

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Thursday, 5 March, 1981

Time — 8:00 p.m.

**CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY
SUPPLY — LABOUR AND MANPOWER**

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, LLOYD G. Hyde (Portage la Prairie): 3.(d)(2)(a) — pass — the Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. RONALD McBRYDE: Before we adjourned this afternoon, I asked the Minister if he could give us a breakdown in terms of the three placement programs, where the people came from, how long they stayed for each program. I wonder if he had chance since then to get that information together.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson): Mr. Chairman, no, I mentioned this afternoon that we are doing a total analysis of the entire program, and I think by and large the bits and pieces of information I have given is all part of the overall review of it. We have assured the members that we are going to have a total review and analysis of the program, and I just do not have any more bits and pieces of it at the moment. I have given the members a fair amount of what we have at hand.

MR. McBRYDE: Maybe I misunderstood the Minister this afternoon, I thought it was a matter of just taking those figures and putting them in that kind of order I spoke about. I take it from the Minister now, that we have wait for some sort of a final evaluation of these programs to get the communities, for example, the Flin Flon Project; from what community do those people come and how many of them stayed for how long?

MR. MacMASTER: That's all a part of the total review. I guess what the member means by how long — the retention rate is something that we are very interested in and we are hoping to do some type of follow-up as to why they left and if in fact they were going to other employment or what the thoughts were on it. It is something we intend to do, and I said this afternoon that we will do that as thoroughly as possible and produce a report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(d) — pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I understand we are on the Employment Support and Counselling Service, and I have some general questions, but I'm not sure which section they would fall under, but perhaps I can address some of them

MR. MacMASTER: We are on (c) Northern Youth Employment.

MR. BOSTROM: Can the Minister perhaps explain what his program is in that area for this fiscal year under consideration? I note the amount is pretty well

the same as before, and if you have answered that question this afternoon, if I missed it, I'll receive the information in Hansard.

MR. MacMASTER: We went over the whole program very thoroughly this afternoon. It's really identical to last year in numbers, generally in numbers and generally in numbers of people.

MR. BOSTROM: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Is there any effort made by the Department through this program to tie in with the Federal programs that are available from time to time for youth employment; that is those that are offered through Indians Affairs and/or the Canada Employment Department?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we went over that pretty thoroughly this afternoon too, and the bottom line answer is yes, we work very close with the Federal Government in relationship to the endeavours that are taking place.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: 3.(d)(2)(a) — pass; 3.(d)(2)(b) — pass; 3.(d)(2)(c) — pass; 3.(d)(2)(d) — pass; (3)(a) — pass — the Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. MacMASTER: I was going to give my opening remarks.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: The main objectives of the Selkirk Training Plant operation is to facilitate development of special needs individuals to enable them to enter the labour force or to pursue further training and to produce a wide variety of wood and metal products for Manitoba parks.

The Plant in co-operation with Red River Community College and CEIC provides a combination of classroom and on-the-job training relevant to metal and wood trades. The classroom component is oriented towards industrialized skills and job readiness, while the on-the-job portion dwells on practical trade skills.

Approximately two months are spent in a classroom with four to five months on the job. Counselling assistance is also provided in assisting individuals in locating permanent employment. Metal and wood products being produced are manufactured according to orders placed by the Manitoba Parks and they are then sold to the parks.

With respect to staffing at the Selkirk Plant there are 14 staff man years.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, the products that are produced by the plant, is there any effort made to sell those products commercially as well as through the parks, perhaps the Minister . . .

MR. MacMASTER: No, we deal basically with the Department of Parks, partly, I guess, because it's

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

more of a training plant than a heavy assembly production plant, though we do produce things that they use. It's more geared for training and job acquaintance, that type of thing, rather than a heavy production commercial sort of an enterprise.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: No, go ahead.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for The Pas.

MR. McBRYDE: I wonder if the Minister could indicate what kind of a percentage of the parks' needs are supplied by this plant, as I understand, it's tables, out houses, barbecues, and those types of items. What percentage of those needs for the Parks Branch would this operation provide and what percent would they be getting through the Purchasing Bureau?

MR. MacMASTER: I'm afraid, Mr. Chairman, the member has got me. I just don't know what precise percentage; the only way I can get the answer to that, I guess, is to get a hold of the Minister of Parks and see if we can get that.

MR. McBRYDE: The reason I asked that question, Mr. Chairman, I know that in 1976-77 it appeared that there was enough of a need to have a similar type operation somewhere else. The feasibility of a number of communities were being looked at and I wondered if in my curiosity if that was still the situation, where there might be quite a bit more need of Parks Branch and other government departments for this kind of product, that could in fact, be located in places of high unemployment and become a combination of training and production operation. Maybe this government isn't that interested in pursuing that further, in terms of the communities with high unemployment in providing this kind of facility.

The other question I have was in terms of the 14 staff man years, the Minister mentioned counselling for one, training for another. I wonder if the Minister could give us a breakdown on exactly what those 14 positions involve.

MR. MacMASTER: There's a plant manager, a plant counsellor, a home advisor; three instructors in woodwork, three instructors in metal work; one sign and paint instructor; one paint foreman; one woodwork foreman; an inventory clerk and a typist.

MR. McBRYDE: Thank you for that information. The Recoverable portion here, we're not quite there yet, but it would help to understand the whole operation, if the Minister could indicate; is that the amount recoverable from Parks or is it a training grant recoverable from somewhere else.

MR. MacMASTER: From Parks, Mr. Chairman.

MR. McBRYDE: The Recoverable from Canada section here then, would be what?

MR. MacMASTER: The \$200,000, if the member would look at his numbers, the \$200,000 is from Parks; the \$50,000 is from Canada.

MR. McBRYDE: Recoverable from Canada would be some sort of a training assistance or what? I really hate to suggest this with my leader sitting right next to me, I might get kicked or something, but if this operation were further north they could probably get 60 percent recoverable from the Federal Government, rather than \$50,000 out of a \$800,000 operation. Would that be correct?

MR. MacMASTER: It could be correct and I'll take it up with the sitting MLA and see if wishes to have that. The plant relocated in another portion of the province. The Member for The Pas and myself come from an area where we might be interested in that kind of . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Chairman, I can't very well let that go by, can I, when I'm confronted with the blue and the orange mafia from the north. I notice last year, the Member for Lac du Bonnet, had posed a question to the Minister as to where people were going upon graduation from the training school, if there would be any history of their progress.

The Minister at that time on page 1119 of Hansard, stated that, "I expect from the member's questioning, it's not satisfactory to him and I can only say to him, that this time next year, we'll have a better handle on where people are going, and what has been happening. There is not history that we can determine, because this question was asked by myself, well maybe in the history of the people that are passing through this establishment."

I wonder if the Minister would have any information that he could reveal to us, as to what has taken place in evaluation over the past year.

MR. MacMASTER: Well, I can give the member some numbers, we are again reviewing this as the Leader of the Opposition may or may not know. In the last couple of years, I have promised myself and government and Opposition a good number of analysis of a large number of programs and we've been giving them out as we went along.

This is one that we hope to have completed in the next two to three months. We've gone back for the information of the questionnaire. We've gone back to 1978 to give us a good run at what's really happening rather than just use last year's, so that gives us a three-year run. We expect that to be completed in the next couple of months. In the figures we do have, the number that went on to employment during the fiscal years of 1978-79 was 23. From my records 23 went on to full employment jobs. In 1979-80 there were 28 that went on to full-time employment and to date — and the only figures we have now is to January 1st — there was 23 so far.

Now the precise question that the member is asking is where they're going, into what kind of work is what will be part of the analysis, just what kind of jobs are we getting for these people.

At the end of 1978-79 — that would have been April 1st — there were 45 people in the program, this is the end of the year. At the year end of 1979-80 there were 42 and as of January 1st this year, there were 56.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

The number of trainees beginning the fiscal year — you must realize these numbers are sort of hodge-podgey because they come and go all the time — but there was 21, April 1st, in 1978-79 going at that point into it, and there were 45 when I reported in 1979-80 going into it; and in April 1st this past year there were 42 going into the program; so this gives you an idea of the numbers that are going in.

During the entire year of 1979-80, there was a total of 80 that were accepted. During 1979-80 there were 76 that were accepted and to January 1st this year, there have been 89 accepted. So that's basically all the figures I have at the moment.

Now there's a heck of a lot more detail that we will be finalizing in a review of the program, where they're going, how long they're going, why they're quitting, why they would drop out, where they go back to or if they're going on to other jobs; did two or three months of introduction to the city life of Selkirk and familiarizing themselves with that sort of living; did that then acquaint them and equip them well enough to move on to maybe another job in Selkirk; just get out of the plant.

We're trying to nail that down, it's difficult. But we think we'll have a better overview of the whole operation in the three-year period — 78, 79 and 80, for the next couple months.

MR. PAWLEY: Can the Minister indicate whether there are any plans to expand the existing facility. It was built originally in, I think it was 1968, and an addition was added to the facility in approximately 1974. And I'm wondering if there's any intention to undertake any further expansion.

MR. MacMASTER: Well, I would think that the Leader of the Opposition would appreciate that before I could give a firm answer to that, we have to assess what we've been doing with what we have. We may find there's things that we've been doing in the last two or three years that aren't adequate. We may find in as many personal interviews with people who have graduated or quit that there's different approaches we should be taking in that operation.

I can't give the member any assurance that it will be expanded. I can give him some assurance that we plan on keeping it open, from what we know of it. It's sort of a cursory review. We're reasonably satisfied with the operation.

MR. PAWLEY: I want to just indicate to the Minister that I do believe that this plant has been one of the most successful operations in developing skills of those that might not otherwise find gainful employment, often insuring that manpower enters into industry that might not otherwise enter into industry, so that when the Honourable Member for The Pas questions about moving the plant I say no, but I think that it is the example of the kind of activity that should be explored in other areas in order to reduce the levels of unemployment, numbers of people on welfare in areas of disadvantage. I'm sure we could all list various communities where there's very, very heavy unemployment.

Has the Minister any plans to consider the expansion of these kind of facilities? Not precisely this necessarily, but facilities that will provide

training, that will provide employment, which will generate at the same time talent development, skill development, so that those that are otherwise unemployed can enter into the workplace, zeroing in particularly on those communities within the province where there is either high unemployment or high underemployment.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, without divulging any items that are being negotiated, I can tell the Member for Selkirk that that type of situation, and maybe not identical to or maybe not even close to, but the same sort of philosophy, I basically think, should be followed when we're looking at the Inner City Core Program, for the development for the City of Winnipeg.

Now I don't know whether it would be a Selkirk type training plant; I'm not sure whether it would be a converted massive warehouse of a variety of different trades or whether trying to develop people into semi-skills, or introduction programs to various trades; or I don't know just what we'll end up with, but surely with that Inner City Core Development Agreement, whenever that is finalized, that the type of philosophy that's applied in the Selkirk training plant, without characterizing the group within the city that the Core Area Development Agreement is supposed to deal with, I think you'll find that there is a need for something like this, and I can't for the life of me, if I wanted to tell the member what that will be, but there just has to be some very basic training structures and programs put in place for a lot of people within the city who have come in from a good number of outlying areas.

MR. PAWLEY: I just also want to emphasize to the Minister that to my experience in Selkirk, it's had some contact with the trainees and those that are responsible for the plant, is that its success is dependent to a large extent on the fact that there have been home advisors and family counsellors that have assisted in more than just the simple job training, but have through the years provided leadership and guidance in helping people, for instance, to look after some of the obvious problems that they are confronted with insofar as urban living is concerned, that they would not otherwise be conscious of.

I assume that when the Minister indicates that he's looking at not this kind of program, some similar kinds of programs, that he would fully conscious of the need for providing those additional programs.

In another area, I would like to ask the Minister whether there are any plans under way to enter into any negotiations with the Federal Government to provide the Federal Government and the Federal Parks with furniture; enter into contracts with them for the sale of furniture, supplies etc., metal work, that would be produced in this plant. I know that you are providing them to the Provincial Parks. I know that a few years ago there was, I think, some discussion with the federal personnel to see if there could be some further expansion that would involve the provision of the materials from this plant to Federal Parks as well. Maybe the Minister can advise whether or not that is presently the case.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I have to reiterate two or three things I've said which I think answers

the question. First of all, we want a good assessment of the operation at that plant and the people and the attitudes and the thoughts of the people that are in that plant. We also want to determine, and the question was asked — it was a good one — and I just don't have the answer; are we supplying 100 percent of what the Provincial Parks want. We can suppose that at 60 percent, or 70, or 80, or 90, whatever; I have no idea whether it's 30 or 40. We may find when I get that question answered on how well we've done since 1978 to 1980, what further has to be done to make the plant more attractive to the clientele going in, and make their opportunities greater when they come out. We have to answer those basic questions. And keeping in the mind the answer I gave to the Member for Rupertsland, that the high priority is not on the commercial sale side; the high priority is on introducing people to work habits, and introducing them to the use of their hands in a trade that we think will be useful to them when they get out. Those three parts, I think, answer the question.

