will obviously have to be discussed over the implementation of the Bill. With those few and brief opening remarks, I would like to get on with the process.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Unfortunately, I did not yet receive a copy of the Minister's opening remarks, however, I was here for most of them. I suppose there are only a few areas that we are going to want to address in depth in our discussion. I do not expect that the department will be before the committee for a great length of time, but clearly the circumstances of the past few months with respect to the Lynn Lake negotiations are going to have to be discussed at some point.

We are certainly going to want to understand, from the Minister's point of view, what the province was

actually prepared to do in terms of supporting the community of Lynn Lake, the people working at LynnGold Mine, and endeavour to clear up for our own information, our own edification, the circumstances surrounding the failure of those negotiations.

I do not have to tell the Minister that the failure of those negotiations is going to cost the province a tremendous amount of money. I know that the province has already put forward a small amount of money, some \$1.2 million I believe, to offset some of the costs of closure. But there are going to be other significant costs the province incurs over the next few months.

Mr. Chairman, I will also be tabling some information that I received from the administrator, the town administrator, or one of the administrators in the Town of Lynn Lake which suggested that the cost of closure in terms of lost revenue to both levels of Governments was in the neighbourhood of \$10 million, that additional costs of closure, including unemployment insurance benefits to be paid out, social assistance costs, would be in the neighbourhood of \$10 million to \$12 million, and that there would be additional one-time closure costs, so that the costs, the on-going costs to the Province of Manitoba are going to be significant.

We have seen in recent days of course an increase in the price of gold to over the \$400 mark—

An Honourable Member: \$410 this morning.

* (1450)

Mr. Storie: —\$410 this morning, my colleague from Churchill (Mr. Cowan) suggests. One has to wonder whether the province would not have been more flexible. No one has ever asked them to provide more money or offer more in actual terms, but one wonders whether, if they had been more flexible, we could not have saved the community, the jobs and of course the trauma that people not only who work there now, who did work there, but who will continue to live in Lynn Lake despite the current catastrophe, if we could not have spared them that.

Mr. Chairman, there are many of us, and I am one of them who does not believe that the Government was ever serious in its offer, that it structured the deal in such a way that it could not be accepted under any terms, and then restructured every time there was a chance for success in the negotiations.

The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) is not so naive as not to understand that if you offer someone a million dollars for a \$200,000 house it sounds like a good deal, but if the deal includes the condition that the children go with the house, it is no deal under any circumstances. I know that the Minister is imaginative enough to make it sound like \$24 million was a generous offer, but in fact it may have been smoke and mirrors. That is the belief of many of us on this side, many of the people in Lynn Lake and many of their friends and family throughout the province.

I can assure the Minister the repercussions for this closure are going to spread beyond the community of Lynn Lake. I have spoken on other occasions about

the growing sense of unease in northern Manitoba when it comes to this Government's intentions in the area of mining, in the area of Hydro development, in the area of economic planning in general, and although we are not at liberty to discuss those in this process, they tie very neatly together. Perhaps there is some symptomatic evidence in the Minister's reluctance to create a mining community development fund, and we have talked about that on other occasions as well. That is going to be a topic for discussion.

I think the Minister has failed in this instance. I think he has failed to provide leadership, he has failed the people of Lynn Lake and the workers, and he has failed the mining industry in some sense. I am going to be talking a little bit later about some other ways that I feel we need some stronger leadership from the Minister in the area of mineral development, but I will leave that for another moment.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister also knows that I and some 2,000 workers are also very concerned about the negotiations with respect to the modernization of Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting. Again, Mr. Chairman, I saw the Minister's comments in my local paper in Flin Flon when he is saying, well, the negotiations are now back on track, the federal Government and HBM&S seem to be discussing things and they are in sync, but it would be imprudent for the provincial Government to say where it stands.

Well, Mr. Chairman, that is not my idea of leadership. The province has more to lose in any of this than anyone else, other than the people who work for HBM&S in the community of Flin Flon who have everything at stake. The province needs to show some leadership. The province should be leading this charge, they should be saying here is the deal as we see it can be structured. They should be saying here is our money and here is our commitment and challenging the federal Government to live up to its responsibilities as the senior level of Government to support the modernization effort, to support the community, as they have done in many other circumstances across the country, and the Cominco plant in B.C. and the Noranda plant in Quebec are just two examples. The Minister is aware of them but we need some leadership.

The Minister again is choosing to sit on his hands and let someone else take the real responsibility for the success or failure of enterprises which affect Manitobans, and that is not the Minister's role.

Mr. Chairperson, we are going to want to have a little more time to discuss those negotiations, and why we have, after two years almost of this Minister's reign as Minister of Energy and Mines, no agreement, no conclusion to what is an environmentally important issue, to what is an economically important issue for the Province of Manitoba, and what is of vital importance to the people of Flin Flon, the business community, the workers, the staff at HBM&S. We simply cannot understand the delay. I spoke of the uneasiness that exists in northern Manitoba with respect to the stability of our communities in the future, and the lack of significant progress. The lack of leadership on this issue is contributing greatly to that sense of insecurity.

Mr. Chairperson, we will also be wanting to talk about the future of the Mineral Development Agreement. I

cannot recall whether that was a \$25 million or a \$27 million agreement, but it is in that range. I believe it is \$25 million, an agreement that expired on March 31, 1989, an agreement that certainly had its weaknesses, but also had its strengths. During the time when that agreement was in place I think we had a great deal of interest, a great deal of exploration activity in the Province of Manitoba. We had—and of course we have to attribute this to gold prices—the establishment of several mines in the province employing hundreds of people. That was good news, and we are afraid that if the Minister is as apathetic when it comes to negotiations for a new Mineral Development Agreement—

An Honourable Member: Or incompetent.

Mr. Storie: Or incompetent—I chose the softer word. My colleague has a different word for it. If he is so apathetic when it comes to negotiations, I fear that northern Manitobans who benefit substantially from these kinds of agreements, and the mining industry which benefits substantially will be the losers. We do not need apathy; we do not need indifference. We need someone who is actually committed to mining, to mine development, who believes that it is important for the province, who understands that it is fundamentally important to northern Manitoba and to our communities. We need some evidence from this Minister that the Government really does care. Certainly, we have heard the rhetoric from the Minister and from the First Minister, but to date we have seen precious little concrete evidence that there is any commitment.

Mr. Chairperson, those are three areas that we are going to want to discuss a little bit in depth. There are many more. Two specifically dealing with the energy side of the Minister's department have to do with the Estimates directly, not only the policy of the Government, but the spending of the Government. A brief review of the departmental spending shows that two areas in particular have been hard hit by this Government, and they are in the energy policy area where five staff have been removed from the area of energy policy, and the energy management section where four staff have been removed, and the other reduction, a significant reduction, is in the area of the Mineral Development Agreement where some additional four staff are removed.

* (1500)

I want to speak for a minute, however, about the importance of energy policy. The Minister again has been called upon—certainly by Members of the New Democratic Party—on many occasions to intervene, to become more aware, more informed on the whole question of natural gas policy for Manitoba. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that Manitobans are paying excessive amounts for their natural gas. When I say excessive amounts, I am talking about in the area of \$20 million per year, and I have on other occasions indicated to the Minister that a preliminary review of prices that are attainable in the field indicate that the price that was negotiated by ICG with Western Gas Marketing Limited was not in the public interest, that

if the Government would have used its weight, would have been prepared to use its weight to negotiate a more responsible contract with more reasonable prices, they could have saved Manitobans some \$20 million.

We know that ICG has gone back to the Public Utilities Board for a rate increase. Rate increases frequently and again we are seeing the second rate increase in a matter of months. Mr. Chairperson, the Minister says, do I want to talk about that one and the answer is, yes, of course, I want to talk about that one.

The fact of the matter is that the Minister's hands-off policy is costing the taxpayers on an annual basis millions and millions of dollars and it is needlessly costing the taxpayers or the users of natural gas these additional monies. It comes from the Minister's reliance, his fascination with a hands-off policy, a laissez-faire approach to energy policy, to mineral policy, to Government in general which says we cannot do anything, we just have to stand back and observe the world around us. If ICG chooses to charge its customers, never mind that they, individual homeowners, individuals small businesses have no alternative, they have no alternative but to buy from ICG or switch to something that is more expensive. Then I think that is an irresponsible policy. I think that is irresponsible action or lack of action.

It is very nice for Inland Cement to go out and contract for its own gas supplies and negotiate a lower rate in doing that, but Mrs. Smith who lives in a little house in St. James or the north end has no ability to do that and she expects and I believe she has the right to expect the Minister of Energy, the Minister responsible for Energy policy, to do those things on her behalf if he can. If he has avenues open to him that will allow him to have an impact on the price of natural gas, I think it is his elected responsibility to do it. It is discouraging when the Minister is not receptive at all to the idea that he has some responsibility in this area.

The whole question of energy policy has obviously been given short-shift in the Department of Energy and Mines. The reduction of personnel, I think, typifies the Minister's response to his responsibility to do planning on behalf of the people of Manitoba. He has a responsibility to plan. We are living in a fool's paradise and the Minister is king fool if he believes that natural gas prices are not going to skyrocket in the next few years because I think there is every kind of evidence that in fact that is going to happen. I do not think that is simply the Minister's responsibility. I know that our energy policy is our ability to impact and affect energy policy in the country is quite limited.

We are a consuming province. We deserve to have some say in establishing national policy, in developing some balance between the energy producers in the country and the energy consumers in the country. At one time in this country I think we had established some realistic balance between those two interest groups and although it was sometimes an uneasy balance, it was a balance nonetheless and there was some respect for the consumers.

Since 1984 and beyond, and particularly after the 1985 Western Accord, and the supposed deregulation

Thursday, November 23, 1989

of in particular natural gas, we have seen the dismantling of the National Energy Board. We have seen this wholesale abandoning of a national energy policy, and what we have seen in its place is unfettered free market sell-off of our natural resources.

I asked the Minister not too long ago what he thought about the fact the National Energy Board was being asked to approve, pardon me, had approved the sale of 90 percent of the known reserves of the gas—I believe it was in the MacKenzie Valley—to three large multinational energy companies. We get no response, a shrug, a suggestion there was nothing the Minister of Energy and Mines could do. Well, in the Manitoba context maybe his response is fairly limited but he is also a spokesperson for the people of Manitoba, and he has a forum through which he can make an impact on the energy policy of the federal Government.

We have seen precious little to indicate that this Minister has used that forum to any advantage. We do not know whether the Minister is going to Energy Ministers' conferences or is speaking to the federal Government and asking them to reinstitute some form of energy management capability even in the country.

I have argued strenuously that the National Energy Board has to have some power. We have to, as a country, be able to manage our resource. We have to, as a country, make sure that we have sufficient reserves of gas and oil, of non-renewable energy sources to protect our interests over the long-term.

It bothers me that we are not doing it. I think it bothers Manitobans that the Minister seems hesitant to enter the fray when it comes to the whole question of energy management and maybe that is because, ideologically, he believes that the wholesale sell off of our resources, the contracting of our supplies to Americans to meet their needs is in our best interests. I think that is folly. It is certainly true that we are the only country in the world that would even contemplate the kind of arrangement that we have, the kind of open door energy policy that we have with the United States.

The Minister is a great defender of the Free Trade Agreement, and the Free Trade Agreements that are in existence around the world certainly do not contemplate neither the European economic community nor the Free Trade Agreement, or the Trade Agreement between the United States and Mexico do not contemplate the wholesale sell off of their gas and oil supplies to their partners, as ours has. Of course, the negative impacts of that agreement have been compounded by the Western Accord in my estimation, by the plundering of the powers of the National Energy Board.

We have a whole bunch of questions when it comes to energy, not only natural gas but in terms of oil and gasoline products as well. Finally, we will have some questions about energy conservation. We know that there have been agreements between Canada and Manitoba that have covered the development of conservation programs, the development of conservation demonstration projects to demonstrate to Manitobans, to the business community, to homeowners that energy conservation is a workable

strategy for reducing our reliance on non-renewable energy and for reducing our consumption of energy generally.

* (1510)

We understand that the federal Government has already cut back on the provision of information and the services they offer in terms of energy conservation. We are concerned because the provincial Government appears poised to do exactly the same thing, at a time when we should be looking with more enthusiasm and we should be looking more thoroughly at all of our options when it comes to energy conservation. It appears, if the reduction in staff and energy management is any indication, that in fact we are going backwards, that in fact we are renegeing on our commitment and the Government's commitments to Manitobans to promote energy conservation.