That's why I am saying to the Member for Selkirk, that we are talking about two very useful trades here. Maybe when we get into developing something in the inner city, we should be looking at six trades or eight trades or ten trades, or maybe we should be looking at an introduction to them all to see what people want. A lot of the people that we're dealing with have never had the opportunity to involve themselves in any trade. So I have all kinds of ideas in my head, which I haven't put forward yet, of the kinds of training, the types of opportunity, the types of familiarization in situations that should be created within the city for that inner city core thing. This, we think is doing a reasonably good job. We want to analyze it, we've spent a lot of money and the previous government spent a lot of money, and nobody has ever really gone out and interviewed all the clientele, both on their way in, how well they were received, what they thought of the program and what they thought of the instructors, how comfortable they felt when they went out, how successful they were, how were they treated in their future employment, why they quit, why they went back home. Did they, after two months feel comfortable enough to get out on their own? There's a whole host of questions that just haven't been answered.

MR. PAWLEY: I don't intend to prolong this, I just want to comment that I'm somewhat disappointed, I'm not pointing the finger either at the Minister or any previous Minister, that in fact this analysis has not been done, because I would have hoped that we would have that kind of information available to us because the plant has been in operation for I guess, 12, 13 years, 1968 to the present time.

My own impression personally, having had some contact with those involved, is that it's been quite successful. There are certainly those that do not succeed but a high portion do enter into the job market and in fact make a real contribution as a result of the skills that they learn at the plant.

Secondly, I would hope that in addition to the inner city core that the Minister would look at other areas of high underemployment to see whether the same kind of principle could be developed, for instance in parts of the parklands, parts of Northern Manitoba, and eastern Manitoba. This, I think is one

of the most effective ways of reducing unemployment and welfare, not necessarily speaking in terms of the short term, the present generation, but in order to build that kind of environment that families eventually, not one generation and the next generation, become gainfully employed, and at the same time being entered into urban life.

I say, and I don't want to be repetitive, that this project, I think, has much to offer by way of example, to reduce unemployment, human waste, and restore to people talents and skills so they can contribute to their provincial community, which seems to me should be, I'm sure, the objective of all members of this Legislature to insure that residents of the province receive every opportunity to contribute their maximum abilities and skills rather than permit those skills to go undeveloped through their lifetime.

I want to assure the Minister that he certainly has my total support in any projects of this nature that he would be undertaking.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (3)(a) — pass; (3)(a)(b) — pass; (3)(c) — pass; (4)(a) — the Member for Burrows. Just a moment.

The Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: If the Member for Burrows would let me read my opening statement on the — (Interjection)— that's the routine we've followed and all the members have found it reasonably informative.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK (Burrows): Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MacMASTER: The objectives of the Private Sector Youth Employment program are to reduce seasonal youth unemployment levels, to stimulate the creation of new jobs for youth within the private sector, to increase practical work experience opportunities for youth, to increase the income of youth to enable them to return to school, should they choose, and to stimulate the creation of new jobs for youth within the private sector. The program is designed to create greater employment opportunities for youth between the ages of 16 and 24 via financial incentives to private sector employers to partially subsidize wages for jobs which could otherwise not have been created.

The resulting new opportunities have positive effects in lowering unemployment rates for youth between May and October and providing young people with good work experience, skills, contacts and references, to better equip them for eventual fulltime participation in the labour force.

During the past year, program staff have developed and revised application and claim forms as well as revised regulations to clarify the program's intent to ensure its integrity in application, and to clarify its scope and intent to program users.

Expanded monitoring and auditing functions have strengthened program controls. Surveys and evaluations are being conducted to determine program effectiveness, clarity, and accessibility to employers.

With respect to staffing, there were three staff man years in the program last year, we are requesting five staff man years, an increase of two for 1981-82. The

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

two additional staff are clerical positions that we feel are required.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Chairman, in dealing with this item and with matters of general application to youth, youth training, youth employment opportunities, I think that some general comments do have to be made. There was a better opportunity for that type of debate at one time, up until a couple of years ago when the Estimates were set up differently, when one was able to, under a specific item, debate the overall issue of human development, in particular human development as it applies to youth, but given the Estimates as they're set up now, we do not appear to have quite the same opportunity. —(Interjection)— Well, the point that I'm making, Mr. Chairman, is once upon a time we had an item called Opportunities for Human Development, and under the umbrella of that item it took in, well, some appropriations which are not part of this Honourable Minister's department, that's true, namely Student Aid, but it did include the Youth Secretariat, Special Programs, New Careers, Special Projects, Community Education and the like.

Anyway, we'll try our best to make a comparison between what had been done and what is being done and hopefully thereby, to determine what progress the Minister is making within that area.

Now, it would seem, Mr. Chairman, and I hope that I am not transgressing the rules of the committee by sort of taking an overall view of what's remaining, because it's all so closely integrated, because in all of the items we are dealing with youth programs, but I think that it's quite apparent to us that in what's before us in the Estimates this year, really does reflect about a 66 percent reduction in youth programs over the past four years. That is from 1977 to 1981. As I've indicated to you, Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to transgress the rules of the committee, but I think it should be pointed out that in 1977, for the programs which the Minister has within his Estimates, Private Sector Youth Employment, Employment Youth Services, New Careers, etc., he has about \$7.5 million. For the same programs in 1977, there was an appropriation of \$8.5 million plus an additional, approximately \$5 million for special projects, 1.9 plus 2.8 plus one-fifth of a million for student aid.

So what I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, if you take \$8.5 million of 1977 dollars and translate them into 1981 you're looking at something in the order between \$11 million and \$12 million. And then if you add the programs which over the years that had been scrapped, which is another \$5 million, so you add that to the \$8.5 which gives you \$13.5 million and you translate that into 1981 dollars, you're looking at something bordering on or perhaps even exceeding \$20 million. So on that basis, Mr. Chairman, I say that over the past four years there has been a 66 percent reduction.

Now, I know that with respect to this particular item that we're looking at now, the Minister will say, well that is one that this government was particularly concerned about and I'd really beefed up and so forth, and he may be right, that there is more money in the Private Sector Youth Employment Program than there was previously. But the fact still remains, that in terms of the total dollars spent on youth oriented programs, on programs designed to do the

type of thing that the Private Members' Resolution of the Honourable Member for St. Matthews, which we debated in the House today, purports to do, there is less money for that type of thing; for those types of programs.

So I'm mentioning that at this point in time, Mr. Chairman, because I think that we have to keep the overall objectives, aims and objectives of human development programs in mind, when we deal with each of the items that appear in the Estimates on a line-by-line basis, because it's quite apparent that even though, if we compare one line with another identical line of four years ago, that it may appear to show an increase, But if one makes an overall comparison, putting all of these programs in one package, comparing what the Minister proposed to do in the fiscal year 1981-82, with what had been done in the fiscal year 1977-78, there is in fact a 66 percent reduction. (Interjection)— Yes, figure it out.

MR. MacMASTER: Well, Mr. Chairman, the NDP and myself, sometimes talk about facts and figures and we always disagree on them and I guess the Progressive Party's facts and figures, wherever they are. The facts that we have as it relates to, now, I don't know what all the Member for Burrows is talking about, there may be other things in other areas, but I think the important figure — and I'd like the Member for Burrows to go back and dig into his records — important figures are the number of young people that are employed.

In 1976-77 there was 5,318 youth employed in the Province of Manitoba under the government programs. In 1977-78, sadly enough, that dropped to 4,766. In 1978-79 it jumped to 9,687. In 1979-80 it jumped to 10,557 and this last year we came out of a year of employment under our various programs of 13,845.

So since 1976-77, and I don't know how we find the figures that the Member for Burrows is talking about, but in 1976-77 there were 5,318 young people employed one way or another through government assistance; 5,318, and last year we had 13,845. I thought, regardless of whether the official Opposition and the Member for Burrows, with his party, I thought the objective — we could put philosophical stuff out of the way — I thought the objective was really to try and get young people working. (Interjection)— Well, it haven't finished. The numbers that we have and I suppose there might be others in other departments, but the numbers that we have is that there was \$4,118,700 spent on youth employment in 1976-77. Now it's important to relate \$4,118,000 to 5,000 jobs; 5,300.

In 1980-81 we had \$6,500,000; I'm cutting out the hundreds. So in 1976-77 the NDP spent \$4,118,000 to create 5,300 jobs. We spent \$6,500,000 to create 13,845 jobs. Does the Member for Burrows really care if we can do it for \$5 million or \$6 million or \$7 million or \$4 million. Is he not really interested in the number of young people that are working?

The other particular point . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Point of order. The Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: I wonder if the Minister could provide us with the basis of his statistics, because

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

I'm looking at his own publication, 1980 Annual Report, Department of Labour and Manpower, where it's pointed out that for expenditure of \$4,278,000 . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order. You'd be out of order.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's a point of order when the Minister . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, you were requesting information. It's not a point of order. 3.(a)

MR. MacMASTER: The one final point that the Member for Burrows should remember, that when the NDP was running a lot of their youth programs, I suppose they were doing them as well as they thought they could, under the circumstances. They might have changed their approach at a later date also, but they didn't. The fact was, part of their major costs for less students, was the fact that you were employing at full salary so many of the students. Now the rationale is simple. There was 4,500 or 5,000 or something — the numbers are there, that we paid \$1.50 towards their salary. Whereas what the NDP was trying to do was to give youth employment, but to pay their full salaries, so that throws your rationale of dollars for youth. The interesting numbers are the numbers of young people that are working.

I would think, I would really sincerely ask the Member for Burrows to consider. It's the number of kids that are working, the young people that are working; that's the issue at stake. (Interjection)— Well, I can go into the Private . . . if you want to ask that question; that's an excellent question.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'd like the Minister to give us an indication of where he obtains his statistics, because in his own publication, the 1980 Annual Report of the Department of Labour and Manpower, on page 63, The Manitoba Private Sector Youth Employment Program, it's pointed out to the government for an expenditure of \$4.2 million created 5,400 jobs. Where are the other figures which he is referring to, where he claims that for \$6 million they produced some 13,000-plus jobs?

MR. MacMASTER: Good question. The member should appreciate what heading under the Estimates we're dealing with. We're dealing with Private Sector Youth Program, the specific item he referred to in the book. He's absolutely correct. That's a Private Sector Youth Program cost for those number of students. As we get into the rest of the Estimates, you'll find that there were more students than more money. And this is the objection that the Member for Burrows had, that it's not all lumped into one.

I wasn't trying to de-lump it and confuse anybody. I actually thought, that logic told me that the Members of the Opposition would rather have piece by piece by piece so they can zero right in, they know what the heck they're talking about, they know what they can grind away at, what they're happy with and say the heck with and pass. That was my logic in having it broken up.

MR. BOSTROM: Well, my request to the Minister is still to provide us with the statistics and the basis of those statistics, which he just quoted to the committee, because they do not seem to make logical sense to me, when you quote in your report that for \$4.2 million, you've provided 5,400 jobs and suddenly you jump to 13,000 jobs with an expenditure of another \$2 million. What programs are you talking about, when you're referring to the 13,000 jobs?

MR. MacMASTER: If the member will look in his Estimates book, the one right in front of him, he'll see that there's other Youth Employment Programs that are following and if you add them up at the end, hopefully they come to the figure of \$6,518,000.00.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Minister of Highways.

HON. DON ORCHARD Pembina: Mr. Chairman, I just want to take this opportunity and I really appreciate the Member for Burrows brining up this topic. We can go back four years ago and for an expenditure of a little over \$4.1 million, the government of the day managed to employ some 5,300 or create some 5,300 jobs.

Now under our Minister's program, in which we provide an incentive to people to hire students, some \$6.5 million, and we constantly hear from time-to-time how the value of the dollar is eroding, so that in four years we might well equate the \$4.1 million spent in 1976 to the \$6.5 million spent last year as being fairly constant dollars, and here under our program we have 13,800 jobs created.

And I think that all political rhetoric aside, that even the most dogmatic adherent to paying people 100 percent wages, such as I hope the Member for Burrows is not one of those, has to admit that the taxpayer of Manitoba and the youth of Manitoba, and that's the important component of this whole student employment program is, the students are certainly much better served by the program that we've instituted in the last couple of years, where 13,800 jobs are available and partially funded by the Provincial Government, rather than some 5,300 jobs. And I might go back and point out some of the unique features of the previous administration's student employment program.

I remember that very well, because I happened to take part in that one back in those glorious days of 1976. What we were paying students to do, in our area, was to paint buildings and there were more barns and graneries painted in Thompson municipality that summer, than probably has ever been painted before. And the idea of a student employment program is to give a student some kind of job experience, so that they can go to their employer in years future and say to that employer, I have had this and this and this summer job employment experience, therefore I am valuable to you and your firm. Under the NDP program students could go and say that I painted all summer; I slapped paint on graneries and barns and fences and everything else.

Under our program, we didn't have such make work programs. We offered the private sector the ability to hire those students and pay a portion of their wages so that students would learn how to operate machinery, take up construction skills and a

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

wide variety of very useful skills, that they could come to their employers at a future date and point out some very positive job experience, that was valuable to them, that was valuable to their future job, to the future job they may want to take on.

The students coming out of our program, the 13,800 of them, that are coming out of our program, can go to future employers and show to those future employers that they have had some meaningful job experience, that they've had a job experience which can be utilized in the future and is excellent reference. They're not jobs that have been created to paint buildings that didn't need painting. And I think that the Minister deserves a lot of credit, in his efforts for making the \$6.5 million that we have spent in the last fiscal year, go towards helping 13,800 students obtain gainful employment and employment that they can go and use as a positive credential towards future employment and future training, and I believe the Minister deserves a great deal of credit for this kind of a program.

It certainly has fit the bill for two-and one-half times the number of students and we're getting into this two-and one-half times one. And this is one time that I'll agree with the old socialist formula that was well espoused in the glorious years from 1969 to 1977, where nobody should have two-and-one-half times one in the wage scale.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend the Minister of Labour and Manpower of the Province of Manitoba for adhering to that two-and-one-half times one formula in employing two-and-one-half times the number of students that were ever available under any student employment program that our socialist friends had in their years. Two-and-one-half times one has been well served by this Minister and I congratulate him.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Chairman, you know, I wasn't aware that the painting was a trade or a craft of less ranking somewhat less down the scale than others and I'm not —(Interjection)— well, now, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister is talking about 5,000 painters, and he knows damn well there were not 5,000 painters. They were doing a variety of jobs and that was one of them, which is just as significant and just as important and just as valuable as carpentry or learning to operate and getting experience in operating a certain type of machine or whatever. But what I would like to ask the Minister, when he talks about his 13,000 jobs, could he translate that in relation to — the expression used to be man months, but I don't know, is that a sexist expression today — but person months, weeks, whatever, people months, people days, because you know, Mr. Chairman, you can create 13,845 one-day jobs. You can create 13,845 one-week jobs, one-month jobs, there's a vast difference. But now the Minister of Transportation is expressing disagreement. The Minister knows full well that you can have a job for one — now if the Minister is including a one-day job or a one-week job as one job and you add up several hundred of those, well there's 1,000 jobs.

So I think that to make a more accurate comparison between what was done in 1977 and

what was done in 1980, I think that the Minister does have to relate the number of bodies employed and the length of time that they worked, and that way he'll be able to give us a meaningful comparison. (Interjection)— That is the question.

MR. MacMASTER: In 1978, under the Private Sector Youth Program, the average working period of the students involved in the Private Sector Youth Program was 8.6 weeks. In 1979, the average working period under the Private Sector Youth Program was 9.6 weeks and in 1980 the best calculations we can give now and we haven't totally reviewed it, but the best calculation we have to date is exactly 10.6 weeks, so we've been gaining a week a year on an average throughout the Private Sector Youth Program.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Burrows

MR. HANUSCHAK: One further question: what are the criteria in terms of eligibility to qualify for assistance under this program. In other words, what are the criteria for the employer because it is the employer, I presume, who is the applicant, to obtain the benefits under this program?

MR. MacMASTER: We wanted it to be a newly created job, we do not want it to replace people that are permanently there, it will be ages between 16 & 24.

MR. HANUSCHAK: How does the Minister know those were newly created jobs?

MR. MacMASTER: We have last year and we prepared it this year, a review of the entire operation, we're monitoring the jobs and we're auditing on a spot check basis much more thoroughly this year than we have in the past two years.

MR. HANUSCHAK: One further question, I believe some other honourable members want to ask questions.

Could the Minister define, you know, what does he mean by newly created job? If I just may elaborate for a second. I would presume that if there was an obvious vacancy where somebody quit a week or two ago, that filling that vacancy is not a newly created job, but if the employer managed to live with that vacancy for six months or a year, and then decided to fill that vacancy, would that constitute a newly created job?

MR. MacMASTER: Well, the first thing we've done that wasn't done in years gone by is that the employer has to certify in fact that this is something in addition to what he would employed. In addition to that, we review all the applications and access to the best of our ability whether in fact it is something additional to what he would have required; and just for the information of the Committee, during our screening process, we threw out over 100 applications which we didn't feel fell into the category. Now, the Member for Burrows might say "You betcha, but I'll bet there were 115 " and I say to him very candidly, "Maybe, there was 115." We're doing the very best humanly possible, we think we've got it under control and we tell you very candidly,

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

very honestly that we threw out over 100 applications which we for good reason knew that that wasn't newly created jobs. Because it doesn't matter what program is in place, there are the abusers in society.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Were employers such as E. P. Taylor, and Mr. Weston, were they eligible for assistance under this program?

MR. MacMASTER: I'm not sure if E.P. Taylor operates a heck of a lot of things in Manitoba, but if in fact he did and if in fact he was creating jobs, I don't have anything philosophically against E.P. Taylor creating jobs for children or young people. To give the member just a idea of, and I'll just give him some of the occupations that the young people were involved in. The largest one was farming, horticultural, and animal husbandry operations; service occupations; sales occupations; clerically related occupations; occupations in sports and recreation; artistic, literary and performing arts; occupations in medicine and health; teaching related occupations; occupations in social sciences and related fields; occupations in natural science, engineering and mathematics; managerial administrative related occupations; mining, including oil and gas field related operations; processing occupations; machining and related occupations; production, fabricating, assembling, repair occupations; constructions trades occupations; transportation equipment operating occupations; material handling related occupations; fishing, hunting, trapping related occupations; forestry and logging operations. That's the general idea of the kind of categories that they fall into.

MR. HANUSCHAK: And a lot of those jobs could have involved painting.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: I'm interested in the statistics the Honourable Minister is presenting, because in his own report as I referred to earlier, it does refer to 5400 jobs being created under this program, the Private Sector Youth Employment Program for a total expenditure of \$4.2 million. So for the other \$2. million plus, which the department spent, I assume that they created 8400 jobs with that. Is that correct?

MR. MacMASTER: You'll have to excuse me. I've been trying to get the answer to the question before the question came and I didn't hear the last part of it.

MR. BOSTROM: My question was for \$4.2 million apparently 5,400 jobs were created, which are reasonably comparable with the program as operated under the previous administration. Now for an additional \$2 million plus the Minister is suggesting, I believe, that there was an additional 8,400 jobs created to make a total of 13,800. Can the Minister indicate under which appropriation those jobs were created?

MR. MacMASTER: Employment and Youth Services at the top of the next page, coming right up behind you.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, the Minister seemed to be indicating, in response to the question from the Honourable Member for Burrows, that all the jobs that were created were of an average of ten weeks or eight weeks, or whatever over the period. At least he seemed to be suggesting they were quite lengthy work periods. Is the Minister suggesting that for \$2. million in the Youth Program, \$2,157,100 that 8,400 jobs of a duration of 8 weeks each were created?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, if the member would wait till I would get on to the other sector, I will explain how the other jobs were created, and again just to put the record straight, in 1978 it was averaging 8.6 weeks per job, and in 1980 it was averaging 10.6 weeks per job under this precise program. The other averages are better and we'll get to them in time.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: 4. (a) — pass — the Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: While we're still on this program, I'd ask the Minister why he has reduced the program this year from what was an expenditure of \$4.2 million according to his annual report to a proposed expenditure in the 1981- 82 fiscal year of \$2.9 million?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, what we have done every year is come in about \$3. million. The Member for Rupertsland was the Minister responsible for Renewal Resources at one time and he knows how he handled his Forestry Protection, but I do a similar thing with this, have never made any qualms about it. We come in at a good figure, and if I need any more — the member will remember last year — I went back to Cabinet for two \$1 million special orders and I think, if I recall right, either the Member for Rupertsland or somebody else asked me about those precise things last year in the House in question period. We have started out generally in the neighbourhood of \$3 million. If the thing works well and takes off, fine.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (4)(a) — pass — the Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, the Minister indicates in his Annual Report that to ensure program objectives were being met, a monitoring function was conducted in addition to the normal program audit, and a survey was also conducted. Can the Minister indicate if there was a report on this survey and if such report would be available to members?

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the same question was asked last year. The same answer was given. The answer was that at the end of the fiscal year when all facts and figures are in and the report is ready, I will forward it to the members opposite, we will make it public. I give him the same commitment this year. We fulfilled our promise last year. I intend to fulfill the promise again this year; that will be made public.

MR. BOSTROM: Can the Minister indicate if there have been any changes in the guidelines of the

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

monitoring process since the first year of this program when it was made aware to the Minister that the Conservative Party of Manitoba were eligible for grants under this program?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I mentioned to the member that over 100 applications were thrown out this year. Last year, I can't tell you whether there was 15 or 20, and I suspect in the first year there was none. That in itself indicates that there's a fair amount of screening taking place. In addition to that, we have people who are travelling around spot-checking just to make sure that the thing is running well. We think when we have finished our analysis of it this year, that it will be very complete and very satisfactory to all people who wish to observe it.

MR. BOSTROM: Can the Minister indicate in the monitoring function that his department carries out, and the spot-checks that are carried out by his staff, if they found any unusual uses of the funds or any cases where the department had to take action to recover funds?

MR. MacMASTER: There's somewhere in the neighbourhood of 25 or 30 that we are giving specific attention to this year, and that's all I can say at the moment. We are auditing them very thoroughly.

MR. BOSTROM: Is the Minister saying that no action has been taken to this point, that a simple audit is being done?

MR. MacMASTER: Not a simple audit, a very thorough audit to see that the program wasn't abused.

MR. BOSTROM: I have a question with respect to the administration of the program and that is, what sort of monitoring procedure is established to ensure that each job that is created is really a new job and not simply a job which is already in place which an employer is making an application to get a subsidy for?

MR. MacMASTER: That's exactly the answer that I gave to the Member for Burrows; that we review the applications as thoroughly as possible. We spot-check them throughout the province in the course of the period of time, and if there are any questionable ones, we audit them, very very thoroughly.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Chairman, I would think that another criterion which one could apply to measure the effectiveness of programs of this type would be to, I suppose on a region by region basis, if it's possible to do some sort of an evaluation of say the average income on a per family basis or whatever, the number of students unemployed seeking employment for the summer holidays and the number that were employed. For example, you might have one region where the average income per family let's say is \$15,000, and you have 2,000 students looking for work, and within that region you

find 2,000 jobs. okay, so every student gets a job. Let's assume that it is a ten-week job for the bulk of the summer months. In another region, it might be Interlake, it might be another region in Manitoba, it might be Northern Manitoba, you might have a region where the average income per family is half of that, \$7,500, and there too you have 2,000 students, but within that region only half the students get jobs. Then I think the Minister understands the point I'm trying to make.

So then it raises the question as to whether the program really is effective, is really doing what one would hope it would do — assist that student who is in the greatest need of assistance, because all it is doing is providing jobs to students who perhaps are in a position to find ways and means of financing their education by other means, but at the same time it's leaving a large block of students in an area where the average income is lower, where the opportunity just isn't there for the families to earn the same income, and those kids in that area just aren't given the job opportunities. Has the Minister done that type of a comparison, say comparing the Interlake with WestMan, comparing Parklands with another, comparing NorMan with another, and so forth, so we can get some idea as to whether this program really is benefiting the students in those areas that are in greatest need of benefit of this kind; whatever benefit there is to be accrued from it?

MR. MacMASTER: The report that we filed for 1979 showed precisely that; the numbers in the different regions of the province. Parkland 400 — I'm just using round figures — Southwest 600, Interlake 400, Southwest close to 300, North Central over 150, Winnipeg was 1,200, South Central was 350, and the far northern side was 120. That was tabled last year, that report.