Those are some of the areas where we are going to spend some time. I will now make sure that I read the Minister's statement very thoroughly and if there are any other questions in it, I know I will have an opportunity to ask in some of the other sections as we go through the Estimates. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairman: Now that we have heard the opening comments, I would invite the Minister's staff to join us in the Chamber.

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Chairman, while staff is coming in I might make some remarks, with your permission. I would like to tell the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) that if he wishes to discuss any matter which he deems to be too private to discuss openly my door is open and I will discuss it with him in my office. He is welcome to come at any time.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to respond to some of the remarks the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) left on the record. I do not think that I would like to leave them on the record exactly the way he spoke them.

Let us talk first of all about LynnGold Resources. Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the Member for Flin Flon that our position never changed from the time that we first made our proposal to the company until the time that they rejected it some four weeks later. We never restructured ours at all as was suggested by the Member for Flin Flon.

I might suggest, Mr. Chairman, that had I or the Government been prepared to give the company, the two parent companies whose combined net worth is some \$540 million, everything they asked for we would have been criticized severely by the same Member.

He speaks of our lack of leadership with respect to the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting negotiations on the modernization. Mr. Chairman, giving money as requested is not leadership. At least it is not leadership in the opinion of our Government and my opinion. The Government, and I am sure we will have more questions on this later, but the Government is negotiating and is leading in the negotiations.

He spoke of natural gas and the excessive cost to the Manitoba consumer. Mr. Chairman, sure we could buy gas on a spot basis for less than what the Inter-City Gas contracted for, but I think it is important that the consumers of natural gas in Manitoba have a secure supply of gas into the future, not only for the period in which it can be purchased cheaper.

Mrs. Smith, in her little house in St. James, who cannot of course purchase gas on her own from a wildcat producer and have it delivered to Manitoba, is comforted I believe by the fact that the Inter-City Gas has negotiated a secure supply for her into the future for a price comparable to, indeed the same as, that a large consumer such as Ontario has been able to negotiate.

The Member for Flin Flon also mentioned that again ICG, Inter-City Gas, is before the Public Utilities Board. I might suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the Act that made this possible was introduced in this Legislature in 1987 at a time when the then Government was planning or attempting to take over the gas distribution system of Inter-City Gas and it provided for the application in front of the PUB on an interim basis for increases. The Inter-City Gas has availed themselves of that change in the Act with this application. It is probably no coincidence that the then Government brought in this Act at a time when they were also planning to take over the gas distribution system.

With those few comments, Mr. Chairman, I will entertain questions.

Mr. Chairman: As is customary we will defer consideration of the Minister's Salary. Therefore, we will begin with item 1.(b) Executive Support: 1.(b)(1) Salaries—the Honourable Member for St. Norbert.—(interjection)— Page 42 in the blue book.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairman, perhaps you could ask the Minister if he would be kind enough to introduce his staff and just tell us a brief view of what the responsibilities are.

Mr. Neufeld: Over on my left, Mr. Chairman, is Dr. Ian Haugh, Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines; next to him is Gary Barnes, Manager of Administration; on my right Craig Halwachs, in charge of Financial Services; next to him is Clare Moster, the Assistant Deputy Minister.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairman, starting on page 15, item 1.(b) Executive Support, I have a question in relation to the ratio and the reasonableness of the ratio of one manager dealing with one professional person and two administrators. By comparison to other areas, are these offices all divided and do they need two secretaries each and one technical person each, or are they in an area where they could be combining and collaborating on some of this by pooling their resources?

Mr. Neufeld: The support staff includes secretarial staff for the Minister's office and secretarial staff for the Deputy Minister's office as well as the executive and special assistants to the Minister.

The professional and technical staff are the two assistants to the Minister and the administrative support staff are two administrative secretaries in the Minister's office and an administrative secretary and an administrative assistant to the Deputy Minister.

Mr. Angus: The question is, as I understand it there is—I am looking at the Schedule 9, I suspect that the administration has put together in trying to tie some of the information on that, managerial, professional, technical, administrative support, through to the information on page 15 of the small book which is the accumulated total of those items.

You have Executive Support of \$355,000; and then you have Communication and Community Relations of \$516,000; and Administrative Services of \$655,000.00. I am assuming, and I could be inaccurate, but Administration and Finance on Schedule 9 across the top is what you are basically talking about in this department. Is that an accurate assumption? If it is not accurate—

* (1520)

Mr. Neufeld: If the Member for St. Norbert looks on page 17, he will find more details on the Executive Support. If he looks on page 19, he will find some more detail on Communications where there are additional details and schedules that follow the statement he is looking at.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairman, I have no doubt that the Minister can spend a third of this department's budget on Community Relations and Communications. I am trying to figure out the breakdown. As I understand it, in Administration and Finance, it seems to be the Administration and Finance department here, you have eight managers; you have 10 professional and technical people; and 16 support people. Is that accurate?

Mr. Neufeld: You are looking on Schedule 9. That is accurate, yes.

Mr. Angus: Good. Is the balance and/or the ratio a reasonable one in the Minister's mind, and/or has he ever reviewed the ratio of employee support staff to management in a fashion that may create more efficiencies and allow for either a transfer of staff or through attrition some sort of a reduction of staff?

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Chairman, we have spent a great deal of time reviewing the staff complement within Energy and Mines. We have indeed changed in a number of areas as I have outlined in my opening address. I do believe that the Member should recognize that we have probably, relative to other departments, more professionals. We have geologists, we have engineers, we have professionals of that like and the ratio may be somewhat different than he is accustomed to, but yes we have, in answer directly his question, we have spent a lot of time reviewing the staff component and are satisfied that we have a complement that is working efficiently. It does not say, Mr. Chairman, that we will not continue to review, but at the moment we think that we have an efficiently operating department.

Thursday, November 23, 1989

Mr. Angus: Can you tell me, Mr. Minister, what the staff years for the Administration and Finance was last year and the corresponding breakdown of managers, technicians and administrative and support staff, secretarial staff?

Mr. Neufeld: If the Member for St. Norbert would look on Schedule 8, we have Administrative and Finance, we have eight; Communications, we would have eight as well. Professional—I am not sure, we will have to look for that if you will just bear with us for a minute. I am looking on Schedule 8. Which book have you got? It is suggested you might have last year's book.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairman, there are no changes from last year to this year, is that what the Minister is suggesting?

Mr. Chairman, it appears, Mr. Minister, that the department has decreased by one individual. If that is a reasonable assumption then can you explain the increase in executive support, costs, if you like, from \$355,000 to \$418,000.00? Is that just wage increases or MGEA settlements or just something else?

Mr. Neufeld: There is a reduction of one administrative staff in the, or one professional and technical staff, pardon me, it is administrative staff, from 16 to 15 in the year in which we are now reviewing. The increases in salary totals are because of the MGEA Agreement, yes.

Mr. Angus: Well, okay, I am looking for an explanation then as to, and this is beyond page 17 of this year's book versus page 16 of last year's book when the one managerial position was \$77,000 and this year the managerial position is \$138,800.00 I am having some difficulty reconciling and breaking the whole thing down and get some reasonable business handle on this appropriation.

Mr. Neufeld: Now we are on the same wavelength, Mr. Chairman. The reason for the substantial increase is that during the year we changed Deputy Ministers and the severance package to the Deputy Minister that left is included in the year ended March 31, 1990, a figure of \$138,800.00.

Mr. Angus: He went through this before, as I understand it. Is it fair for me to calculate that the difference between the \$77,000 and the \$138,000 is the amount of the severance pay (a); and (b), when you replaced the Deputy Minister, what was the severance package then, for comparison purposes?

Mr. Neufeld: When the former Deputy Minister left, Mr. Chairman, the Government and Mr. Kang entered into an agreement indicating the mutual intention not to divulge any information with respect to that agreement. It is the practice also of the Civil Service Commission not to divulge such information. I would hope that the Member for St. Norbert would understand and accept the explanation that that difference is substantially the severance package but there were increases to the former Minister or to the former Deputy

Minister as at the start of the year, and that plus the payment to the current Deputy Minister and a severance package represents that difference.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, if this Deputy Minister was hired back would he be required to return or re-admit any of that severance package or is that his to keep as a parting gift? If he is re-employed is there any allowance for that standard in any way, shape or form?

* (1530)

Mr. Neufeld: Of course, Mr. Chairman, that is a very hypothetical question. It would be my understanding, at least if it were I that received the severance package, that it would be mine. Whatever I did thereafter would not affect the package that I had received. I am sure that the former Deputy Minister feels much the same as that. I would, in answer to the Member's question, suggest that monies that he received in severance would not be repaid in the event that he were hired back. As I say, that is a very hypothetical question.

Mr. Angus: That is also poor business practice, Mr. Chairman. I will leave that line of questioning.

I would like to get an explanation of the communications and community relations although there is some information in here as to what they do. Perhaps the Minister would be kind enough to give us just an overview and we can then start to ask some specific questions on it.

Mr. Chairman: Before I recognize the Honourable Minister, is the committee ready to pass I.(b)? I notice the Honourable Member is on I.(c).

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, it was not my intention to pass that yet. The rest of my questioning is I expect that the Executive Support is directing the communication and community relations. I want to try and find out what they are directing and get an overview of the department and the thrust that they are making to tie it back into the decisions that are being made.

Mr. Neufeld: The Communications and Community Relations section that the Member refers to includes an Info Centre that we have in the Eaton Place building and it includes mobile buses, several buses that go around to country fairs, to other places where people gather and might want information on energy conservation. It includes a bus that will do energy audits to help institutions and it will help industries to reduce their energy costs. It is that kind of function that is included in their activities.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, would the Minister just give me some guidance? The Communication budget has a manager, two managers as I see it. They are not included in the managerial component, if you like, of the Executive Support. Is there any of the \$418,000 and the seven people involved in the Executive Support that are responsible for the communications other than through a line function from your department?

Mr. Neufeld: The Executive Support section, Mr. Chairman, includes the people that are in the Minister's department and the people that are in the Deputy Minister's department and those are the only ones that are included in this.

Mr. Angus: That is fine then, I will save my questions as you have answered the reporting relationships in your office. I will save those and if my colleague from Flin Flon has questions on this area I would be pleased to turn the floor over to him.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, I think while the Minister, earlier in his remarks suggested that he was not prepared or did not want to release information in terms of severance agreements, obviously the taxpayers of Manitoba have paid for that severance agreement and the payment of such amounts should be part of the public record.

(Mr. Richard Kozak, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

I am wondering if the Minister would now care to put on record what it cost the province to dismiss the Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines.

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Acting Chairman, I would think that the Member for Flin Flon would be more sensitive to the feelings of people who have left under the circumstances that Mr. Kang left and not review his severance publicly. I think that by looking at the difference in the cost, between the years '89 and '90 he can get a fairly good indication of what that severance package was.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am interested in the circumstances surrounding Mr. Kang's leaving. Mr. Kang, in my opinion and the opinion of many, was doing an excellent job and I am interested to know if the Minister cannot share with us what it might have cost the taxpayers to see Mr. Kang dismissed. Perhaps the Minister can explain why he was dismissed.

Mr. Neufeld: I have to remind the Member for Flin Flon again that we have entered into an agreement with Mr. Kang not to divulge information with respect to his severance contract. I am told, Mr. Acting Chairman, that the Civil Service Commission has received requests under The Freedom of Information Act in the past on information such as this and have denied that information. Inasmuch as we are under an agreement which is legal and binding not to divulge this information, I am sure that the Member for Flin Flon will understand and accept the explanation that has been given to him.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, no one wants to infringe on the privacy of individuals, but the fact of the matter is that this Minister made a decision which inevitably cost the taxpayers of Manitoba tens of thousands of dollars, which disrupted the life of an individual and his family, and I also believe that the Minister has an obligation to share with the people of Manitoba the rationale for the change. Is the Minister saying that he did it on a whim? Did the Minister do it for ideological reasons? Did the Minister do it for

financial reasons? Is the Minister not prepared to share at all with the committee why this change was necessary and why it was in the interests of the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Acting Chairman, I consider the employment contracts and the separation contracts with employees a very personal matter and I have said already, and I will say again, we are under a legal agreement not to divulge this information and I think that in the interest of the former Deputy Minister we should not bring up personal matters that become public information. I would suggest that the Member for Flin Flon, if he wishes, avail himself through The Freedom of Information Act and request that information. Short of that, I can tell him here and now, I will not divulge that information.

* (1540)

Mr. Storie: I can appreciate the Minister's sensitivity and it certainly puts a new emphasis on the meaning of public accountability.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, I was the Minister of Education when Members of his caucus demanded day after day that the severance package related to—over which I had no control, the severance package paid to Dr. Perkins, then president of Brandon University. There was great indignation when I suggested, similar to what the Minister is suggesting, that frankly there was an agreement to keep this secret.

I did not believe, at the time, that any such secret agreement was in the public interest whatsoever. As much as I respect Mr. Kang, the fact is, he was a public servant and the people of Manitoba deserve to know what it cost the Government and this Minister to sever his services.

It is not meant with any disrespect, but the fact of the matter is these kinds of questions have been raised and answered in the past. This Minister's sensitivity not withstanding, he is a Minister responsible for accounting for the public money in his department—

An Honourable Member: That he is.

Mr. Storie: The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) said that he is.

The Minister I suppose can, in this instance, choose not to answer the question, but the fact of the matter remains, he made the decision—and he knows this better than anyone else—for no particular practical reason. He made this decision or perhaps the decision was forced on him. It was not done because of any lack in the Deputy Minister who had conducted the affairs of the Department of Energy and Mines with a great deal of zeal and competence. The Minister chose for his own reasons, and perhaps he will want to keep them secret, to cost the taxpayers this money.

Frankly, it surprises me that an accountant, someone who claims to have a great deal of respect for the spending of people's money, could so cavalierly decide to cost the taxpayers money, and then in this Chamber

Thursday, November 23, 1989

say, well gosh, yes, we cost thousands of dollars, but we are not allowed to talk about it. Well, it is my money, it is my constituent's money, and for the Minister to say we cannot talk about it is nonsense.

The fact of the matter is, it can be made part of the public record and it does no one any disservice to make it so.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, I want the Minister to answer the question. Does he believe that the public has a right to know how its money is spent?

Mr. Neufeld: Well, I have already said that the Member can avail himself of The Freedom of Information Act and request that information.

I personally do not like to discuss personnel matters publicly, and I never have. In my other life I did not do it. I think that is a matter between the person, the employee and the employer, and in this case, the employee.

While he was a civil servant, while he was a servant to the public, he still has a private life, and it will do no good to dredge up information that maybe of an embarrassment to him. I think we should allow the matter to rest and the Member may avail himself.

I have said I will not divulge that information, and I have no intention of changing that commitment. That commitment is to Mr. Kang as well as to the Government. I think if Mr. Kang indeed wants that information made public, and he tells me, I will make that public, short of that I will not.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Minister is no longer responsible for a private accounting firm. The Minister is responsible for the taxpayers' money. The Minister has given us no explanation for the dismissal of a senior civil servant, and now he says I do not have to tell you what it cost.

This is a new kind of responsible Government. We are talking about a civil servant, someone whose salary, incidentally, for the Minister's information, is public information.

What is not public is the secret agreement that the Minister made to release this individual, to dismiss him, the cost of which is the Minister's and the Minister's lone responsibility. He made the decision apparently with no rational reasons, unless he can share them with us, to cost the taxpayers money. I only put that on the record, I am not going to pursue it any further. I share the Minister's sentiment that policy or personnel matters should not be discussed in public. But the fact of the matter is that we are not talking about—if the Minister would be forthright, we would not have to talk about the personnel question, we would have to talk about one figure, and that is the taxpayers' money.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, the fact of the matter is that in this instance and many other instances, decisions were made on a political basis, and that is the point that is being made here. I raise the issue because I understand that the Minister is a little bit sensitive about the way things are done and perhaps in his experience it is not normally done the way it was done in this

instance. But I want to sensitize him to the fact that he did spend taxpayers' money needlessly, and that point is not going unnoticed on this side of the House and amongst certain members of the public.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would like to change my line of questioning and ask the Minister if he can indicate what the 10.5 staff years in Communications and Community Relations are, what their activities include at the present point, what major projects are they working on, and can the Minister provide me at some point with a list of those personnel?

Mr. Neufeld: I will undertake to provide the list to the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). Included in those 10.26 staff years is an executive director, one Community Relations co-ordinator, two Community Relations officers, two information writers, one library technician, one secretary, one administrative officer and 1.26 information clerks.

Mr. Storie: Yes, I have two other questions: (1) could the Minister indicate what the current Deputy Minister's salary is; and (2) could the Minister answer the question about what major activities this group is working on at the present time?

Mr. Neufeld: The budgeted amount of the deputy's salary included in the amount of \$138,800 was \$78,800 for this year—\$78,800.00. It was a budgeted amount.

* (1550)

Mr. Storie: The Minister replies in a way that begs a question, Mr. Acting Chairperson. If that is the budgeted amount, what is the actual amount (a); and (b) is the Deputy Minister employed based on Civil Service classification, or is the Deputy Minister employed by contract? Under either one of those scenarios, are there additional costs to the Department of Energy and Mines for benefits, allowances, et cetera?

Mr. Neufeld: The Deputy Minister is not under contract. He has the same benefits that any other employee of the Civil Service has; indeed, his position falls under the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Storie: I appreciate those answers. Would the Minister now answer the question of what the Communications staff are doing? Can he give us any broad guidelines? He promised to table a list of the employees, but would he tell us what they are doing?

Mr. Neufeld: I could read page 18 for the Member, but I think he can well read that himself. The activities of the Communications and Community Relations people are listed. I have here now the employees who are included in those 10.26 staff years. If the Member wishes, I will deliver them to him.

Mr. Storie: Yes, I appreciate being directed to page 18, but page 18 is sufficiently vague as to be meaningless. But my question was, what specific, what does it mean produces speeches, advertising, news releases? What speeches, what audio-visual programs,

Thursday, November 23, 1989

what feature articles, what brochures? My question is this: is the department mounting any significant communications campaign currently, not one that necessarily has been announced? My question is this: is the department preparing material for some future announcement and if so, can the Minister indicate what that is? What material, what area?

Mr. Neufeld: The department is not preparing any future communication, any hidden agenda. The department is carrying on its information or its duties as an Info Centre, and they do prepare documents for things like energy conservation, for the CHEC Program, things like that, but there is no hidden agenda. There is no project that they are working on and specifically that has not been announced.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I thank my colleague from Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for letting me jump in on this because we have not passed the Minister's Salary yet, and while we are discussing Communications, his thrust of questioning was along the same lines as mine as to what does a Communications Department do?

I would like a further explanation of how come you have close to half a million dollars in your global budgets under Communications in each of the departments. What is the \$21,000 in your department spent on, and/or do with, and have for communication purposes when you have got a whole department that is labelled for half a million dollars for communication to write speeches, to prepare news releases, to do feature articles, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera? Maybe you can just tell me what they do in your department for 21 grand.

Mr. Neufeld: I should say that if he is talking about the Executive Support, the Communications primarily telephone. On page iii, it is indicated that Communication includes things like telephone, electronic mail, postage, advertising, exhibits, radio systems, couriers.

Mr. Angus: Fax machines, too?

Mr. Neufeld: Fax machine. We have a fax machine, yes.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Acting Chairman, could you explain what Supply and Services is then, and while you are at it you might as well explain what Other Operatings are.

Mr. Neufeld: Are we back onto page 17?

Mr. Angus: Yes, that is in your department.

Mr. Neufeld: Operating supplies, materials, office supplies, repairs, utilities, rentals, professional services, fees and services recovery, that is under Supplies and Services, \$21,600 under Supplies and Services.

Mr. Angus: Other Operating?

Mr. Neufeld: Other Operating is things like hotels, meals, computer-related charges, insurance and

extraordinary costs, publications, employee education assistance, relocation and transfer costs, membership fees, hospitalities, uniform, conference, conventions, registration fees, incidentals.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, my questions actually follow very nicely the questions from my colleague, the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus).

An Honourable Member: We will be the judge of that.

Mr. Storie: My colleague, who is very judgmental, says he will be the judge.

An Honourable Member: No, we will, as a group.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Communications budget is some \$548,000, and the Minister has just indicated that the Communications branch is doing nothing out of the ordinary. There is no preparation for—who knows?—a hydro development announcement. There is no preparation for an assault on the people of Manitoba extolling the virtues of the Minister in mineral development, in geological services, and that is gratifying to know.

My question to the Minister is, is he satisfied that 10.5 staff that are in the Communications and Community Relations branch are informing us sufficiently, informing the department sufficiently in terms of the activities of the department? Is he satisfied that 10.5 staff is doing the job?

* (1600)

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Acting Chairman, they are not working on an announcement for Conawapa, they are not working on an announcement on the Ontario hydro sale, and they are not, for obvious reasons, working on extolling the virtues of the Minister because that is obviously not needed. I should mention that I believe the staff is working efficiently, the staff is doing the job that it was intended for the staff to do and is not unlike the work it was doing when the Member for Flin Flon himself was the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I wondered perhaps if they were writing an epitaph or a eulogy for the Town of Lynn Lake. I thought perhaps that would be something they could be doing.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, I gather from the Minister's comment then, he feels that the staff he has in Communications is adequate, that they can keep the public informed and provide the appropriate information to the Department and to the people of Manitoba. I guess the obvious question is, we see some cutbacks in other areas, particularly in energy management and energy policy. Then is there an argument that can be made for more money to be spent? There is no cutback, obviously, in Communications. Is there a need to put more money into the communications area?

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Chairman, during the year 1988-89 the department produced eight brochures, the

Thursday, November 23, 1989

department produced 41 speeches, 26 news releases, a number of newsletters, advertisements, annual reports, responded to some 30,000 inquiries, set up displays at 17 events, eight of which occurred in communities outside of Winnipeg. They scheduled and publicized 24 Home Energy Savers Workshops, and they promoted and helped organize the fourth annual Energy Conservation Week. Yes, I do believe that the department has worked efficiently, and I believe that the staff that is there is needed there. In the future if we require more staff we will go through the appropriate channels to look for more staff. If in the views of the managers we require less staff, we will act accordingly.

Mr. Storie: You have a wide range of abilities obviously within the Communications Branch and you have Community Relations officers, information writers, information clerks, a community relations co-ordinator, an executive director, et cetera. Are we expecting any changes in those people? Is the Minister satisfied that those people are doing the job for the people in Flin Flon as well as the people in Rossmere?

Mr. Neufeld: I believe that the people are doing a job for the people in Flin Flon, and for the people in Churchill, and for the people in Lynn Lake; indeed, and for the people in Rossmere. I do not anticipate at this point in time any changes, but that is not to say changes will not be made. If changes are required they will be made. It is our objective to serve the community in the best possible way and in the most efficient possible way. Toward that end, we will do what we have to do to meet those objectives.

Mr. Storie: If we can summarize just to this point, despite the fact that there have been cutbacks in other parts of the department, cutbacks in energy management, energy policy, and Manitoba Development Agreement, there have been no changes in staff in the communications area. We have a staff, a huge staff some would say, a large staff in communications of 10.26, 10.5 staff years.

The Minister said quite clearly that there has been no new work. We are not planning a significant promotional campaign for any aspect of the Department of Energy and Mines mandate. The Minister says he has confidence in the staff and the Minister indicates that the staff that he has is fulfilling the information needs of Manitobans. I have one other question. Can the Minister indicate how many newsletters were produced by the Department of Energy and Mines last year?

Mr. Neufeld: For exact details we will have to get back to the Member. There were four different newsletters, but multiple issues and the number of issues of each one, we would have to get back on. We do not have that information here.

Mr. Storie: I am assuming that the Minister's newsletters, the newsletters from the Department of Energy and Mines were produced by the Communications Branch.

Mr. Neufeld: Yes, the newsletters were produced by the Communications Department.

Mr. Storie: Were all of them produced by the branch?

Mr. Neufeld: I cannot help but get the feeling that the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is driving at something, but I will tell him that the Communications Branch gathers information from other areas, from the Minerals Department, from the Energy Department and puts it together, but the newsletters are produced by the Communications people.

Mr. Storie: The Minister I guess, like all, gets paranoid about a line of questioning. My final question is, the total budget for the Communications area is \$548,400, given that the budget has not changed substantially—an additional \$300, can the Minister indicate whether there are any additional newsletters planned? Are we planning to expand that area? Does that \$300 indicate an expansion of intradepartmental communication?