MR. HANUSCHAK: That's the number of jobs; is that correct? Would the Minister know how many students in each of those areas, or people, because it's not necessarily students because he's talking about age 16 to 24 category I believe?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Does he have numbers that would indicate how many still remained unemployed, and then we could get some comparison? In other words whether this program provided jobs for 50 percent, 60 percent, 80 or whatever.

MR. MacMASTER: We don't have those precise figures. We have the figures that were involved in this particular program. When we get on into the other programs you will find the figures that were involved in those programs, totalling 13,000 and some odd. You will also find hundreds, thousands, I don't know, of young people who just themselves get out and get jobs. They don't involve themselves with any of these types of programs at all. You have large companies, I know Inco, HB and S, Sherritt-Gordon, take on, I'm just guessing, 200, 300, 400 students during the course of the summer. You have other major employers who take on specifically employees' children during the course of summer; there's a whole host of things that's going on. I think, and I don't know the details, that the Federal Government

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

in fact has some type of youth program going on too.

So you get down somewhere some day to the figure, I suppose, of those who claimed that there was no job available anywhere at all and I don't know what that figure is. I'm just not sure how you would ever determine what that figure is.

MR. HANUSCHAK: The reason why I asked that question, Mr. Chairman, is the 13,000 figure of the 16 to 24 age group, that accounts for less than 10 percent of the population of 16 to 24 and I'm just speaking off the top of my head in relating that to school enrolment on a year-by-year basis; I would suspect that there's something in the order of about 20,000 persons per year in Manitoba. It must be that. There are a million people in Manitoba.

The school enrolment is in the order of a quarter million, so you're looking at about 20,000 per year, roughly. So 13,000 really isn't that high a percentage of that age group. Now granted, from 16 to 24, a large percentage of them are still in schools; 16, 17, 18, most of them are still in high school, others are at university. But it still does leave a number of unanswered questions as to the effectiveness of this program in terms of meeting the employment needs of the people within that age range.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I don't like comparing years by years but I suspect, and if the member really wants, I'll try and find the number in '75-76 when his government created 5,000. If he wishes, I'll try and find the number of youth 16 to 24 in that age group in that particular year and we'll compare it with the number that were in the year 1980 when there was 13,800. What we do have for his interest, and I think it's extremely interesting for all Committee members, in May, there's May, June, July, August, September, October, we took the number of youth; we took the unemployment rate and we worked it out as to what the variety of programs that are in place, did to the unemployment rate in that youth age group. Now am I clear in what we did, to see if we had an impact. You know when your monthly statistics come out, where you're at in the 16 to 24 year age group.

So here's what happened in May of 1979 and this was filed too, but just so we have an idea of what we're doing. In May of 1979, and this is only the Private Youth Program, the unemployment rate dropped by .4 in that age group, and while that could be for a variety of reasons, you don't feel super good if it goes down .4, but it's certainly better than going up.

In June the unemployment rate in that age group went down 1.5 percent, pretty significant you know, and this is just this Private Sector Youth Program that we're relating it to.

In July, the unemployment rate went down by 2.3; in August — and this is during your peak months — it went down 2.4; and in September it was 1.3 and in October where all your youth programs were going out, it was .2. So I suggest to the member, there is absolutely no question that something had a pretty good effect, this program, and that's the figures for this program.

We have the other 8,000 in the other programs. You have young people that are out hustling around getting themselves jobs. Mr. Chairman, there's

absolutely no question that it had a great effect and if the member wants sometime at his leisure, to sit down — and I'm not being sarcastic with his element of intelligence, I'm just simply saying those charts are sometimes difficult to relate to — I'll show him month by month when the programs were coming in, what happened, and the picture is there as clear as hell.

It's difficult just to sit around and throw figures at each other but if you had the charts in front of you, you would see what the youth programs are doing, there is just absolutely no question. During your days if your people had wanted to research that sort of thing, you would have seen a decline too because there was an effect; you people couldn't employ one way or another 5,300 or 5,400 young people without having an effect on the unemployment rate.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (4)(a) — pass — the Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Minister for his offer and I will take him up on it when it's convenient for him and me and do that type of an analysis. Has the Minister been able to obtain — now we're looking at the 16 to 24 age group so obviously we're looking, not only at the high school or the university student who is seeking summer employment in order to make his contribution towards the financing of his education, but we're also looking at young people on the threshold of entering into the labour force on a full-time basis — has the Minister been able to determine whether this program has had any success in establishing young people in jobs under this program that ultimately led to full-time employment?

MR. MacMASTER: In 1979, and we'll give you the figures again for 1980, but in 1979 members of the Opposition, in fact two or three of them personally came to me in the hallways and said to me, it's good — they didn't want to say that in the Legislature and I understand that — it was about 12 percent retained employment during a 1979 analysis of the program.

This year if it's 10 percent, 11 percent, 12 percent, so that very factor that the Member for Burrows is talking about, is a pretty key thing because all young people aren't going back to school. Some choose for a whole host of reasons, not to continue their education. I have a daughter at home that's graduating this year from high school who has no intentions of going back to school next year. She just doesn't know what the hell she wants to be. Some day I hope she does go back and get something else. So there are lots of young people who, at that stage, do not intend The other beautiful part about the whole damn thing is that young people going into reasonably good sort of jobs, they're getting into meaningful sort of jobs, just the spirit of the young people being involved, a lot of employers who weren't necessarily going to take on any young people but because of some assistance, and let's be honest about it, do, and they find damn it all, those young people are pretty good for business. and they keep them on. That, I think, is the real beauty of the whole thing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (4)(a) — pass; (4)(b) — pass; 3.(e)(1)(a) — pass — the Member for Rupertsland.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

Excuse me, the Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: I've got my opening remarks, Mr. Chairman.

The Employment and Youth Services Branch is primarily responsible for increasing employment opportunities for youth by developing and implementing employment oriented programs and placement activities. As well, the branch increases the effectiveness and efficiency of its programs through the development of interlinkages with relevant organizations and agencies. The Employment and Youth Services Branch provides an administrative base for a wide range of major programs and services.

1. The Employment Services Office is a centralized student summer employment registration and referral service for university, community college and high school students. It is anticipated that it will also offer a placement service for high school students seeking part-time employment during the school year.

The Manpower division southern region field unit is responsible for the delivery of all programs and services offered by the Manpower Division of the department to the population of Southern Manitoba.

STEP-in-government and northern summer education are summer employment programs that provide a meaningful career-related work experience for students. Hire-a-Student Job Centre Programs provides a summer job placement and referral service for youth in rural and northern communities in the province.

5. Volunteers in the Public Service Program establishes volunteer components in selected provincial departments and agencies which supplement and improve the quality of their services; and the Manitoba-Northlands Travel Program awards travel grants to school groups from northern and remote communities to provide them with an educational view of other Manitoba locations. Last year there were 23; this year there's 23.

Now that is more like what the Member for Burrows wanted, Mr. Chairman. He wanted an overall youth employment variety of programs and they are all in here except for the one that we've talked about, the Private Sector Youth Program.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister indicated when we got to this section that he would explain the statistics with respect to the number of jobs created and the number of man weeks, or person weeks or whatever.

MR. MacMASTER: The Employment Services office placed 1,984 students in jobs within the Provincial Government. Of these, 942 were in projects funded by STEP in Government; the remaining 1,042 were in jobs where funds were contained in the budgets of individual departments; so there were 1,984 jobs within government.

The High School Part-time Placement Program, we haven't even got into that yet. The Hire-A-Student Job Centre Program; this is where we have 42 job centres scattered throughout the entire Province of Manitoba. It employed 42 youths as managers of rural and northern job centres. The program found — and these are facts — the program found jobs for 6,291 youth; 4,733 were full time, and 1,558 were part time; found them all within the private sector.

The member may be aware that we have these jobs centres scattered over the province. Maybe I could get a list of where they are.

The Northern Summer Education Program employed 30 youths who planned and implemented an education recreation program for 219 children from northern communities. Of the 30 youth employed, 6 were northern youths over 16 years of age who participated in a counsellor-in-training component. The Northern Youth Corps had 303 jobs, plus 36 youth supervisors.

I haven't added them all up but they sure as heck better come up to the figure I gave you.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I think to a certain extent the Minister then was comparing apples and oranges when we was saying that for the \$6,000 he seemed to be suggesting that the government had employed or created directly 8,400 jobs in addition to the 5,400 that were through the Private Youth Placement Program.

MR. MacMASTER: There is nothing misleading about what I said. I said through our programs 13,800, if that's the number, through our assistance those number of jobs were one way or another located and young people were working through our efforts. I didn't say we paid them all; in fact, we debated whether the NDP's philosophy of paying them full salaries was as good as other efforts that could take place for lesser money. I thought we had sort of agreed, I didn't see the Member for Rupertsland objecting, when I said the objective is to employ and get employed as many youth within the province as possible for a reasonable price. That's what it's all about and it doesn't matter what party is in power that should be their objective. Through these wide variety of ways and assistance in co-ordinating our efforts in government, out government, private sector, lining them up, putting employers together with employees, the whole host of programs that we were involved in, we created 13,800 jobs.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, there is certainly a difference between assisting a student in finding a job and creating a job. I understand the Minister's statistics now, and I still say that he's comparing apples and oranges when he compares the two figures because the calculations that were done, the statistics that were used to determine the number of jobs created through the government programs in the years 1976-77 and so on, were simply to determine those jobs that were created directly and there were not additional things added in like the Minister is adding in here.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister, with respect to the Youth and Student Employment Program, in particular, how many jobs were created and how many work weeks were created for the amount of money that was budgeted last year of \$2 million.

MR. MacMASTER: Through the entire set of programs that we have talked about, and I haven't broken the figure up, but it seems we're talking about round figures, it was 8,000 some odd through the other \$2 million worth of efforts.

Mr. Chairman, we are not comparing apples and oranges unless you want me to break down the

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

\$5,000 figure that you had in 1976-77, and please believe me, it was every type of variety of program that you people could put in place, or chose to put in place; assistance, paying, lining them up, whatever you did, that was the total program that you took credit for in all ways; and rightly so. It's the same number that I am saying that my staff are responsible for 13,845 people being employed. You people were responsible in 1976-77 for 5,300, and that included the different ways you did it put together and the different ways that we did it.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could provide us with copies of his statistics and the method of calculating the statistics because I believe that there are certainly different ways of using these, and I think that the Minister may be employing the best advantage for himself of course in the way he's presenting them.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, I assure the member, seeing that he's asked the question, that I will break down how the NDP took credit in 1976-77 for 5,318; I will break that down for him and get to him, certainly not within the next half hour. I have broken down for him how we were responsible, one way or another for 13,845; and I'm just asking him to take my word for it, that their 5,300 in 1976 was done in every type of conceivable method that you felt appropriate at that time. So it's not apples and oranges. You can pick out of your 5,300 a 2,000 block or a 1,000 block, or a 500 or a 600, but all added together that's the number of jobs.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the number of work weeks, I think the Minister was suggesting, in his earlier comments, that the number of work weeks per student he has statistics on and they were apparently better than the ones he had given us before, I wonder if he could give us some indication, from the statistics he has in front of him for this category of job finding for students, how many work weeks were made available to students through this process and, at the same time, how the statistics he is using were calculated?

MR. MacMASTER: The only stats that we have on the other programs, and I gave the member the one on the Private Sector Youth Program, from 8.6 to 9.6 to 10.6, that one I gave. The 1,984 students within government averaged 14 weeks; that's approximately 2,000 young people that had 14 weeks. The 30 youth in the north who were involved with the Northern Summer Education Program, they worked 16 weeks. The only one I don't have, and it would be very difficult to nail it down, is the Hire-A-Student Job Centre Program which employed — the 42 youths that we employed as managers certainly worked for the entire season — but of the 6,291 that they placed, put together with employers, I haven't got that figure.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, was there any effort made to obtain that figure, to see if these students did in fact work the full summer at the jobs that were found for them, or are they short-term temporary jobs, or what were they?