Mr. Neufeld: I would have thought that the Member would be happy to see us holding the line in one area of our department. If you will notice, of course, the areas that have dropped down substantially are the areas of Communications, and Supply and Services. The personnel area is up about \$19,000 or \$18,300.00. I think it is an indication that the department is working possibly more efficiently than it was under the former administration and is able to provide the same information and the same number of brochures, the same number of newsletters without going through as much expense as you would have thought with two years having passed. The inflation of 4.5 percent a year has not been included in this particular department. I would have thought that the Member would be pleased that we are holding the line in the manner in which we have been able to hold the line.

Mr. Storie: Yes, I would have been surprised if the Minister was holding the line. I would also have been I guess pleased if we had not seen significant cuts in other areas. What is more interesting though, and what we are trying to discuss here in the whole area of administration, is the direction that the Minister is providing and I guess developing a sense of how competently that department is being managed.

A question to the Minister: who is Ralph Hedlin Associates?

* (1610)

Mr. Neufeld: Hedlin and Associates is a Calgary consulting firm who is providing energy information to the Government. The cost of the information that is being provided—the cost of consulting services that are being provided are shared between the Department of Energy and the Department of Industry and Tourism.

The reason for this is that we wish to be on top of any new information that comes out of the energy departments of any province and Manitoba.

Mr. Storie: We have a bit of a problem here. The Minister suggests they are providing energy information. Mr. Chairperson, the Minister has awarded an untendered contract for some \$15,000 to, he tells us,

a Calgary-based consultant, a contract to provide a monthly newsletter. Is this not information that could have been provided by the Communications Branch, the people that the Minister has just said he has so much confidence in?

Mr. Neufeld: The information that the consultants are providing to us is for the happenings in energy outside of our province. The information that our own people would gather for us would be information substantially within the province. We believe it is in the best interests of the residents of Manitoba to have at our fingertips the information that can be provided by the firm of Hedlin and Associates.

Mr. Storie: We see some interesting complications here. The Minister did not respond when I asked him to explain why we have four fewer energy policy analysts. The Minister on the one hand is saying, yes, we need this information and we need to have an overview of what the energy issues of the day are. Yet he is now contracting from someone outside of the province, with no knowledge of the province, on the provincial Government's perspective on energy questions. Can the Minister explain why energy policy is so important that he has to hire in an untendered way a group from Calgary when we have no in-house capacity, or the in-house capacity is being decimated?

Mr. Neufeld: The information that we are gathering is for happenings outside of the Province of Manitoba. As the Member for Flin Flon has already stated, we have reduced our staff complement by four and have in turn taken a contract with the consultants for I believe he said \$15,000. Is that the amount? I think a little arithmetic will tell him that we are further ahead, we are much further ahead with a contract than we are with four full-time employees. Further to that, we are gathering the information that we do not believe we could gather with in-house communicators. It is information that is available in other provinces. It is information that the consultants have access to. I believe as I said before that in the best interests of Manitobans it is important that we as a department access such information so that we can act in the best interests of Manitoba residents.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairman, the Minister may believe that by eliminating policy developers and by eliminating staff who are responsible for developing energy policy in Manitoba; that by chopping those people who have Manitoba's interests at heart, or should have, and should be providing direction for the department and the Minister and the Government when it comes to energy matters, that he can replace that by an associate who provides information. It does not say that he is going to develop policy for the Government. It does not say he is going to advise on policy matters, not that we would perhaps want someone from Calgary, Alberta to provide policy to a consuming province.

It is an example of the Minister's weakness when it comes to planning and forward thinking. The Minister may be proud of the fact that he is cutting staff in Energy Management and Energy Policy, but I can tell him that being provided with information from the Albert

oil patch is not what Manitoba needs. The Minister maybe can undertake to provide—I will ask the Minister—will he undertake to provide myself, as Energy Critic, and my colleague the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), as Energy Critic, with a copy of this newsletter so we can determine for ourselves whether this in any way compensates for the fact that the energy policy, the planning capacity within the department, is being undermined?

Mr. Neufeld: I think the Member for Flin Flon is missing the intent of the contract. The intent is to know what is going on in other provinces. I think it is important for our department, the Department of Energy and Mines, to know what is going on in other provinces of this country in order to formulate policy for Manitoba.

We have to know what is going on, for example, in Alberta. We have to know the thinking of the Alberta producer. We have to know the thinking of the Alberta Government and how they formulate their own policies. I think that without this information we are left in a bit of a void. It is not information that we can gather through our own department. It is information that has to be gathered at the source. When the source is Alberta, the best place to have that information is from Alberta people.

That is the reason we have contracted with a firm from Alberta. I believe the savings to Manitobans in the long run will be substantial. I think if he wants to compare the staff that was let go that might have provided the same information he will find the difference in the savings to Manitobans quite substantial. If he wants, I can gather that information for him and show him exactly the number of hundreds of thousands of dollars that were saved by the reduction in staff.

I do not think that is the issue. The issue is, do we need the information from a consultant in Calgary in order to fulfill our duties to Manitobans? I believe we do. With that information we can formulate the policies best suited for Manitobans.

In answer to his question, can he have a copy, I see no reason why he could not have a copy. I think that is public information and by all means he can have a copy.

Mr. Storie: Thank you, I appreciate the fact that I will have a copy of this newsletter, but, Mr. Chairman, the Minister misses the point entirely. The point is not about a \$15,000 contract to provide information that will in all likelihood be available through other sources.

The question is, what do you do with the information? The Minister says this information is going to help us formulate his policy, while at the same time he is busy undermining the ability of the department to develop policy and to put policy forward. Even more important is the fact that the Minister, despite information that is available to him, has refused to act on our interests when it comes to energy policy.

The Minister has done nothing about redefining or redeveloping a national energy policy. The Minister has done nothing. The Minister has done nothing about the fact that our interest in natural gas is not being

protected. The Minister was on his feet a few minutes ago saying that ICG was protecting our interests. Nothing could be further from the truth. ICG is protecting ICG's interests. The contract is not secure for a long period of time. We have a price contract for two years.

Our interests are not going to be protected. The Minister is put on notice, the energy interests of the people of Manitoba are not going to be served by the Minister patting one of his erstwhile friends on the back and giving them a \$15,000 contract for information that is generally available. It is not going to lead to new energy policy. It is not going to lead to any new insights about what Manitoba needs in terms of energy policy. It is another expenditure of public monies, another expenditure of public monies for which there will be absolutely no return.

* (1620)

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Flin Flon ignores the fact that the contract signed by ICG and Manitoba is identical to the one that Ontario signed. He talks about the savings that could be effected by Manitobans, but with somebody with the volume that Ontario has—if we can with our short smaller volume negotiate the same contracts, the same agreements, the same prices, we have accomplished something. We are not talking about a few hundred thousand. The reduction in staff has saved the Government—I want the Member for Flin Flon to hear this—has saved the Government some \$266,000, staff that they felt was necessary, staff that we felt was not necessary.

I do not think we can honestly say that there has been a reduction in any services to the residents of Manitoba. The services have stayed the same. The staff in place before we took office in no way increased or improved the service to the people of Manitoba. If we can replace a \$281,500 price tag for \$15,000, Mr. Chairman, I defy the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) to object to that.

Mr. Storie: As usual the Minister confuses the question of policy and the question of information. The Minister has got \$15,000 worth of information that may be useless, and I believe will be useless.

The fact is that this consultant is going to collect information from the oil patch which is generally available and feed it to the Minister. What he has done is dismantled the capacity of the department to prepare and implement energy policy that is good for Manitoba. He tries to pretend that a \$250,000 staff saving compares to the \$28 million worth of savings that the previous Government was able to achieve by getting busy and acting on energy policy.

Let us not confuse the issue. The issue is not access to information, and that is what the Minister is getting here. The issue is, do we have energy policy? Do we have energy policy that reflects the needs of Manitoba and not the needs of any other part of the country? Are we implementing it? The answer is no.

The Minister wants to take some pride in the fact that he is dismantling the department's capacity to plan

and provide us with energy policy and direction. That is not leadership in any sense of the word. If the Minister thinks that saving \$288,000 is anything, he should consider that we saved \$28 million by getting directly involved in the negotiations between ICG and Western Gas Marketing in 1987-88.

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Chairman, I cannot let the Member for Flin Flon leave on the record that he saved, or their Government saved \$28 million. The prices at that time were falling and everybody was getting better prices.

I would like to remind the Member for Flin Flon, if he does not already know maybe I will tell him, his Government spent \$1.9 million on a failed effort to take over the distribution system. This is over and above the \$266,000 or \$281,000 they were spending on staff within their department to do some other—these are payments to outside consultants. These are payments to outside people they incurred because they felt that they wanted to become the distributors of natural gas in Manitoba, not for anything else but ideological reasons. That is a terrific price tag for Manitobans to pay for their ideological purposes.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister needs a history lesson. The fact of the matter is that consumers in Manitoba, whether you are talking about Manitoba Telephone, Manitoba Hydro, or Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, have received the lowest rate in the country virtually since their inception. As well, the fact of the matter is that Manitoba could likewise benefit from the ownership of the distribution network in the Province of Manitoba.

Yes, we were working on it. The figure of \$1.9 million of course is not accurate, and the Minister probably knows that. It involved all kinds of other advice and expertise on a whole series of questions besides those related to the acquisition of the assets of ICG Manitoba. I am going to leave that aside. The fact of the matter is that in November of 1986, and prior to November of 1986, ICG had applied for a rate increase that would have seen Manitobans charged some \$3 per thousand cubic feet of gas.

The Minister of Energy obviously was concerned and believed at the time that price was outrageous. It in no way reflected the true market price. As a result the PUB was ordered to investigate and review the circumstances of the contract, and they did. The PUB reported in May of 1987 I believe, and said, there was no evidence whatsoever that ICG had negotiated a gas price in the best interest of Manitoba. There was all kinds of evidence that the gas price could be lowered.

My colleague the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) got directly involved in negotiations with Western Gas Marketing and this can be confirmed very easily by Mr. Hoffman of ICG, got directly involved. The end result of that series of negotiations was a reduction in the price of gas from \$3 to \$2.20 per 1,000 cubic feet. Included in that, and the Minister will be up on his feet to remind me, was the elimination of a tax on the gas pumping system, or whatever. I cannot remember what it was exactly called, but it—

An Honourable Member: The motofuel.

Mr. Storie: The motofuel—which meant the total savings to Manitoba as a result of Government action and the involvement in negotiations was a total of about \$38 million in savings. It was not illusory. It was not going to happen anyway. The ICG went before the PUB from January to May of 1987 and said no, that is the best we could do, honest.

Well, we find out that it was not the best they could do and the ratepayers of ICG saved \$26 million, and that is a fact. The Minister had an opportunity, in fact was invited by ICG to join the discussions with Western Gas Marketing on the next round. Unfortunately, the Government changed and the Minister responsible said, well no, I am going to wash my hands of that, and I am not particularly concerned with what ICG ends up charging its captive consumers—its captive customers.

The end result is not only are they paying more today, but the next round of negotiations—after the current two-year price on gas is finished consumers will be paying even more. The Minister wants to pretend that the \$258,000 he is saving by removing planners and people with some insight into what is possible is a false economy. In fact it is going to cost Manitobans millions and millions of dollars. This newsletter he is getting for \$15,000 when he has staff in the Communications Branch that have access to that information and people in the department who have access to it is a waste of taxpayers' money—a gross waste of taxpayers' money.

Mr. Neufeld: I am not sure there was a question there. There was a political statement. I am surprised that he would even mention Manitoba Telephone System. He knows as well as I do, and as well as all Manitobans do, that had they not wasted \$26 million at the sands of Saudi Arabia they may well have been able to bring the price of telephone service down even more. It is true that Manitobans have been fortunate in having low telephone rates, and they have been fortunate in having low hydro rates, and I hope we can continue to have low gas rates.

I do not want to revisit the Estimates for the year in which the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) was the Minister of Energy and Mines. We can argue from now until doomsday and we will never agree. He and I will not agree as to what they accomplished with their \$1.9 million of expenses. We will not agree that they on their own forced down the price of natural gas that ICG had brought before the Public Utilities Board. They did not do that alone. They were partially at fault because they had a motofuel tax and without belabouring the point, the TransCanada Pipeline refused to talk to him until they removed it. When they removed it they talked.

In the end the price was approximately the same as that received by the Ontario consumers, so what did they gain? They would have got the same price without spending the \$1.9 million, Mr. Chairman, as well as having staff that did not help them in getting a better price, but were there for their own ideological purposes I suppose. I am not sure there was a question there, and I have no question to answer.