MR. MacMASTER: We're working at getting those figures. That's the only one I haven't got. I had said

to the member that I would give him an idea, and I don't think he wants all 42 of the centres but I will give him an idea of where the job centres were. In the Interlake at Selkirk, Arborg, Ashern, Gimli, Stonewall, Lundar, Teulon, Beausejour, Lac du Bonnet. The South Centre was Morden, Carman, Treherne, Pilot Mound, Altona, Winkler, Morris. In the South West it was Brandon, Russell, Hamiota, Minnedosa, Virden, Melita, Deloraine, Beausejour, Killarney, Glenboro, Eriksdale, and I might as well finish them. In the Parklands there was Dauphin, Swan River, Winnipegosis, Roblin, Gilbert Plains, Ste. Rose du Lac; in South West there was Steinbach, Ste. Anne, St. Pierre; in the North Central there was Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, Neepawa; and in the north there was Thompson, Lynn Lake and The Pas. That's 42 centres, the job centres that we established throughout the province.

MR. BOSTROM: Perhaps the Minister answered this question when he was on an earlier part of his Estimates, but to what extent did these programs under this section relate to students in remote communities?

MR. MacMASTER: We discussed the Northern Youth Corps, that's the program I think precisely he's talking about. I'm guessing last year there was 288 and 26 youth supervisors; this year there was 303 and 36 youth supervisors.

MR. BOSTROM: The Minister is now referring to the previous program is he?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland, further questions.

MR. BOSTROM: Not on this section.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (1)(a) — pass; (1)(b) — pass; 3.(e)(2) — pass; 3.(e)(3)(a) — pass; 3.(e)(3)(b) — pass; 3.(f)(1) — the Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: The New Careers Branch provides training and job placement with employers in the private sector, in government departments, and in publicly funded agencies. Trainees are unskilled persons who have difficulty in getting and maintaining employment; they are recruited from the geographical area where the job is located. The training agency employers are committed to hire the trainees upon successful completion of the program. That was a very important change that we made; we wanted firm commitment that people just aren't going to take New Careers without guaranteeing employment. Jobs trained for are mainly a para-professional or technical nature; the length of the training is 6 months to 2 years; academic upgrading is directed to the needs of the job and the requirements of the employer.

Last year we set up some new procedures for the New Careers Branch; these procedures have been implemented and are working well. The procedures include a percentage split between private, publicly funded and government departmental employers. Funds for these three sources of employing bodies have been divided approximately one-third each.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

This ratio responds to and reflects the applications received by the branch.

We will continue to allow for flexibility in order to be able to respond to requests from employers. A review committee consisting of all manpower division directors has been established. This board reviews proposals and makes recommendations to the Assistant Deputy Minister for approval of new projects. Implementation or orientation workshops for supervisors of eventual employing organizations has proven successful and this will continue.

This year we began a new program to train retail store managers. This has met with a high degree of success, as all trainees are still active in place and the training employers are more than satisfied with the progress. Consideration is now being given to greatly expand this program into 1981-82.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (f)(1) — the Member for Rupertsland.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, just a couple of comments on this program. The general impression I have is that the Provincial Government has, although they've continued this program, they tend to not follow or pursue the program as vigorously as the previous government did; and it was unfortunate, the first year in which the government was in power they saw fit to terminate a number of the people who were training under the program. There is still quite a lot of underlying resentment, I might point out to the Minister, in many communities to this government because of that action. With respect to the program concept itself, I believe it's an excellent concept and one which should have been built on with somewhat more enthusiasm than this government has chosen to follow.

The New Careers concept I believe is one which, as I've said before in this Legislature, should be used in other types of training programs relating to persons that are in disadvantaged positions in society. It seems to be ideally suited to provide disadvantaged persons, someone who has had difficulty obtaining employment, with the sort of training which appears to be on-the-job type of concept which seems to appeal to people because it gives them a specific target to work towards. They know exactly what kind of job they will be moving into when they complete the training, and it appears to give them more of an incentive, I believe, in continuing through to completion of the training program.

I'm glad to see that the Minister has taken the opportunity to do a follow-up survey of New Careers graduates. I wonder if the Minister could indicate to us if a report has been prepared on this, and if so if he could make this report available to the members.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Rupertsland wasn't here when I handed out — well, the Member for Churchill can tell me whether it was 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12, whatever it was — reports that we had finalized and that precisely was one I said we hadn't finalized, along with the private sector and two or three others. When that survey is completed and the reports are completed, the member has my assurance he'll get a copy.

MR. BOSTROM: Could the Minister perhaps indicate what is the status of the survey at this

point? Is it just in the process or is the report being put up in draft form?

MR. MacMASTER: Data is being collected, it will have to be analyzed, it will have to be put together, it will be another two to three months.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, beyond the brief introduction which the Minister provided to us, I wonder if he could indicate what his attitude is towards the continuation of this program and/or the potential expansion of the program. I notice that over the years it's received rather token attention and some token increases without any real effort to make it the kind of expanded program that it probably should be; in fact, I would recommend it be a greatly expanded program because I believe it has worked well and is a concept that, because it has worked well, should be built upon and used to a greater advantage in providing opportunity to people that could utilize the opportunity. There are many many people in Manitoba that could utilize a program like this, there are many many opportunities even within the government that have not yet been explored or followed up by this government in terms of identifying positions that could be filled by people that could be trained through a program like this.

I notice that they have identified a program outside of the government, and that is in co-operation with the Hudson's Bay Company to train Native northerners in retail store management, and I think this is a good addition to the program and it's one I'm hopeful will work.

I would like the Minister to comment on what his experience with it has been so far, because certainly the experience of Native northerners in Northern Manitoba is that the Hudson's Bay Company has not, over the years, really provided them with the opportunity to move into positions of management within their operations, and as recently as the last few years, I've met people in Northern Manitoba working for the Hudson's Bay Company that have been recruited in Scotland. Not to say that there is anything wrong with people moving to Canada and working in remote locations for the Hudson's Bay Company, but it seems rather ironic that the Hudson's Bay Company, after 300 years in the north, has not been able to establish a relationship and a program that would provide the opportunity for Native northerners to move into their operation and have the same kind of opportunities as they would offer to people from other countries. So I would ask the Minister if he could comment on the success to date of that particular project within the New Careers Program.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, we're reasonably pleased with the project, it's been running about seven months. There are 14 people involved; we have not had a drop-out, which in itself tells a bit of a story; nine of the people are involved with the Bay and five are in co-ops and band stores. But it's all under the one program and I agree in part with what the Member for Rupertsland says, why the hell weren't those stores in the north looking at northern people to run their own stores over these many many years.

The Member for Rupertsland and myself could sit down for hours and talk about the destruction of

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

stores, the frustration with stores, the abuse of merchandise and the frustration of people in communities, we could spend hours talking about that because of the management of the stores. We won't get into those details now but the Member for Rupertsland knows what I'm talking about. He's been up in that country too many years not to know.

So, is it a good move? You bet it's a good move. And is it long overdue? You betcha, there's no question about that.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Chairman, I would further like to hear the Minister's comments on the program in general, because I believe that as I was saying, the New Careers Program can provide valuable opportunities to northern people and it's one which should be expanded. Generally, and particularly with respect to Native people in Northern Manitoba, I think that this program can provide some valuable opportunities.

The concept of training involved here seems to appeal to the Native people who have worked through the program, and many of them I believe, will show up in the survey of the 326 New Careers graduates which the department is surveying at this time. It would be interesting to see their comments on their experiences as a result of having moved through this program and moved on to permanent employment. I might add that this is probably the one opportunity in their life they had to really get a chance to move into permanent employment. Many of them were not young people that I'm aware of that were in the program, and this was a really unique opportunity for them.

I would say that this program, Mr. Chairman, is one which we've often pointed to as one which the government should be using as a guideline in developing new and innovative programs with respect to Native employment in particular. It's one perhaps that the Minister could take some hints from in terms of his participation in the Cabinet discussions that relate to the inner core area of Winnipeg, and when and if that program ever gets off the ground and they're relating programs for people in that area to move into training opportunities because the concept here is a workable concept, it's one which has proven itself now over the years that it's been in operation, and I would think it would be one that could be plugged in very effectively into that kind of a situation where you're dealing with much the same people that the program has been dealing with so far and you're really working with perhaps as disadvantaged a group as you would find in any remote Northern community. Many of the people have moved from the remote northern communities to the inner core, inner city area of Winnipeg, looking for opportunities and have been frustrated in their attempts and end up on Unemployment or welfare or whatever. This kind of a program could be used very effectively there, I think.

So I would ask the Minister if he's had any opportunity to look at expansion of this program in that respect — I notice he was nodding his head when I mentioned that — and if he could comment on how he would see this program working in that area.

MR. MacMASTER: As we talked about the Selkirk Training Plant, I think the possibilities and the

philosophy can be applied, and I don't know precisely how we'll end up but the philosophies can certainly be applied to the inner city core area, I would suspect.

It's going to be interesting to see the final assessment of this program. I think that we'll find similarities to what the Member for Rupertsland has said, that by and large there are a lot of people that are pretty happy that they were given this opportunity.

We're involving more of the departments or the employers now in the basic beginning and on the way through the program than ever was the case before and I said to the member, and we mean it, that we want a guarantee of a job when they're finished.

MR. BOSTROM: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I just noticed in the write-up on this program in the report from the Minister's office that in their follow-up survey the initial indication was that 76.6 percent of all graduates were employed, so that's a pretty good success rate.

The other thing, Mr. Chairman, is with respect to programs of this nature. I must express my disappointment in this government for not having had the creativity or whatever, to produce any programs of their own along these lines. Over the eight years of the New Democratic Party government, there were many attempts to develop innovative programs of training or educational nature. I think that some of them were successful, as this one obviously is, some of them were not so successful, but at least there were attempts made by the government of the day to move into areas that were untried and to develop new and innovative programs. It's disappointing to me, one who is concerned with people having an opportunity and particularly those disadvantaged persons in our society, that what I'm concerned with them having an opportunity much like the New Careers Program would offer, that this government has not seen fit in any way to utilize the services of their public servants or to utilize their own creativity in developing new and innovative programs to assist people that are disadvantaged in our society. They seem to have taken the ones that we had developed, the good ones — some of the good ones — and they've carried them on in a token way, without any real expansion or any real vigour in pursuing them and moving them along.

I'm disappointed in this Minister and I'm disappointed in the government, that they haven't seen fit to try anything new and to make any new strides in terms of new programs to assist people. I notice that the Minister did refer to his hire-a-student program under the previous section, which you know is a good idea and I commend the Minister for trying something like that, but that is really only a very simple thing to set up — Job centres — where people go and apply and you assist them to find jobs. That concept has been around for many years. The Canada Employment Centre's are a case in point. I mean you have that kind of a concept in place.

The New Careers Program was a new concept. Now I think that the government should have been able, in the three years that they've been in power so far, they should have been able to come up with at

least one new idea in terms of training, in terms of education, in terms of providing opportunities to disadvantaged persons in our society and I haven't seen that. I just have not seen that in any of the government departments and I have not seen it in this Minister's department, whether it be in Labour and Manpower or in his previous departments of Renewable Resources and Northern Affairs. There have been essentially no new initiatives and that is something which I believe people in Manitoba have noticed; people besides myself have noticed that this is not a crusading, innovative, progressive Government. It's a stand pat government. It's a government that's practised restraint and continues to practise restraint, particularly in those areas that relate to the most disadvantaged groups in our society.

I might say to their credit, they don't seem to be practising restraint to the same vicious extent that the new President of the United States seem to be indicating he's moving in. But, Mr. Chairman, I don't think it's to their credit at all, that they haven't taken any new steps. That is not commendable on this government and it certainly is something which is necessary in Manitoba. All you have to do is look around. There is some effort being made now in the area of the inner city of Winnipeg, but that is not an initiative of the Progressive Conservative Government of Manitoba; it's one in which they have been dragged into by efforts of the Federal Government it appears and to a lesser extent the City of Winnipeg. The Municipal and Provincial Governments in Manitoba appear to be dragged in, kicking and screaming into this inner core initiative.

Now maybe this Minister personally has somewhat more concern over this area than other Ministers, but for one reason or another he hasn't been able to persuade his government to do anything about those concerns, if he does have those concerns and, Mr. Chairman, that is a disappointment. I think it's obvious from my point of view, that if there are going to be any new and innovative things done in terms of education, in terms of training, in terms of opportunities for disadvantaged persons in this province, it's going to have to be done by another government because this government appears unwilling to do anything about those problems.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: 3.(f)(1) — pass; 3.(f)(2) — pass; 3.(f)(3)(a) — pass; 3.(f)(3)(b) — pass; 3.(f)(3)(c) — pass; 3.(f) — pass; 3.(g)(1) — the Honourable Minister.

MR. MacMASTER: The Career Resource Centres: The Manpower Division of my department became actively involved in the field of career planning over the past year. A new branch was established which set up an operative network of Career Resource Centres in the Province.

The first centre was piloted in Thompson, Manitoba with Northlands cost-sharing. The services of professional counsellors and the resource centre material extend throughout the region. The services have been so readily accepted that an additional counsellor has been hired six months ahead of schedule to keep up with demand.

Additional centres are budgeted for expansion into the Brandon, Dauphin and in the central location in the southwest to provide regionalization, regionalized

delivery. The policy we are following calls for a program that stimulates career awareness and combines informational material with career planning and counselling.

Our objective is to develop a full range of career programs for delivery from strategically located Career Resource Centres. The service we provide is not a duplication of any other program whether Provincial or Federal. It is very carefully structured to complement other programs now in place and to bridge gaps where they exist.

In 1981 there were two staff man years in this program area. We are requesting 11 staff man years in 1981-82, an increase of nine.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Since there is such a large increase in the number of staff, perhaps the Minister could be more specific as to the duties of the staff which exists now and the anticipated duties of the new staff.

MR. MacMASTER: There are three SMYs for the proposed Brandon Centre, a co-ordinator, a career counsellor and a career resource technician; two SMYs for the proposed South Central Area, a co-ordinator and a career counsellor; three SMYs for the proposed Dauphin centre, a co-ordinator, a career counsellor and a career resource technician.

MR. COWAN: Perhaps I can read those back to the Minister and make certain that I have them correctly, there's three for Brandon, two for the south central area, three for Dauphin.

MR. MacMASTER: And one for Winnipeg. I forgot the first one I had my hand on, a career resource technician for Winnipeg.

MR. COWAN: That's one for Winnipeg for a total of nine and that means that there'd be the same number in Thompson.

I'll just have to go back to my notes for one moment here, Mr. Chairman, because I think I recall during the Minister's opening remarks, that he said that they were going to be hiring another one in Thompson, six months ahead of schedule. Did I misunderstand the Minister?

MR. MacMASTER: We already have. I said that in these opening remarks that an additional one has been hired for Thompson.

MR. COWAN: An additional one has been hired for Thompson. So the Minister also indicated that in his opening remarks as well. I just wanted to check on that. The two that are in Thompson now, is that the full complement for the Thompson Resource Centre?

MR. MacMASTER: Three, Mr. Chairman.

MR. COWAN: Okay, I think I have the arithmetic right now, although I'm not certain. That means there's a total altogether of 12 SMYs in this branch.

Mr. Chairman, the reason I ask that is there's a discrepancy. Number 11 was given to us in the first place and now my addition adds up to 12, so I'd just like to find out wherein lies the problem.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

MR. MacMASTER: There is one assigned presently to the Fort Garry one. What happened, the Federal Government started that with the school division and got it started then that was the end of it. It was so well received in that area that they requested us to give them some assistance. It started out on a part-time basis and it's worked into a full-time position.

MR. COWAN: That full-time position is funded by the Provincial Government, so in fact there are 12 SMYs. Is that correct?

MR. MacMASTER: Thirteen. Three in Thompson, one in Fort Garry, an additional one for Winnipeg, three for Brandon, two for the south central area and three for Dauphin.

MR. COWAN: Now we have them all located. Okay, it adds up to 13.

MR. MacMASTER: I think I said that three times, all different.

MR. COWAN: Either that or I heard it three times all different, it could be one or the other, this being the last item after a long Estimates.

Perhaps the Minister can indicate what other funding is being provided for the development of these centres. We know in the one instance, in Fort Garry there was Federal funding; in Thompson it was Northlands Agreement. Is there other Federal money in the Brandon, the south central area, the Dauphin and the Winnipeg Career Resource Centres?

MR. MacMASTER: We're negotiating for 50 percent at Dauphin. We would like to see the Feds more involved in Brandon and Winnipeg.

Now my interpretation of the word "like" means for the edification of the Member for Churchill, it means that I haven't given up on trying to get Federal participation in those other programs.

The word "negotiate" means that I'm into it and there's a possibility; I haven't reached the negotiating point yet. So don't say next fall when you're talking to me, hell, you didn't tell me during Estimates that there might have been Federal input. We're saying that I'd like to see that. I haven't thought of the soft spot to go after yet, but that possibility is there.

MR. COWAN: We certainly hope that that Federal money is forthcoming, because it always means that the province is then able to do a bit more with the money that they have. The Minister says yes, and I hope he doesn't read back through some of the speeches of his colleagues whenever the New Democratic Party government went after this sort of funding and they said a tax dollar is a tax dollar and it comes from a pocket no matter where it comes from, and it doesn't matter if it's Federal or Provincial.

I hope he has more support from his colleagues in those sorts of negotiations and gaining that type of money than the previous government had, when they were Opposition. But that just shows, and I am certain that it applies to all groups, that Opposition does have a different perspective than does government.

However, in this case I can assure him that we support him in his endeavours to try to make

Manitoba's funds go further by attempting to convince or negotiate with the Federal Government, better deals and more financial involvement in programs such as this.

I've not had an opportunity yet to read through in detail, the document which the Minister tabled, and I believe the title was The Thompson Career Resource Centre Needs Assessment. As a matter of fact, I have not had the opportunity to get past the title yet, and I wish I had, but unfortunately we've been pretty busy and therefore I'd ask the Minister if he can indicate to us, exactly what assessment was necessary as per that document which originated from his department.

MR. MacMASTER: Mr. Chairman, when you're going into something new such as we're going into here, all of society needs to be aware of what you're doing. Hopefully you can get support of all of society. We were very fortunate; we walked very slow; we dealt with the School Division; we dealt with the companies; we dealt with business; we dealt with labour; we dealt with the native communities; we dealt with the churches; we dealt with organizations all over the city and ended up with a Board excellently proportioned in representing virtually all the major organizations in the City of Thompson. It took a long time to get that acceptance but I felt it was terribly important. The school of course does some counselling; Canada Manpower does some counselling; we do, in a variety of different ways, and I didn't want people thinking that we were coming in and saying that they weren't doing well. We thought that the concept of what we had to offer was extremely good; could be complimentary of a good number of other situations. We have found, by and large, if I could just keep it simple, rather than getting too technical about it, it's serving three or four or five, I guess, segments of society. The outlining areas now, we find Frontier School is very interested. A lot of people who are into a profession or trade or into a way of life and want to change that there is a substantial interest from that group. The youth, of course, are very interested, extremely interested. There's another group and that's women who have been out of the workplace for a good period of time, by choice by and large; families are getting older or finances are what they are today, they want a little better way of life and want some type of job, part time, full time whatever; aren't very sure about resume making, aren't sure about presenting themselves, aren't sure of the kinds of opportunities and the type of training they might need, the type of courses they might need. All these groups can be advised on the type of educational requirements; the areas you'd go to get them; the type of pay that might be at the end of the line, particularly when they are talking to young people, there's no sense trying to convince 600 kids in high school in Thompson — can we just use that one as an example — that engineering is a great field if, in fact, we know that engineering is pretty plugged up right now. Another thing we're finding is that a lot of young people again, when you talk about getting into the trades, a lot of young people know that there's a carpenter, there's a painter, a mechanic and an electrician but my God there's just so many variations in this technical age that we're in. My young lad is interested in conservation. God, there's

just no end to the type of conservation programs that he can get into.

So, that is basically what we've done and where we're at. I guess, busting at the seams is a loose expression but we're busy as heck. We're getting requests to start travelling around throughout the North into other communities; we're into one of your home towns, Leaf Rapids. Some of the Reserves are starting now to ask us if we would come into their areas. There was a class came down to Thompson, I think it was from Leaf Rapids too. So, the concept is being accepted which was so terribly terribly important that the base be set and set well. I'm glad it happened as quick as it did, but I have to tell the members of this Committee that I would work another year at it, to make sure that concept was accepted by everybody. I didn't want anybody feeling that we were stepping on their toes, that we were imposing anything on them. We wanted them to believe we were there to compliment what everybody was doing, and there are so many agencies that are trying to help people, and that we would be of service to people in a very very meaningful helpful way. I have no reservations; the Estimates, I guess, signify that; that it's a very successful way to go. We have been complimented by all kinds and groups of people; we haven't had a bit of sarcasm; we haven't had any flak about it; we haven't had any people criticizing it. There have been people come in that suggested occasionally a little better approaches, but it's just a remarkable concept in my viewpoint and an awful lot people deserve a lot of credit. My ADM and the director of it and the staff in Thompson and the people in Thompson, the School Division in Thompson, the Unions, the companies. It's just gone over tremendously well.

MR. COWAN: Well, having had some conversations about the Career Resource Centre with Northerners and obviously not having as many as the Minister's had or not having the opportunity to go into as much detail in the program as the Minister has had. I do know that it has been generally well accepted. I have not heard negative responses in respect to the program or what it is doing. The concept of course is not a unique concept but it is an important concept and it is one that I believe government can play an active role in promoting, although I do note that there are areas in the private sector that are trying to promote it as well from the advertising on TV. I think that it is an area where government has a legitimate role and where government can probably provide the best service possible, even better than that of the private sector. Of course that follows because the structures are there, the government structures are already there, such as the schools and the employment agencies and government can provide a coordinated approach. So, again, it is necessary to commend the Minister where commendation is deserved, or at least appears to be deserved, and in this instance that is the case, I believe, the concept is certainly a good concept.

Without having a great deal of information on the actual operation, I would reserve judgment on that, except to say that I have not heard complaints, and usually if an operation is not functioning to the utmost or is malfunctioning an Opposition MLA is as quick to hear complaints as anyone else. So, I can only assume by the lack of complaints that the

operation is successful and I accept the Minister's words at face value; if he believes that to be acceptable and that he believes his approach has been a good approach, then I have no reason to quarrel or disagree with that. We will watch it carefully because we do believe that it is important and we do believe that it can be a valuable tool and can be of great assistance to those persons who wish to enter the labour force. They may be persons who have been kept out of the labour force by historical or discriminatory reasons; they may be persons who have been kept out of the labour force because of handicaps; they may be individuals who are entering the labour force for the first time because they are coming out of school. The Minister assures us that the Career Resource Centre is dealing with all of those different situations and, according to his analysis of it, it seems to be dealing with them very effectively. So we wish, or at least I wish, to offer our support to the Minister in respect to this program and hope that the new areas that are being considered are in fact as successful as the Thompson Centre has appeared to be and hope that the Minister is successful in convincing the Federal Government of the legitimacy of his request for 50-50 cost-sharing in respect to the operation of the Centres.

Having said that I think it's a bit too early to comment on any more than the actual concept; perhaps at next year's Estimates we can talk about the actual operation in a bit more detail, we will have that data available to us. I hope that in the next year we can be as positive about the operation as we are about the concept but I think it is important that the records show that we believe the efforts in this area have been fruitful efforts and have been efforts that certainly should be successful in the future.

Just one question, or there may be more than one question, the problem is everytime somebody says pass it is a stimuli to me and I have to ask a question just on general principle, but that's okay. I had intended to ask a question and I have it in my notes and I'd forgotten to, but the Minister indicates that the operation which is centred in Thompson is meant to serve a larger area and a lot of that larger area is in my own constituency. I know that there are groups that are coming down to it and there are also groups that would like to have people from the centre and equipment from the centre come to them; a travelling road show, so to speak. I would ask the Minister if they're going to build upon their experience of the past and try to extend that so that this group can get into to places like Gillam, Churchill, South Indian Lake, and Lynn Lake and I could go through all 20-some that are in my constituency. I don't think that it's necessary except to say that these areas could probably benefit from this program as much as Thompson, just less time would be necessary because they are smaller areas, so that if a travelling program went in for a certain period of time and it was well promoted so that the people were ready for it and willing to accept it; the Minister has already acknowledged . . . acceptances; that it could be of great value to those outlying communities.

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we plan on travelling, we plan on doing it in the same process we went to Thompson. We do not intend to walk into

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

Leaf or Gillam or Ilford or Pukatawagan or Nelson House and say "Here we are, we're the answer to your problems". While the desire, for example, in Leaf Rapid is already evident so we plan on doing some more work with them. The desire will come from other communities, and we'll be working with those other communities. We may find this time next year that there's more than three staff in Thompson. We may find that we can set up a travelling van. We may find that in a centre — I'm just using examples — we may find that in Norway House or Cross Lake because of the huge concentration of people you might be able to put a person or two in there to service those two. There's many concepts that you might be able to develop from this, keeping in mind that we've got to get our feet on the ground and get it solid and we've got to prove a point; we've got to prove a point that the thing really works and the member is right, a year from now we'll have some stats that says that there are some successes. No question in my mind that it's going to be successful.