* (1630)

Mr. Cowan: I do not want to belabour the point on ICG. I want to make one point and then go on to a

different subject. I think if the Minister would take the time to acquaint himself with the statistics and facts, and indeed they do not lie, they will show him how the price has fluctuated over a number of years. If he would take the time to compare the price for Manitoba consumers; this is not the price for Manitoba industrial users but the price for Manitoba consumers previous to our involvement in the negotiations.

I was directly involved in those negotiations with Western Gas Marketing Limited and with Trans-Canada Pipeline and peripherally with ICG, who were involved in a peripheral manner with those negotiations. I studied the area very well and I can tell him he will find, if he takes an honest analysis, that previous to the Government's involvement—and I am not attributing it to one individual or another individual, but I am attributing it to the involvement of the Government previous to the involvement of the New Democratic Party Government—Manitoba consumers were paying more than were Ontario consumers.

Following the involvement of the Manitoba Government directly in those set of negotiations, Manitoba consumers were paying less than were Ontario consumers. That is not to say that Ontario industrial users—and ICG is a major industrial provider in Ontario—were not paying less, but consumers versus consumers, Manitobans were paying less. If he is saying they are now paying more or paying the same, then in fact our position relative to what it was when we left Government has deteriorated, and in fact that position was an improvement over what had existed previously.

I would ask him if he wants to come back with the side-by-sides and the charts later on to answer that question, because we can debate around it a lot, but without the facts in front of us—and I have them in my files, it would be easy enough to find if he cannot find them—it is difficult to answer that question. I think the facts will answer that question specifically.

My question to the Minister today is, can he indicate who within his staff was the chief negotiator on behalf of the Government with respect to negotiations with LynnGold, American Barrick, DCC Equities and others involved with the Lynn Lake situation?

Mr. Neufeld: I would not like to say there was a chief negotiator, there were three or four people involved. The Deputy Minister was obviously involved, I was involved, the president of Manitoba Mineral Resources became involved, oh, for the last four weeks, as did two members of his staff. That would be Cyril Vickers, Mr. Briggs, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Haugh and myself were the negotiators. I do not think there was a chief among them, but we put our heads together on all occasions that decisions had to be taken and came up with the decisions by consensus more than by direction.

Mr. Cowan: I ask the Minister then, who was responsible for signing the correspondence that transpired as a result of those negotiations on behalf of the Government?

Mr. Neufeld: In some instances I signed them, in some instances the Deputy Minister signed them. It was a matter of who happened to be in the office at the time.

Thursday, November 23, 1989

I did not send out any correspondence of which the Deputy Minister was not fully aware, and he did not send out any correspondence of which I was not fully aware. In the latter four weeks, there was no correspondence sent out to anybody of which all five people, who I have indicated participated in the negotiations, were not fully aware.

Everyone was fully aware of each one, and who signed it was incidental. The decisions were taken in concert, and were in all instances unanimous.

Mr. Cowan: Can the Minister indicate now the status of those negotiations from his point of view?

Mr. Neufeld: I do believe that the company has indicated to us that they will close the mine and that they will not negotiate any further with us. It has never been a matter of the Government not negotiating, it is the company's decision and was a company decision to close the mine, and they took that decision without consultation with the Government. That was their decision and remains their decision.

Mr. Cowan: But I asked the Minister a different question, I asked him in his mind, what is the status of the negotiations as of this date?

Mr. Neufeld: There are no negotiations at this point. The creditors' meeting will be held on I believe December 14. I am not sure of the location, but the Government will be at the table and we are not at this point certain whether we will be talking to the offices of American Barrick or of the Dynamic Capital Corporation. As far as we are concerned the negotiations have ceased. We will not make an effort to go back to the table with the people who negotiated with us in the first place.

Mr. Cowan: It is important that we are very clear in this regard. I would ask the Minister then if he could indicate that as far as he is concerned, there are no negotiations ongoing at the present time with respect to the LynnGold situation between LynnGold, DCC Equity and American Barrick or any of those parties and the Government. Taking from his answer what I can glean, he is saying that there will be no further negotiations with those parties around that particular issue.

Mr. Neufeld: I can say I believe with certainty that our last correspondence with the company was a letter we received from them and I believe it was November 10 by fax. We have not spoken with them or corresponded with them since. I can say that we will not initiate any negotiations with them. As far as we are concerned they have ceased.

Mr. Cowan: And there will be no further negotiations, is that the case?

Mr. Neufeld: Somebody once said never say, never. I have said that we will not instigate any negotiations. If they wish to negotiate with us, they come to us. We will not start negotiations with them.

Mr. Cowan: That begs two questions. The first is, why would not the Government initiate negotiations with them? What is it that makes them so adamant that they are not going to go back to the company to try to resolve any outstanding issues?

As the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said, perhaps it is because it is not their houses, it is not their jobs, it is not their future that is at stake. That is difficult to believe, but based on the evidence that we have seen before us throughout this entire fiasco on the part of the Government, one could easily come to that conclusion, and I think it would be a justifiable one based on the empirical evidence of what has transpired. It would not be difficult for a logical thinking person, or a rational thinking person, having reviewed all the materials, to come to the conclusion that this Government never did want a deal with American Barrick, with DCC Equity, with LynnGold to help continue the operation of the LynnGold mine and mill in the Lynn Lake area.

I would ask the Minister if he can answer why it is that the Government would not initiate under any circumstances, and that is what I hear him saying, new discussions with those parties to try to resolve this issue, if it is at all possible reconcilable.

Mr. Neufeld: Let me say, first of all, Mr. Chairman, had we not been concerned about the people of Lynn Lake, we would not have entered into any discussions with American Barrick or LynnGold Resources, for that matter, in the first instance. We knew from the start that the proposition, that any proposal would not be economic. That was a given. The cost of their operation was simply too expensive.

Mr. Chairman, there have been a number of issues that have been left with American Barrick, with Mr. Buchan of American Barrick, that he never responded to. If he wishes to respond to those issues, then we can talk. He has not responded, he took the political route and put the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) on his mailing list and negotiated through the Member for Churchill.

I do not think that until Mr. Buchan lives up to the conditions that we asked of him, asked of American Barrick and of Dynamic Capital, until he meets those conditions, we have absolutely nothing to discuss. He has not and they have not met a number of the conditions that we imposed. We had to as well protect the taxpayer of Manitoba. There were many dollars of taxpayers' money involved. As I said earlier, if it was not for the people of Lynn Lake, we would never had entertained discussions with somebody with a combined net worth of \$540 million.

* (1640)

Mr. Cowan: Every time the Minister opens his mouth we see once again why it is these negotiations failed. We see an arrogant take-it-or-leave-it attitude. Just to quote back to the Minister. The reason that he will not negotiate with them, the reason he will not talk to these people is because a number of conditions that the Government have imposed—those are his exact

words—have not been met. That is not negotiations. That is not an honest dialogue based on the concept of win-win to reach an agreement that solves a common problem. That is the old style negotiations perhaps that has been outdated and quite frankly has been useless for a number of years now. It is that type of arrogant take-it-or-leave-it, my way or the high way attitude that has destroyed a community. Let there be no doubt about it. It has destroyed a community.

I talk with those people in that community quite frequently. Yes, I have talked with Mr. Buchan and I have talked with Mr. Faught and I have talked with Mr. Goodwin and I have talked with Mr. White and I have talked with Mr. Harris and I have talked with Mr. Linfitt, and I have talked with so many others in that community about the issues that are important to them. I have tried to bring them together. I have even tried to bring the Government and them together, in spite of the fact that a Deputy Minister would go so far as to call one of the principals at his home to tell him not to come to Manitoba unless he was prepared to take it or leave it, to discourage him from coming here to talk.

It is that sort of ramrodding of their will and their intentions that destroyed any sort of environment that would be conducive to common problem-solving, conducive to negotiations. I am not saying that one party is either entirely wrong or entirely right in these negotiations. I never have, and I do not believe that to be the case. But when I look at it from my perspective to try to determine which was the party that was trying not to make the deal, it was the Minister and his staff that were trying not to make a deal.

I do not know why, yet, they worked so hard to scuttle the deal. I do not know why, yet, they worked so hard to make certain that that deal did not come to pass. I do not know why, yet they refused to sit down and to try to problem-solve in a way that would have engendered an agreement that would have allowed for the continuation of that town.

Those answers will come out over time, as all answers do. So I cannot say why it is that they scuttled these negotiations and in doing so they created such great havoc on a community and its residents.

I want the record to be clear, and I will be using this opportunity as many others in this House to set the record clear, because some of the arrogant, antagonistic things that the Minister has said do nothing toward resolving this issue. More importantly, they do even less toward ensuring that as we work our way through this, we are able to get the community back to a functioning community.

But it was not Mr. Buchan who put the Member for Churchill on his mailing list. I want that to be very clear because I think a lot of the problem here has been the ego of the Minister and the fact that he could not bear to think that an MLA for an area would talk to the people that are involved in the future of one of the major communities of that area. He has had staff call up people that I have talked to and ask, why are they talking to me? Or if he has not, staff have done so on their own, and he should try to find out why that is. To quiz people as to where I got certain information

which had the effect of putting on the record things which the Minister would prefer not to have on the record, but things which were in fact written and for that reason, until disproved, considered to be accurate. The fact is that the Minister has done everything in his power to try to skirt around this issue and nothing in his power to try to resolve this issue, and that is a tragedy.

To get back to the point at hand, I talked to Mr. Buchan. When did I talk to Mr. Buchan? I talked to Mr. Buchan after I talked to Mr. Faught for the first time. When did I talk to Mr. Faught? I talked to Mr. Faught on the day that the company came out with a press release that said this Minister had not told the truth when he said that there was a \$24 million offer on the table. He stood in this House and said he had brought a \$24 million offer to Cabinet. He went out in the hall and he said he had made a \$24 million offer. The next day the company said no such offer had ever been communicated to them.

The Minister cannot produce in writing any such offer. The union that was involved said they were not aware of any such offer. I have that in minutes of meetings, Mr. Chairperson, that date back to around that period of time, a period of time after which the Minister said he had made that offer. But when you look through the Minutes of people relating what they understood to be about the offer, it was nowhere near \$24 million. There is even an article from the Minister himself on October 3 from the Free Press in an interview taken on October 2 where he said they were talking about an offer of much less than \$20 million. Yet he said his October 4 letter contained an offer of \$20 million although he could not point to anywhere in that particular letter where that offer would have been documented.

So the fact is, Mr. Chairperson, there are a lot of unanswered questions with respect to the involvement of the Government and the reason that they were so headstrong in scuttling a deal which would have saved a community. We are going to ask him point by point, dollar by dollar, day by day, as to why they took certain decisions, because I believe that when you lay those decisions out, when you ask the reasons for the decisions, there is a pattern that soon jumps to one's awareness. That pattern is one of a reluctance, a hesitancy, on an all out effort on the part of the Government to negotiate a fair deal.

I think, I do not know why yet, I am just throwing out theories, and one may or may not be true, but I think it may have been that they wanted to put enough money on the table to make them look good, but to do it in such a way so that they know that they would not have to spend it, that the company could never accept it.—(interjection)— Well, the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) says, oh, come on, from his seat as if that would never happen. Well, he was a Member of Cabinet. He will have to know that every time the company came a step forward in trying to meet the terms and conditions imposed on them by the Government, the Government took two steps backwards. Every time the company tried to come up with some creative way to deal with the problems, to

Thursday, November 23, 1989

meet the needs and concerns of the Minister and the needs and concerns of the Government, the Government took two steps backwards.

That is not just my opinion. If it was, I would hold it just as strongly. The fact is that is the opinion of the people of Lynn Lake; that is the opinion of the union; that is the opinion of the negotiators on the other side. I believe that will be the opinion of any rational person that takes a look at the fiasco and the way in which this Government scuttled every opportunity to come to a deal.

It is as if they went out of their way to ensure that they had something on the table that would make them look good, but that they would not have to actually live up to that commitment. The fact is that it backfired on them in the end, because they did not look good. They looked like what they were, a bunch of bunglers, a bunch of incompetents, a bunch of people that could not even sit down at a table in a rational way and in an amicable way try to work out a bargaining relationship with people that shared a common goal with them—they said it was a common goal—and that was to keep the mine operational, that they drove people away from the bargaining table, that they would stand in this House and give figures one day that they would have to repudiate the next.