MR. COWAN: Do choices really talk?

MR. MacMASTER: Some time when you've got time, in fact, while you're in the city, you should maybe drop over to the Fort Garry area, I'll get you the address and you can wander over there some noon hour and have a look at it and run yourself through it and see what you might have been or what you could have been or where you might have wanted to go or —(Interjection)— or what you may be and you're not sure.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (g)(1) — the Member for Churchill.

MR. COWAN: Thank you. For Hansard, I have to point out that it's choices. I know they are going to have a very difficult time with that particular word, the Hansard people downstairs.

The computer, the choices computer which the Minister talks about, if it is similar to other computers, I would imagine could be hooked up to remote banks or remote keyboards and screens in other areas through a simple MTS connection, would that be the case?

MR. MacMASTER: Yes, it is.

MR. COWAN: It may not be able to talk but I'm certain it could pass the video information through the wires. Perhaps a suggestion to the Minister and I know he doesn't want to overextend this program right in the beginning but something to look toward and investigate and maybe talk about in the next Estimates is putting a computer terminal in the different schools in the different communities, and tying the program together that way and then as you send your people around there would be something before and after them to support their efforts. And again it's just a suggestion for perhaps a review during the next Estimates, but with the technology available, it would appear to be beneficial to utilize it to our utmost and computer terminals and telephone line connections are a very inexpensive way of transmitting data, once you have your main computer bank, which you appear to do with the choicest computer.

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

MR. COWAN: As well on this and the others, I missed the Other Expenditures.

MR. MacMASTER: I'll get that.

MR. COWAN: Thanks.

MR. MacMASTER: No, we forwarded those Other Expenditures to the member so that's (g)(2).

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (g)(2) — pass; (g)(3)(a) — pass; (g)(3)(b) — pass; (g)(3)(c) — pass; (g) — pass; 3. pass. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,654,300 for Labour and Manpower — pass.

4. Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets — pass — the Member for Kildonan.

MR. FOX: Yes, Mr. Chairman, just briefly if the Minister could indicate to us this area and why there is less than last year and whether last year's was all spent or not and then I would suggest if it's agreeable that we call it a night for tonight.

MR. MacMASTER: The difference, Mr. Chairman, is your Manitoba Special Municipal Loans Fund. That program has come to an end. We have carried forth \$7,700 this year to complete about three different extensions. There has been an extension, an extension, an extension, and some of the communities couldn't make up their mind whether they wanted it at one end of the arena or the other end of the community hall, and in fairness to them we have carried over \$7,700.00. That air compressor program that we had in place, we are planning on providing three more of them again this year for the mutual aid districts for the firefighters and we need \$45,000 for training equipment for the Thompson firefighting training centre.

MR. FOX: I thank the Minister for that. We can pass this item, and then I would, if the Minister is agreeable, suggest that committee rise and take the Salary tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: 4. pass. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$92,700 for Labour and Manpower. Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets, \$92,700 — pass.

Committee rise.

SUPPLY — CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT

MR. CHAIRMAN, Abe Kovnats (Radisson): This Committee will come to order. I would direct the honourable members' attention to Page 31 of the Main Estimates, Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Environment. Resolution No. 37, Item 2. Consumer Affairs, (a) Salaries — pass the Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I'll just say a few words under this item and direct a few questions to the Minister on a specific and

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

constituency matter. I'd like to congratulate the Minister on his appointment to his new position and wish him well in the months that remain.

I would like to ask the Minister as Minister responsible for The Landlord and Tenant Act and the Minister who has taken over the remains of The Rent Stabilization Act, if the Minister can give us a report as to the arbitration proceedings under that Act and how that is working out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. GARY FILMON (River Heights): I wonder if I could ask the Member for St. Vital if he was referring to The Rent Stabilization Act, is that what he said rather than The Landlord and Tenant Act.

MR. WALDING: Yes.

MR. FILMON: Yes, okay. Mr. Chairman, there are presently three matters still in the process under provision of The Rent Stabilization Act. All relate to rent rebates under the following three locations, 22 Beliveau, where monitoring of rebates to vacated and unfound tenants; 379 Union, where the landlord has disappeared; and 1007 Inkster Boulevard which is pending disposition of Small Claims Proceedings.

In addition 8 applications for rent refund relating to The Rent Stabilization Act were received under provision of Subsection 128(4) of The Landlord and Tenant Act of which three remain active, I think that's the area that he's referring to.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I want to refer the Minister to two particular apartment blocks in St. Vital, one of them being Southgate Plaza, which is 50 Alpine, and the Minister will have received correspondence on the matter before, including some from myself; and the second one I'll come to afterwards is 11 St. Michael Road.

The Minister might be aware or have been informed by his predecessor that the tenants from that block had first written to the government — various members of the government incidentally — as early as June of 1980 about a proposed rent increase which was to come into effect on October 1st. I should tell the Minister that 50 Alpine is a reasonably new apartment block; it's about 10 years old; it's about 10 storeys I believe; it's quiet and it's a respectable block. It has a large number of retired people in it and a number of others who are still employed, and those retired people are generally people who have made provision for their senior years. It's not the sort of rent block where the people are eligible for rental supplements and the various programs that the government has.

It's a quiet block, a very settled apartment building and it's a type of building where there is not a high turnover. Generally, all of the apartments are rented with, as I mentioned, very little turnover involved. The rent increases over the years have been modest, although they have been subject to rent controls and there was a roll-back approximately half way through.

A number of tenants in the block had applied to the Rentalsman back as early as September because of a proposed rent increase from the landlord, of some \$60.00 a month per apartment, which worked out at approximately 20 percent. Now, there are a

number of other apartment blocks in the area where the rents have gone up somewhere between 5 and 10 percent, which is not considered unreasonable. The tenants of 50 Alpine, Mr. Chairman, are not unreasonable people. They know that the landlord's expenses have gone up and maintenance costs more and heating costs more and the taxes have gone up, and if a rent increase in the neighbourhood of 10 percent had been requested, I feel fairly sure in my mind that there would have been no protest, that it would have been accepted. But a rent increase in the neighbourhood of 20 to 23 percent is, in my opinion, unreasonable and was in the opinion of the tenants, also unreasonable, Mr. Chairman.

He had contacted the Minister; he had contacted the Rentalsman and a hearing was held arranged by the Rentalsman I believe, some time in September, when a group of some 25 or so of the tenants appeared at a meeting to state their case and to protest against the rent increases of 20 percent and to seek to have them turned back to a more reasonable level.

The tenants have had, over the years, a variety of fairly small complaints having to do with redecoration, the replacement of curtain, the cleaning of the corridors, the state of the parking garage and a number of other things that were brought out at the time, and there was one other factor involved in this, that the charge made for the parking was to be increased by 50 percent, it was to go up to \$30.00 from the present \$20.00.

Now the landlord, or at least the solicitor for the landlord was quite adamant and there would be no change contemplated. I subsequently had a meeting with many of the tenants in there who repeated their complaints and I undertook to do what I could to assist them.

I wrote a letter to the Minister, urging the Minister to refer the matter to the Director of Arbitration and to seek a decision from the Minister, to impose a compulsory arbitration in this particular case, along with the necessary investigation of similar accommodations in the same neighbourhood. My letter to the Minister went approximately towards the end of October. The Minister replied in a letter to me as of November 12th, that the matter was in hand and something was probably going to happen. Mr. Chairman, that is now approximately three months ago and I understand as of at least last week that that arbitration meeting, or the hearing has still not been held.

Now from October until now is approximately six months and the number of people who were originally complaining has tended to dwindle. There are some tenants who have left; there are some who have become disillusioned and have just given up in disgust and others are beginning to lose their faith in the system, their faith in the Minister and their faith in the Conservative Government.

Mr. Chairman, I'm forced to wonder, to ask the Minister why this proceeding should take so long as this. The original letter of concern from tenants in the apartment block went to the Minister back in June of last year — and that was June, July, August, September — a good three months before the rent increase was to come into effect. A further six months have gone by and the tenants are still awaiting some satisfaction of their complaints.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

One thing that the tenants found, and it's been a particular concern to me, was when they got together to discuss the matter, they found out strangely enough, that the rents within the block had no relation to one another at all.

The Minister knows in an apartment block that the one-bedroom suites all tend to be the same size, and the same layout; and the two-bedroom suites tend to be the same size and the same layout; and that other than being on a lower or a higher floor, there is really no reason for charging a rent higher in one suite than in another suite.

The tenants in 50 Alpine found for example, that in neighbouring two-bedroom suites, both on the same floor, the tenants were paying as much \$60.00 difference in one suite from the other. The range of rents being asked was from somewhere in the region of \$260 up to a maximum of somewhere around \$400 for the same accommodation of the same size, within the building.

If a slightly differing charge were to be asked, \$2.00 or \$3.00 for each floor that the tenants went up, that would be acceptable. If there was some difference between suites of a similar accommodation, again it would seem to be acceptable. But in this case there was simply no justification at all, or no justification that was apparent to the residents in the block. It was seemed by them to be unfair and when they compared their rents for the previous years, the difference that was being paid in some of the higher priced accommodations, was just startling and unacceptable to the tenants.

The particular point that I made in my letter to the Minister, was to urge the Minister to have the Director of Arbitration examine the matter of all of the rents within the building and to have them served on some reasonable and justifiable basis so that there could be seen to be a measure of equity between the different accommodations that were being rented by the tenants. If it should happen that some of the lower ones should be increased in price and some of the higher ones brought down to a more reasonable level, Mr. Chairman, my constituents in that block are reasonable people and they would accept, I am sure, a reasonable solution to the problem that is facing them.

It's been pointed out by one of the tenants in a very recent letter to the Minister — he might even have it, I don't intend to read it, a copy was sent to me — where it has been pointed out that other commercial establishments that are selling goods are not allowed to advertise one price and to sell at another price, and that there are investigations and law suits that can be undertaken against establishments that are doing that sort of thing.

The suggestion made to the Minister, and it seems a reasonable one to me, that in the lobby of each apartment block there should be a tariff, if you like, posted for anyone to see, that a bachelor suite costs this much, a one-bedroom suite costs this much, a two-bedroom suite costs that much, and they are of this number of square feet; and that if there is an additional charge for parking that it shall be listed; and if there is a charge for other extras, that that shall be listed too; so that any potential renter could go in there and see exactly what the tariff was, the same way that one can walk into a restaurant and

see what the menu is and what the charges are. I understand, at least in some provinces, there is a requirement in every hotel and motel that the going rate for the room shall be posted within that particular room. It does not seem unreasonable that something similar could happen in this particular case.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to move now to the other apartment block that I mentioned, and this is at 11 St. Michael Road, and again the tenant has sent me copies of the letters that he has sent to the Minister. This tenant complains of the same problem, that not all of the tenants in the same block had raised objections and he felt that only those who had raised the objections were likely to have any hope for redress. Not only that but again, that the same sized apartment on the same floor was being rented at differing prices for no reason whatever that he could see. Again the same problem raised there. Now I'm a little unclear from the letter whether this matter has gone to arbitration and has been settled, because the tenant raises another problem that is perhaps the other side of the coin, that I'd also like to bring to the Minister's attention.

Where it is said here that a complaint by a tenant, that she was paying \$50.00 a month more rent than the receipts showed in the landlord's books and that — I presume it was the Rentalsman or it might have been the Director of Arbitration — without checking the landlord's books, had ordered a refund of \$600.00 for one year's rent, to be refunded to that tenant merely on her say so.

There may be more to this then there would appear in this letter, Mr. Chairman, but this would seem blatantly unfair to the landlord. If the Rentalsman were simply to accept the word of a tenant that she was paying \$50.00 a month and would order a refund to her, just simply on that basis, I find it a little difficult to understand but that is the report of this tenant, who has written this letter to me on the topic.

So I would ask the Minister if he can account for the delay in the compulsory arbitration in these two blocks. Why is it that it has taken six months? Has there been so many in the city that the staff cannot keep up with the enormous flow of them? Or has there some other reason that it has not been able to be resolved before this time?

The second question I'd like to ask the Minister is whether he can assure the tenants in these two blocks, that when the arbitration is carried out, that the director will in fact review the rents of all of the apartments within that block and attempt to bring them into a reasonable and fair balance, so as to satisfy at least those reasonable tenants, within the block.

MR. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Member for St. Vital has asked a number of questions and gone through a lengthy description of his concerns and I'll try as much as I have been able to follow them, to respond to them.