Well, never repudiated, that just shows that they are prepared to back up bad figures with stubbornness, if they never repudiated them, because there is an article, October 3, where the Minister does not mention \$24 million, yet he said it was contained in an October 4 letter. There are minutes where it is not mentioned that there was \$24 million on the table, yet he says it was. When you present him with the letter he points to a line that has nothing to do with anything at all, and he says, well, there is the extra \$4 million, there it is right there. Even a fool could see through that sort of manipulation.— (interjection)— The Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) says, he only has eight more minutes. I will tell him he has eight more days, he has eight more hours, he has eight more months, he will be in this House answering these questions until these questions are answered to the satisfaction of the people of Manitoba. Do not let him try to shove his Members around—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Order. Your point of order.

Hon. Gerry Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): The Member across the way from Churchill cannot get everybody all excited. I have the right to talk to the Member and the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) without that person over there. I did not make a remark to him, I was talking to this Member.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order, although he may have a point. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: I am sorry, Mr. Chairperson, I thought the Member for St. Norbert was on a point of order and

I would have relinquished my time for that, but his not having been on a point of order, I will continue my remarks.

* (1650)

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

Mr. Cowan: I just like to -(inaudible)- my point.

The Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) says, get to the order, and that is his point of order. Well, the fact is the Deputy Minister's salary is what is under discussion right now. The Deputy Minister signed a number of letters; the Deputy Minister made a number of phone calls; the Deputy Minister was involved in these negotiations as much as anyone else if not more. I think that it is an appropriate place to discuss this matter and it is the first opportunity. I think it is an important matter.

It will go on for more than eight minutes—to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme)—it will go on for a long, long time because there are too many unanswered questions; there are too many inconsistencies; there are too many contradictions; there are too many misleading statements that have to be corrected or have to be answered. The Minister has been one of those foremost in making those incorrect statements, in making those misleading statements, in making those contradictions, and in being totally inconsistent with respect to what has happened here.

So we are going to dwell on this for a while, not because we want to dwell on it, but because we believe there is still an opportunity to save the community. We believe so less and less each time this Minister takes his place and starts out with another arrogant tirade. We believe so less and less every time this Minister takes his place and says, it is a take-it-or-leave-it situation. We believe it less and less every time this Minister takes his place and, backed up by the First Minister, says, we are not going to talk until they talk. What a childish, childish attitude on the part of the Government. We are not going to you until you come to us. We are not going to say what we are prepared to do until you say what you are prepared to do. It is the old tit-for-tat style of negotiations which has been discredited long ago, and it is that type of arrogance that has destroyed the community of Lynn Lake.

This Minister has to assume direct responsibility for it. I know that his colleagues supported him for the most part in his efforts and I know why they did so, but the fact is he is the one that has to carry the can on the fact that when he took office, when he was made Minister of Energy and Mines, there was a thriving community there with a gold mine that was operational, and today there is no community there.

An Honourable Member: Puffy Lake.

Mr. Cowan: The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) says he also has to take some responsibility for Puffy Lake, and we will talk about that as well. Well the Minister

says that LynnGold never made money from Day One, yet the Strathcona Report says that had the Minister, had the Government sat down and worked out a deal that they would be making money if gold was over \$300 and some odd dollars an ounce, and in fact they would be very profitable over \$400 and ounce.

Well, he shakes his head no, but that is in writing. Does he not believe what he reads? Does he not believe the independent analysis that he had prepared for himself, or does he just not understand it? It could be both. It could be one or the other, but the fact is that that Strathcona Report, and we will read it out in the record so there would be no doubt about it, says that at \$400 an ounce that mine could be quite profitable.

The fact is that gold started at \$410 this morning and has been rising since the last two or three weeks. By the way, I have to mention that the Leader of the New Democratic Party Caucus (Mr. Doer) stood in his place and asked the Minister about the price of gold and said that analysts say that it is going to increase, and the Minister said no, how can you tell it is going to increase? What are the analysts? What do they know? -(interjection)- Well, yes, he is paying \$15,000 now for a consultant that tells him -(interjection)- but the fact is, Mr. Chairperson, the price of gold is \$410. The mine is profitable at today's prices -(interjection)- Well, now the Minister says, with no cost for Farley, but even the Strathcona Report contradicts him once again.

We will read it out because it is in black and white. We will bring the report. We are going to spend a lot of time in these Estimates on the LynnGold situation in Lynn Lake, but I just want to conclude my remarks today by saying that in fact this whole set of negotiations has been bungled from Day One by an arrogant Government that only wanted to look good but did not want to do good, by an arrogant Government that wanted to put an offer on the table that the other parties could not accept. It is a bit of the converse of the old "I am going to give you an offer you cannot refuse."

Well, this Government set out to put in place an offer they could not accept and every time they came closer to accepting it, either the Minister or one of his staff would get in the way of the discussions, agitate people, alienate people, call people names, yell at people as they travelled together and would in fact make certain that those negotiations did not go forward.

He did not do it alone. He did it with the help of his Premier, and he did it with the help of his Government. They all bear collective responsibility for what is happening today in the community of Lynn Lake. They bear collective responsibility for the fact that people cannot sell their homes and are going to lose their entire savings and equity in their homes, and they refuse to do anything about it. They bear collective responsibility for the fact that while some are finding jobs, many more are not finding jobs. They are going to, at ages 50 and 55 and 60, find themselves without employment, never to work again through no fault of their own, only through the fault of a Government that could not see through its own arrogance, its own obstinance, its own stubbornness, to try to sit down with the other Party and negotiate a deal that was workable, a deal that would protect the interests of

the province and would also protect the interests of the individuals in those communities.

The Minister is going to have to bear responsibility for the small businesses that are going under, day after day, in that community. The Minister is going to have to bear responsibility for the social economic wrath that is being incurred upon an entire community and a region because of his Government's refusal to negotiate in good faith, because of his Government's refusal to sit down and negotiate a deal that was there for the making.

The Minister and his Government are going to have to bear responsibility for that for a long time yet to come. We are going to spend much more than the eight minutes that we had here today. We are going to spend much more time than we have even available to us in these Estimates, laying out before the public of Manitoba, day by day, detail by detail, record by record, exactly how badly this Government bungled the negotiations. I am not saying that they did not meet their objective because I think their objective might have been not to have a deal.

I think their objective might have been just to try to look good. But the fact is that the stated objective, to keep the mine operational, is the one that they failed miserably in.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairman: Order, please.

The time being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise and call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS PUBLIC BILLS

BILL NO. 2—THE LANDLORD AND TENANT AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill No. 2, The Landlord and Tenant Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le louage d'immeubles, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). (Stand)

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

Thursday, November 23, 1989

BILL NO. 4—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake), Bill No. 4, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant le Code de la route, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). (Stand)

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

BILL NO. 10—THE BEVERAGE CONTAINER ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), Bill No. 10, The Beverage Container Act; Loi sur les contenants de boissons, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) who has 12 minutes remaining, the Honourable Member for Concordia.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): It is indeed a pleasure to rise on this Bill. It is a Liberal proposal, I believe, and we like some parts of it. I think our critic has pointed that out, the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), has he not in previous discussions? -(interjection)- Yes. I know the Member for The Pas will be elucidating on the Bill at a future point, as he does so well.

I missed the comments from the Member for Brandon today. It must have been quite surprising. We are going to really be in terms of beverage container Bills, I wonder whether there are going to be any beverage container jobs in Brandon. One of the great parts of the announcement by the Government yesterday and in the paper today about decentralization, well, to be opposed to it is to be opposed to motherhood of course in this province. To be opposed to it is to be perceived to be part of that disease called perimetrevision. So we all support the concept of decentralization. The question becomes, will they be able to make up the 100 jobs that have been lost in the public service in Brandon? I doubt it. Will they be able to make up the number of jobs that have been lost in the Parkland Region through savagery and a Tory economic development policy in terms of the federal and provincial Government? Well, it is the word that Members of the Liberal Party may have recalled in the old Trudeau days when we were being savaged in western Canada.

How many jobs are we going to have to have from the decentralized program to make up for the black cloud that has been over Portage la Prairie since this Member has been in the Cabinet? How many jobs is it going to take, Mr. Speaker? That is why it is so important to talk about this Beverage Container Bill, because even the 500 jobs that allegedly—and it will not be 500 jobs. It is 500 positions. We know how these things work. It is a little slight of hand. Even those 500 jobs are not going to make up for the 1,000 jobs or so just in his one community with Tory economic policy at the federal and provincial level. The Beverage

Container Bill—it fits very well, because we are talking about how many jobs would be available outside of the City of Winnipeg pursuant to the Bill.

An Honourable Member: Who is going to carry the can?

Mr. Doer: Who is going to carry the can? Yes, well, I think the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) is going to carry a little bit of a can today, because the Member for Fort Rouge is going to be speaking one way and the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) is going to be speaking another way at a different venue, and sometimes whether we like it or not those inconsistent comments catch up to you. Sometimes we have to compare what we said at one venue with what we say at another. I will be very curious to see how that fits.

Again, at speaking in favour of some provisions on The Beverage Container Act, this is the first time in my life I have supported anything that Gilles Roch has put forward in this Chamber. So I want to put this as a disclaimer in terms of the Bill, but certainly we support the principle of a Beverage Container Act, and indeed had it as part of our recycling policies where we proposed that there be some ability to have a Crown corporation operate a recycling policy in Manitoba. The reason why we said we believed in our Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, is we believe that recycling will not work if you have a private sector model where profit will be the only motivating factor, and that is the way the private sector should operate, and companies in the private sector that are involved in recycling are involved in cherry-picking the profitable parts of the recycling and the public sector or the rest of us are left with the rest of it.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is a good step forward, but it lacks a lot of provisions that could be much more effective in terms of recycling. It is very short on the number of items that will be included in recycling and Beverage Container Acts. We will be looking at ways of improving this Bill from the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) when we—I am sure as we move along to Committee Stage of this Bill, I am sure that Members across the way, the Government Members, would love to move this Private Member's Bill submitted by their old colleague the Member for Springfield. I am sure they would love to move this Bill forward and get this in the Committee Stage. I know some Members are coughing, but I know the season is that of winter and it is a bit of a problem.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, in my place dealing with The Beverage Container Act, and it is relevant that this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak in this Chamber while the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) are in the same Chamber.

I would just like to go on record as I am dealing with this very important Bill as to my utter disappointment that those two strong Members of the Cabinet could not take on the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and get the Concordia Hospital on the way and forward.

* (1710)

I know that the Members from northeast Winnipeg know as I do, and in fact I believe the Member for River East used to work in the hospital and knows very well the pressure on the emergency wards and the pressures on the citizens of northeast Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, I want to say straight up and in their presence how very disappointed I was when the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) turned his back on East Kildonan, Elmwood and Transcona. I want to say that I hope the Minister of Health will be influenced by the former Deputy Health Critic, now the Member of the Cabinet Benches and the Treasury Benches and a former employee of the Concordia Hospital. I hope we have the Minister responsible for Energy also as a member of that community that will influence this project.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the public sector should intervene more in recycling policy. We believe a Beverage Container Act is an appropriate way to go. We believe that there should be a Crown corporation that is involved in recycling for these beverage containers. We do not believe we should just deal with one side of the equation and not the other.

Mr. Speaker, it may well even be a Crown corporation as a new entity that should be located outside of the City of Winnipeg because our preference is for new jobs rather than old jobs. Rather than people being moved around, that new jobs should be located in new settings. We will see how many hundreds of people will be politically moved by this Government. We will have to see whether it is merit or politics that determines the decision.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik)—we will see how effective he is in Beausejour-Lac du Bonnet. They are expecting about 200 jobs out in his area when about 5 or 6 trickle out to his community. I am sure the people of the community will hold him accountable.— (interjection)— Nothing to be against, but you have to look at what you are proposing.— (interjection)— well, it is very important on this Bill.

I think if the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) or the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) were in the caucus this morning—I am betting money that they were not in the caucus this morning, because if they were there they would sure have different advice from the downtown Liberal Members than we saw today in the Question Period. I will tell you the downtown — (interjection)— well, Mr. Speaker, I do not know, but if I was a fly on the wall, I would expect somebody to have been raising the other side of this equation. To be against decentralization is to be against motherhood. It is to be against the buffalo. It is to be against all things that are right. The specifics though, we will be going through position by position and community by community to see —(interjection)— Well, you need 500 jobs for your community just to be half equal to where you were when you started in the Government.

Thank you very much, it was indeed a pleasure to speak on The Beverage Container Act, a positive step forward but one that needs lots of amendments and improvements at committee stage.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)? (Agreed)

BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba.

The motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that the question be now put, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) who has two minutes remaining. Stand?

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)? Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose)? Is there leave? (Agreed)

BILL NO. 17—THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill No. 17, The Employment Standards Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les normes d'emploi, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). Stand?

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I did want to have a chance to speak on this particular Bill. I am interested, intrigued by the fact that our Liberal friends in the Legislature are taking every opportunity to avoid debating any serious matter when it comes to its impact on working people.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), the Member for River Heights is not afraid to rise in this Legislature and raise her voice about the concerns of people being laid off at Marr's Leisure or Wescott Fashions.

The fact of the matter is that this kind of legislation, the Employment Standards amendments, that has been introduced by my colleague from Thompson are exactly the kinds of amendments that would benefit the people who are being laid off across the province, not the least of which of course, Mr. Speaker, would be the people who were laid off at Puffy Lake Mine, at Tartan Lake.

Mr. Speaker, we should not confuse the question of severance benefits with the question of payment in lieu of notice because the two things are not identical. The fact of the matter is that even though some contracts include severance benefits, there are many, many thousands of workers who enjoy virtually no benefits under The Employment Standards Act, no significant benefits, and this amendment is intended to improve those circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, it is of concern that we hear our Liberal colleague continue to pretend, continue to attempt to

voice the concerns of working people on the one hand, and yet on the other everytime they have an opportunity to present their principle position, when it comes to the protection of working people, we see a certain avoidance mechanism click in.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have chosen not to debate final offer selection to any extent at all. We had the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) stand up in his inaugural speech I believe and say, final offer selection is working, but we are opposed to it. In essence, when you boil down his speech that is what he said, final offer selection works, but we are opposed to it.

Then we had the Member, the defender of the working people from St. James stand up and say that he opposed this legislation. So we have had two people, and like most Liberal approaches to a problem, one is on one side of the issue and one is on the other and both of them are with their friends.

The fact of the matter is that the New Democratic Party knows which side it is on, both in terms of final offer selection, and we are prepared to take a stand and we know which side we are on when it comes to the amendments that are being proposed to The Employment Standards Act. Again, Mr. Speaker, we wonder where are the Liberals. We know that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has said that the amendments that are proposed, the increasing notice, the additional severance benefits would be too onerous for business. Those are the Leader of the Opposition's words, too onerous for business.

We do not believe that to be the case at all. Many of the other pieces of labour legislation that have been introduced over the generations, over the last three decades certainly, have also been touted as being too onerous on business. In fact when unemployment insurance and the employers contribution in unemployment insurance were first introduced, the Chambers of Commerce, and many members of society said that was too onerous a task, a chore, a cost for business to bear, and we can continue to use that argument. The Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), the Leader of the Liberal Party, may want to continue with that argument.

I would like to know whether there are other Members on the Liberal benches who are more enlightened. I would like to know whether there are any Members on the Liberal bench who are actually interested in introducing, and changing legislation in this province that is beneficial to workers. That is what we want to know. It is certainly obvious, Mr. Speaker, to this point, that everytime they are confronted with a piece of legislation that is to protect the interests of workers, whether it is final offer selection or Employment Standards Act amendments, or Labour Relations Act amendments, they have shied away, shied away from taking a forthright position.

* (1720)

Mr. Speaker, we all know that on difficult issues it sometimes takes a great deal of courage to take a stand. We have now created a situation in this Legislature where the Liberals had to take a stand on final offer selection.

I believe, after listening to the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson), that position was taken because of the position of the Leader, because of the imposition of the will of the Member for River Heights (Mrs Carstairs), rather than any fundamental belief on the part of most of the Members of that caucus that what was being proposed was right, that the repeal of the final offer selection was in fact a regressive, retrograde step by a regressive Government. A Government that really is not interested in the question of harmonious labour management relations, but is more interested in posturing for the Chamber of Commerce and a few of their friends.

Mr. Speaker, the same I suppose can be said now of the Liberals who have taken the same position as the Conservative Party when it comes to improvements to The Labour Relations Acts. The fact of the matter is that the amendment that is before us today, the amendment which would improve the protection of workers who are laid off through no fault of their own, puts the Liberals in a similar dilemma. Do they go ahead and support the legislation and risk raising the ire of the corporate world, or do they in fact side with working people?

We believe that the results of the last few months, the indications that the economy continues to decline, the impact that we are all going to feel, that the manufacturing sector, the agricultural sector is going to feel as a result of free trade and the implementation of free trade, we believe that the what we call plant closure legislation and the improvements to that legislation are imperative.

Mr. Speaker, if anyone is keeping a running total of the number of workers laid off in this province, it is fast approaching 1,000 people directly, and who knows how many others who have been laid off in a more quiet and surreptitious fashion, but whose job loss may be attributable to the impact of the Free Trade Agreement or the economic policies of the Government, the Conservative Government, either federally or provincially.

Yesterday, I was in Morden at the founding meeting of the new Pembina constituency, and lo and behold I find that in the Member for Pembina's (Mr. Orchard), riding there has been a closure of a business approximately a month ago; 41 jobs lost in the community of Morden, a job loss that I believe was directly related to the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement. They were a manufacturer and the products they were manufacturing were directly Triman Industries.

The company, a month ago, laid off all its workers. Mr. Speaker, certainly, as far as the workers are concerned, the plant was working. They had orders. The problem was that they were being undercut by competition, particularly, from the United States, but we do not hear of those examples. Here is another example of why we need stronger plant closure legislation. If we have to, based on our observation of the economic circumstances of the province over the next few months strengthen this even further, then I believe that we should be prepared to do that.

Certainly the New Democratic Party is prepared to do that because the reduction in our workforce, the

jobs being lost in our economy, is certainly not the fault of working people. It is certainly not the fault of the employees of Triman. It is certainly not the fault of workers at Toro. It is certainly not the fault of workers at the Springhill plant. It is certainly not the fault of the workers at Ogilvie Oats, and the list goes on.

So, Mr. Speaker, we believe that the amendments that are being proposed here are long overdue. We believe that the Members of the Chamber had better give serious consideration to what has been requested. We certainly want to hear from our colleagues in the Liberal Party, and we want to know what their views are on this legislation. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) continues to put off the inevitable, the day when he has to take a stand. It is going to be interesting to see which side of the fence the Liberal Party falls on this time, or do they attempt again to straddle the fence and create political eunuchs out of themselves.

The fact of the matter is that the Liberal Party is in jeopardy right now, serious jeopardy, because they are being perceived as political eunuchs.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Storie: The fact of the matter is the people of Manitoba are not going to be fooled for long. They are going to have their day and the fact is that despite that the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) feels they are doing a good job, I think most people recognize that on the major issues of the day the Liberal Party is either on the wrong side or they are on no side. That is not going to be acceptable for very long.

We still want to know where Members in the Liberal Caucus stand. We believe, I believe anyway that I know where the Conservative Party stands. They are not going to support this under any circumstances. They have never shown any interest in the concerns of average people. They have never shown any concern about the working conditions of working people in the province. They have never shown any genuine concern about the plight of workers laid off.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Storie: The Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) is going to continue to chirp from his seat that we never answered any questions about Workers Compensation. The Member for Portage knows as well as anybody in this Chamber that the only reason there was not a question asked was because the Minister was not organized enough, and his Government was not organized enough, to indicate to other Members of the Chamber how the affairs of the Chamber are going to be organized. The responsibility lies with the Government, not the Opposition Parties, to organize the affairs.

The fact of the matter is that we know where the Tories are going to stand on this Bill. What we do not know yet is where our colleagues in the Opposition are going to stand. We have reason to believe if past history is any indication they are going to stand on the wrong side of this issue again. If they follow their Leader's example they are going to say, no, this is much too

onerous on the business community and we are not going to improve the notice provisions. We are not going to improve the severance pay provisions of the legislation. We are not going to ensure that those who lay off workers are obligated to pay compensation to workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own.

I do not believe this Bill is particularly onerous and I challenge the Government and particularly the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) to come before the Legislature and tell us what she thinks this legislation is going to cost employers in Manitoba; tell us what she thinks it is going to cost based on the thousands of jobs, or the, yes, the thousands of jobs that have disappeared in Manitoba over the past year; tell us what the cost is going to be to those employers; tell us to balance that with the cost to workers of not having access to this kind of support. Let us have some sort of rational analysis of whether this is going to in the words of the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) create a business climate that is so poisoned that we will lose investment. I do not believe any of that to be the case.

* (1730)

The fact is that every piece of progressive legislation that has been introduced in Legislatures across the country has been opposed by Conservatives in the main but also Liberals because of its terrible impact on the business community. The fact is we have progressed a long way, because some people, particularly people in the New Democratic Party, were prepared to be consistent and persistent in our protection of workers' rights.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter remains standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

BILL NO. 18—THE OZONE LAYER PROTECTION ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), Bill No. 18, The Ozone Layer Protection Act, Loi sur la protection de la couche d'ozone, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery), who has 11 minutes remaining, the Honourable Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the ozone layer to me is one of the most important subjects that we have as a Legislature, that we have as a province, that we have as a country, that we have on this planet, because if we do not do something about the ozone layer we are not going to have future generations with a planet to live in.

Mr. Speaker, I have looked at the Bill that the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) has put forward and it is just typical of the problem that the NDP have with the environment is that they just have no idea of what to do with the environment. They passed a piece of

legislation which was not all that bad, but that was about as far as they went. They passed legislation and then forgot to do anything about it.

The Bill that the Member put forward, the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), it is obvious that there was no Bill there to take out of the department as the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has done in Consumer and Corporate Affairs, picked out old Bills to make use of them and present them as his own.

The Bill that the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) put forth is a very immature Bill, a Bill with no content, and I can understand why. They had done absolutely nothing when they were in Government. There was not one initiative, not one initiative that was on the books to carry on with and to bring forward. We had to start from the base, pardon? -(interjection)- Well, they did not do very much. I think the Minister—as the Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) says, they must have done something. I question that too, they must have done something, but I think they collected their salary and that was about what they did. In Environment there was absolutely nothing.

When we looked at the Bill that was presented by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) and then we look at The Ozone Depleting Substances Act, Bill No. 83, put forward by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), you can see the difference between the two Bills.

The Member for The Pas should know that when you look through one area, for instance, under the area of penalties, he talks about \$5,000 for the first offence of an individual. In the Minister's Bill, it is \$50,000.00. Second offence in the Member for The Pas' is \$10,000; in the Minister's Bill it is \$100,000.00. When it comes to a corporation, the Member for The Pas, he has a fine of \$100,000, where the Minister has a fine of a half a million—five times. The Member for The Pas, in a subsequent fine, a total of \$200,000, where we have it at a million. The Minister brought in a fine of a million.

Well, if the Member for The Pas had even read The Environment Act, he would find that The Environment Act calls for penalties of up to a million dollars for infractions in environment. When we are talking about the most important aspect of our environment, the ozone depletion, you would think the Member would at least have had penalties that would have been equivalent to the Act. To me that would have only made any common sense.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, I can see the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) is chirping away very, very sensitively. I can appreciate that because they do not have anything to work with. The Member for The Pas, last January sometime, we put the ozone layer, the CFCs back on the national agenda to deal with CCREM and it had never been put on there by the previous Government. We were concerned—never put on, they had never discussed it, it was not an issue with the previous NDP Government. We put it on the issue when there were no CBC documentaries. There was no pressure to put it on, we put it on because it was in my estimation the No. 1 environmental issue.

When the CBC put out a documentary showing the depletion of the ozone layer having increased, and in

fact in the Arctic, another hole that was showing up and increasing, Ontario came forward with some legislation very quickly to show that they were proactive. The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) goes on record by putting out a news release on eliminating—not in a given period of time, of say five years, or under some plan where we could look for alternate sources of Freon. He said all CFCs should be abolished in one year. That would have meant there would have been no refrigeration in Manitoba and Canada in one year, because there is no substitute for Freon. It is basically Freon-12 that is being used in household refrigeration. There is no substitute at this point. They are looking at Freon-134A, I believe is the number, as being a substitute for refrigeration, but the Member did not know that.

The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) also, in his provincial affairs speech, had these little plastic, or styrofoam, cups as being contributors to CFCs and the ozone depletion, not knowing that for some time the CFCs that were used in the manufacturing of these were long thrown out, not used anymore, no CFCs in them at all, no CFCs used in the production of those cups. They had not done their research and they were doing a lot of knee-jerk reaction.

The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) should know better. If you are going to start making comments like that you should be serious about it, because this is a serious item. These are not a problem with CFCs. There are no CFCs used in the—we are talking about the ozone layer and the ozone Bill. Sure there is a problem with putting them in the landfills. There is a problem with it, but it is not a problem to do with CFCs.

An Honourable Member: The hole is not big enough yet.

Mr. Connerly: The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) says we should not be worried because the hole is not big enough yet. Any hole in any ozone layer is big enough. It does not matter what it is, any hole is too large.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for The Pas, on a point of order.

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, the Minister is very clearly the one that said, at the press conference, that the hole was not big enough. I never ever said that the ozone layer—the hole was not big enough. It was the Minister who made that statement. I just reminded him of the fact that he said the hole was not big enough.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to remind the Honourable Member for The Pas that a dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Connery: To discuss whether it is big enough or not is ludicrous. We have to look very seriously at the ozone depletion and basically the number one culprit is refrigeration. Now in a lot of refrigeration we have the use of Freon-22. Freon-22 still has some CFCs in it but only has about 5 percent of the CFCs that is found in Freon-11 and Freon-12.

Just to make a knee-jerk statement as the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) did in saying we should eliminate all CFCs in one year, was not responsible. We would have had hospitals that would have had the air conditioning turned down. We would have had sick people sweltering in 90 degree heat. That would have not been acceptable. The alternative was to move as quickly as we could to find something in an alternate form to replace those Freons.

* (1740)

If you eliminate refrigeration or air conditioning, air conditioning in hospitals, apartments, because of—he said within one year we should eliminate all of the CFCs in Manitoba. That would have meant refrigeration, and air conditioning would have been shut off in one year, which then would have meant all of those—we could not have kept milk. Food would have been spoiling by the semiloads, boat loads. We would not have had any food. It was an irresponsible statement on the part of the Member for The Pas, but we are used to those irresponsible statements. Well, he is pretty irresponsible. I kind of like the Member for The Pas, really in essence, but he does make some very silly comments.

The ozone layer leads to two major things and I think one is the natural sun—the filtering out of the ultraviolet radiation from the sun is one of the first major causes which leads to skin cancer and to death. The other one is the greenhouse effect, which is the ozone layer holes, and if we do not stop it we are going to have a major greenhouse effect on this planet. If we have the polar icecaps melting, we will see tremendous areas on this planet flooded. We can take a look at areas like New York. We can take a look at Holland, Florida, a lot of these states would have humongous amounts of their land flooded.

We have to move with all haste, but also with some common sense. While we would like to eliminate all CFCs within—I would love to see them all gone right today, but common sense says they cannot. The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) in his Bill, Bill No. 83, is looking at a responsible method of depleting, eliminating, CFCs as quickly as we can.

I want to make a comment. I want to say that the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) made one of the better speeches on the ozone layer. He did his research. He made a very, very calculated and reasoned discussion on the ozone. I think this is the sort of debate that we are lacking at many times in this House to address the issues and to debate them in a realistic way. I compliment that Member for that particular debate on the ozone layer.

Unlike the New Democratic Party, they have been just rambling away -(interjection)- well, they do have

the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) and I know that is a liability that they have to live with because he rather goes on -(interjection)- well, yes, we could call him sandbox or that sort of thing.

Mr. Speaker, I think it was one of the Members from the NDP who said that, and in fact I think it was the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister's time has expired.

Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House—oh, the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to this debate on the very important environmental question that concerns not just us in Manitoba, but indeed all of us who are residents on this planet Earth. I think it is important for all of us to participate in this debate. From time to time, I am compelled to do so because of the seriousness of the issue, even despite the fact that I am currently suffering a disability.

Mr. Speaker, you perhaps will understand that some of us who otherwise are prepared to face the trials and tribulations of this life in a courageous way. I have an admission to make that when I am in the hands of a dentist I become very, very meek and mild. I am just in between stages of seeing to a problem area in my upper molar and that will constrain my comments today from the usual verve and vigour with which I like to attack all subjects that are raised in this Chamber.

Nonetheless let me say that the issue before us is an important issue, and I am very pleased that it is coming to us from all sides of the House. We have a measure before us in the form of the Bill that I am currently debating, but Honourable Members are also very much aware that my Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings), the Government, has put forward very specific proposals on this very issue.

I think it would not be inappropriate to suggest and to thank the mover of this particular Bill, a Private Member's Bill, for his concern and there might be some validity to proceed with the Bill if in fact you had a do-nothing Government, a Government that showed a callous disconcern about the issue, a Government that shut its eyes to what is happening in this world and what our contribution ought to be to this important matter.

If that were the case, then there would be some rationale, some reason to continue the debate on this Bill but that clearly is not the case. This Government has demonstrated on this matter, and on many other matters, that it is very much concerned with all things of an environmental nature.

Indeed we have embraced, possibly in a way that no other Government has in Canada, the concept of sustainable development. Our dedication to seeing that is not just a buzzword of the '90s but that in effect will to a large measure be present in all decisions made, particularly decisions of economic matters here in this Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, when thinking about what I wanted to say about this Bill and about the subject matter generally, it would have been easy to take the attitude that it is a world problem. Our contribution to the problem here in Manitoba, or indeed for that matter of fact even in Canada, is minimal. We need only to look to our populous neighbour to the south. We need only to look at the populous countries of the world in Europe, indeed around this planet that together have created this situation.

For us to avoid the use of cups that add to the problem, for us to put specific deadlines and actions in terms of other practices, consumer practices and industrial practices, such as coolants for refrigerators, to try and to limit—(interjection)—and for cars, the Honourable Member correctly reminds me, that in itself—you know, one could take the attitude and say that: but our contribution to this problem is so minimal, why impose any of these kind of restrictions or why accept any of this responsibility here in Manitoba? As proud as we are of our Manitoba, but we are a jurisdiction of a million people, compared to the billions that inhabit this planet, a goodly number of them who contribute in a far greater way to the problem.

There is a reason, a very valid reason, why we in Manitoba are taking these steps and why we in Canada are taking these steps, and I think it is with some pride that we can say that Canada is taking a leadership role in this area. I refer to the conference that was held not so long ago, I believe, in Montreal on this very matter, an international conference, that for the first time brought this whole subject matter to the attention of the world and created and provided a forum by which countries of the world of this planet Earth can begin to address it.

It is important that we take this kind of action here in Manitoba and hopefully in other jurisdictions, other provinces, so that Canada in its international role can do so from a position of some credibility, of some integrity, that we in fact have recognized the seriousness of the problem and are prepared to subject our constituents, our residents to some of the costs perhaps some of the inconveniences or more importantly bring about attitudinal changes that will help address this problem.

The problem really is global. The problem really is of putting our house in order so that we can speak with a stronger voice on the international stage, and when we bring these matters forward at international conferences. Indeed in my humble opinion an organization like the United Nations ought to be involved in making this a truly international and global concern, and perhaps through the mechanics of United Nations recognizing the limitations of that organization.

Nonetheless it is the only global organization that we have, and there are facets of that organization that have world-wide bureaucracies in place, world-wide opportunities, to influence other countries along the path that we are travelling here in Manitoba, with respect to ozone and ozone producing or the chemical parts that are destroying our very important ozone component in our upper stratosphere.

So I think upon reflection, the mover of this Bill will be well satisfied that, No. 1, Members of this Legislative Assembly have taken the issue that has been raised in his Private Members' Bill seriously.

We have I think addressed it and I am sure other Members will want to address it. That all goes to help create the climate within Manitoba, the need for us in Manitoba to change our practices. Then, Mr. Speaker, we will recognize that the Government of the Day has taken the necessary action as you would expect a concerned Government to take, that we have not, as is not sometimes the practice of Governments or indeed of Ministers that will look into the matter, or that we will study the matter, or that we will do something to use the phrase that Ministers are sometimes prone to use, "soon." We are doing something about it right now; the Bill is before us at second reading.

I think we can all take some comfort from the fact that is indeed the case. We are prepared to act in a responsible manner and so position firstly our province, then our country, Canada, in the strongest possible position to speak with integrity, to speak with a strong voice at international conferences that are going to be called on this very important subject matter.

I think, Mr. Speaker, we ought to take a moment and set aside our partisan differences and when we occasionally do something right, collectively as we are in this instance, let us all take a little bit of credit in the fact that we in Manitoba, both by the route of a Private Members' Bill that is before us right now and by the Government action, are acting in a way that I believe a growing majority of our citizens would want us to act on these kinds of matters.

I, for one, am very pleased that this Assembly has taken this step. It certainly should encourage the Minister and this minority Government with the assurance that the measure presented to you the other day by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) will receive the endorsement of all Members of this House. Under those circumstances I am satisfied that the Mover of this Private Members' Bill can also take his satisfaction from it and do the right thing and withdraw the Bill now that this subject matter is being aired, it is being dealt with in an expeditious manner. We can use that time that this Bill has been on this Order Paper for other equally important measures and hopefully in some instances invite him to find that fertile ground where unanimity of thought and spirit can move this House progressively forward to creating a better environment for our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me these few comments.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

* (1750)

**BILL NO. 20—THE MUNICIPAL
ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT**

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), Bill No. 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger). (Stand)

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

**BILL NO. 21—THE UNFAIR BUSINESS
PRACTICES ACT**

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), Bill No. 21, The Unfair Business Practices Act, Loi sur les pratiques commerciales déloyales, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). (Stand)

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed? The Honourable Member for Transcona.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, as we are approaching adjournment, my remarks today on Bill No. 21, The Unfair Business Practices Act, will necessarily be brief. I will continue my remarks at a later time. In fact my prime objective this afternoon is to express my deep disappointment and, yes, my sense of hurt to my friend the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) over his approach to achieving social reform in this House.

I attribute the approach of my friend the Member for Elmwood to too strict an adherence on his part to the great dictum of the NDP philosopher, Ronald McDonald: We do it all for you, Mr. Speaker. I would suggest to the Member for Elmwood that he further research Mr. McDonald's philosophy and understand that Mr. McDonald expects to be paid for all that is done for you.

Second, Mr. Speaker, I attribute this Bill to too strict an adherence to the well-known cradle-to-the-grave philosophy of the New Democrats. The New Democrats fail to give due credit to the intelligence of the consumer, the intelligence of individuals to make well-informed decisions on their own part.

Government indeed has a very real and important role to play in educating the consumer. That is why we have a Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. The New Democrats fail to recognize that individual Manitobans are capable of a great deal of intelligence with proper Government intervention in terms of

educating the consumer and that consumers in Manitoba are well able with proper educational support to make intelligent decisions on their own behalf.

Last October I studied an identical Bill put on the Order Paper by the very same Honourable Member. I considered the Bill; I researched it with some care; I prepared and delivered on October 13, 1988, a well-reasoned set of remarks on the Bill. What happened, Mr. Speaker?

The Honourable Member for Elmwood ignored my carefully prepared suggestions and those of other Honourable Members and simply plunked the same flawed piece of legislation on the Order Paper in this new Session.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for Elmwood really wants to accomplish social change, he should learn and learn quickly that in a minority Government situation, it is possible and indeed essential for the three Parties to arrive at reasonable accommodations through a genuine exchange of views in this House and in the committees of this House.

I remind the Member for Elmwood that the Public Accounts Committee of this House has reached a number of all-Party reasonable accommodations on other matters. For example, the Public Accounts Committee adopted a twice-amended Liberal motion on the over \$1 billion unfunded pensions liabilities of this province, a motion that will eventually lead the province to introduce a more accurate accounting policy.

I suggest to the Honourable Member that his contribution to debate and his contribution in terms of placing useful Bills on the Order Paper of this House would be much enhanced if he paid more attention to the successes achieved by other Honourable Members in realizing their objectives in this House.

I suggest further that the Member learn from accomplishments in this minority House if he is really interested in Bill No. 21, which has many good points. I suggest that the Member read my sincere remarks of last October 13, read the remarks of other Members and show us if he has any negotiating skills at all.

On the other hand, if the Member for Elmwood merely wants to put his Party's election platform on the record, he should have the courtesy to advise me and my colleagues not to waste our time by trying to negotiate a reasonable accommodation with us.

Mr. Speaker: When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).