To begin with 50 Alpine, there was a number of objections raised to the rental increase as the member indicated. In December my predecessor ordered compulsory arbitration. Upon receiving a report from the Director of Arbitration that indicated that he considered the rent increases for the suites could be construed as excessive and recommended

that, and so my predecessor ordered compulsory arbitration. A hearing was convened in December, at which time I understand the tenants were notified that there might be some difficulty because the landlord planned to be away on vacation and would be out of the city, and then following his return he would be overlapping with his lawyer being away from the city, and I understand that the tenants were informed that the hearing would not proceed without these people present and therefore when the lawyer returned on the 17th of March the hearings could and would proceed. That is, as I understand it, what will happen.

I can assure the member that any decision of the arbitration hearings would be retroactive to take care of whatever situation arose so that the people would not be penalized, the decision would be retroactive and they would benefit or whatever the case may be, from the decision regardless of when it was taken.

I agree with his commentary about the relationship of rents, one to another for similar suites within the same block, and I know that is an opinion that is held by the Director of Arbitration and certainly is an objective when being looked at by either the Director or by a Board of Arbitration on behalf of the Minister. The difficulty is that those anomalies occurred inevitably because of the rent controls that were applied. As the member probably knows, rents were not always equal when the rent controls came into effect in the same apartment blocks, when the same percentage was applied to different levels of rent that perhaps caused an even greater difference amongst the rents for similar suites in the same apartment block, compounded by the fact that some became decontrolled during the process and there were, no question, there was a wide spread between rents on the same type of accommodation within the same block. One of the difficulties is that if constant or fixed percentages are applied by landlords, because they are used to doing that under rent control, to the new situation under decontrol, we're having all these anomalies occur.

One of the objectives of the arbitration process or the mediation process is to try and level these out as much as possible. When these come under scrutiny I would say that is happening, that they are being levelled out.

With respect to 11 St. Michaels Road, again as a result of a recommendation from the Director of Arbitration, the Minister has ordered compulsory arbitration and, in fact, it has already occurred with respect to that. The hearings have taken place and I'm advised that for one type of suite, and I'm not sure whether it's the one bedroom or the two bedroom, in some cases the rollback was \$25 per month, and in other cases it was \$30 per month.

One of the difficulties with the suggestion of posting the rents for the same type of suite in each block in the entranceway is that tenancies expire at different times and consequently if people came in and rented under one level and then two months later an increase went through, then you would still have the situation where people in the same type of accommodation would be paying a different rate based on an increase that occurred in the intervening period. As a consequence, that isn't a totally satisfactory situation either but the objective of the whole process of reviewing rents, through the

mediation and if necessary arbitration process, would be to bring the same type of suite at the same level within the same apartment block.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. J. WALLY MCKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I have been in this Legislature for many many years and this perennial problem that we are dealing with tonight is one that's haunted me for a long long time. While this problem grows I see my constituency out there, municipalities today have half the population which they had ten years ago. It's an urban type of shift that is going on and people are coming in and congregate in this city and all these problems are before us in this Legislature and they are likely going to get worse and worse unless we can try and deal with this problem.

People can come today in my village from this city if they wish and they'll get rent for \$40 a month for a two-bedroom home, free gas, hydro, sewer and water, but they are not coming; they're coming in here. Agriculture is the No. 1 industry in this province, and why can we not get people to get back to the land and deal with the No. 1 industry in this province instead of congregating in this city where these problems grow and grow and grow every day. I've been coming in for years to the city and I have no problem. I come from the country into the city; I am staying over now in Colony Square, excellent accommodation, the price is right, everything is there. I have stayed in Place Louis Riel; some of our MLAs are staying in the House of Lords; we stayed in the St. Regis for many many years, in fact, I dare say there were more political decisions made in the St. Regis than ever made in this Chamber in those days. But we have a problem and I just want to raise it and draw to the attention of the Honourable Minister, the Government, we cannot carry on in this province the way we're going this day. I'm certain the government is doing its best and they are decentralizing. Brandon; the water resources people went out the other day and the government is decentralizing as fast as we can. When our dollars and our No. 1 industry in this province is agriculture, and everybody is congregating into this city, it just doesn't make sense to me because they can't farm in the city. Certainly there's lots of industry coming in here; the industries are growing in this city; the city has a great potential.

I read the report from Dr. McCallum today, which is very encouraging for the future of our province. But people for some reason don't want to farm, and here we have, as I stand here, I don't know how many people in the world tonight are going without sufficient food, they are going to bed hungry. We have a problem with rail transportation and we've been debating that thing around this Legislature all the years I've been here, and I don't think we are ever going to solve it, it has to be the federal people. Once we get this thing in perspective and decide where we are going to go, and I congratulate this government, likely we have to go back to what is our No. 1 base and that's agriculture in this province, and build that base.

Why should I have to lose in Ethelbert; over half the people have left Ethelbert and they are likely in this city today. The same from Churchill, and

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

certainly there's industries out in those areas. All these problems are building and building. I'm not a negative and I'm not a doom and gloom boy such as the Member for St. Vital, I listened to him there for some length. I congratulate the new Progressive Party, I haven't them on this matter. But this is not an election issue, this is a matter of a whole bunch of guys in this Legislature. Sure we have a problem with rent, but do you want all the people over there to come and keep living in the city and dealing with the problem and give me a chance, bring them out to Roblin. I'll give them land, I'll give them housing, I'll give them water, sewer, and they'll make a lot better life than they are living in the city. (Interjection)— Sure the birds will sing. But Mr. Chairman, I well understand the socialist philosophy, I have listened to red collar remarks, that because unless they get the people in a mass they can't control them; and I understand once you get them in a group, in a mass, then they bitch every day and that's not the way we're going to build this province.

I feel very sorry for any young person today. Why can't we have a big city in Dauphin, or Thompson, or someplace like Saskatchewan's got, or Alberta's got, why can't we just cut this city in half and say, move out, because we wouldn't have these problems the Member for St. Vital is laying on our table tonight if we decentralized this city and moved half the people out, and help us build this industry — our No. 1 industry — grow wheat, feed the world, and we could do it at the best price of anybody in the whole wide world. We can do it, we have the resources, we have the Legislature, we have the people, we've got the courage, we've got the technology, we've got everything.

Why should we crowd people into this city, in small little rooms, and come back here year after year fighting about rents when I've got a whole bunch of empty houses in my constituency that are vacant, with sewer, water, and gas? I apologize, Mr. Chairman, but I get so uptight about this thing and I've been here for a long long time and I don't see that it's getting any better, it's getting worse.

There's a new Minister sitting down in front of us here tonight, and I just thought maybe it would be timely for me to stand up. We have a big challenge ahead of us, not only this government but governments for a long time. We may not be able to do it, but let's try and decentralize this great monstrosity where more than half the people of the province live where we're sitting right here tonight.

That's not economic justice to Manitoba; it's not economic justice for the people that built this province, and it's not being a good Canadian.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Chairman, we're on Item 2. Landlord and Tenant Act. I gather that's the item that we're on. We have now an interesting solution to the tenants' problems. My friend the Member for Roblin, is saying that 300,000 people can move out of the city and let us say, move to Dauphin and start —(Interjection)— oh well, Ethelbert, and there they will form part of the agricultural base in the Province of Manitoba. Now let us assume that 300,000 people did that and let us assume that that was 100,000 families. My friend is saying that there is room for

100,000 farmers in the Roblin area, that there is land for them? —(Interjection)— I am not as acquainted with the agricultural situation in the Province of Manitoba as is my honourable friend, but I wonder what uncultivated vacant land there is in his constituency for a person to come from the City of Winnipeg and start farming in that area.

Mr. Chairman, what I understand to be the case is that land in my friend's constituency would be selling for at least \$300 an acre, at least three, that in order to be viable you have to have a section of land, so that that would cost you \$190,000; and my friend is saying that the tenant over there who's having difficulty with the increase of \$40.00, that if he could come and take \$190,000 he could farm in your constituency and rent for \$40.00 a month.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let us assume that all that was true. What happens to the farmer who is now occupying the section of land that the Member for St. Vital's tenant goes out and gets, he comes into the city and lives in St. Vital. So how has he changed anything? Are you suggesting that there is room for 100,000 farmers? Mr. Chairman, I would venture to say that there are not 40,000 farmers in the Province of Manitoba and they are farming all of the available agricultural land in the Province of Manitoba; and in order to get it you have to pay them \$300, \$400, \$500, \$600 an acre for it and my friend is saying that you can take the City of Winnipeg, divide it into two, send 300,000 people there to farm land in the constituency of Roblin? —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Chairman, that's what he said, come to my constituency. I want to know where 300,000 people are going to migrate from the City of Winnipeg and live in the \$40.00 a month vacant houses in Roblin constituency. —(Interjection)— Not all at once.

Mr. Chairman, I am concerned with the logistics of what my friend has said.

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

MR. WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure that my constituents who live in 50 Alpine will be comforted by the remarks of the Member for Roblin.

I would give him the undertaking that I will transmit his remarks in Hansard to them so that they may be suitably impressed by the wisdom of his remarks.

Mr. Chairman, there was a couple of matters that the Minister didn't reply to from my remarks, and I'm wondering if he could comment on the matter that I raised to him about a reported \$600 refund to a tenant, solely on her say-so without checking the landlord's books. I wonder if the Minister has any information of that, and that's referring to the 11 St. Michael's Road apartment block.

I would also like to ask the Minister, further to his remarks about the arbitration systems attempting to bring into line the rents in different apartment blocks, whether this will in fact happen when an arbitration hearing is held; and whether the Director of Arbitration or the Arbitration Board, whichever it may be, has the power to adjust rents in those apartment blocks where the tenants have not formally filed a complaint to the Minister or to the board. Does the arbiter look only at the cases of the complainers or does he assess the whole situation and take action accordingly?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa on a point of order.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

MR. DAVID BLAKE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Member for St. Vital has been quoting from some letters that he has. I wonder if he's prepared to table those letters for the Committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't think that he read the letters, I don't think it's necessary.
The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: Mr. Chairman, I did not read from any of the letters. I quoted a figure of \$50.00 and \$600 which appears in the text. The letter in any case is a copy of a letter that was sent to the Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I must confess that I'm not familiar with the letter to which the member refers and it appears as though my staff is not familiar with it, so in order for us to do anything on behalf of the constituent of the Member for St. Vital, I'd have to ask for more details so that we could investigate it.

With respect to the item that he brings up about whether or not the Director of Arbitration or the Arbitration Board will, after making a decision on an arbitration of rents, then go and equalize rents throughout the block, I would say that the answer is no. Section 116 of The Landlord and Tenant Act requires that a protest be filed by a resident if he is not satisfied with the notice of rental increase that he has been served with and; if one of the member's constituents did not file a protest and others in his same apartment block did and were rolled back, then if the time has expired, beyond which he can file a protest legally, then unfortunately we cannot deal with it.

MR. WALDING: Which makes the Minister's earlier remarks sound a little odd, Mr. Chairman, when he said that attempts were being made to regularize and equalize the rents. He told the committee that this was in fact happening and now he is telling us that something cannot happen only where . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, the member is putting words in my mouth, on a point of order. I said that under the rental arbitration process, the process of hearing, either by the Director of Arbitration or review board, the Arbitration Review Board, that was the objective. But if others are outside of that then obviously they're not included in that process.

MR. WALDING: It was not my intent to put words into the Minister's mouth, Mr. Chairman. I had understood him to say, in his earlier remarks, that he saw the wisdom or the desirability of having some logic and reasonableness in the rents charged within a particular apartment block and that there was a move in this direction.

I would merely point out that from the last statement he made, that the Arbitration Board can only deal with those who have filed an objection, this could well have the effect of making those rent differences worse, rather than better.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (a) — pass; (b) — pass; — the Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. BRIAN CORRIN: On this same topic, Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister if he can provide me with the number of voluntary rent arbitrations that have taken place subsequent to the passage of Bill 83, can we have the number on that?

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, as of February 28th, 1981 the Rentalsman had received a total of 988 rent protests; that's dating back to July 1st of 1980. Those protests include those that came in directly to the Rentalsman; to the office and others that were conveyed via Members of the Legislature and so on; so these are all the protests that had been received as of February 28th, 1981. Of these 513 were settled, either by mediation by the Rentalsman or by mutual agreement between the landlord and tenant; 475 protests were referred to the Tenancy Arbitration Bureau; 138 were subsequently withdrawn by the tenants; 80 protests were settled by voluntary arbitration and 81 by compulsory arbitration; in 55 cases the Director of Arbitration reported that the rent increases were not excessive and the tenants were advised accordingly.

There are currently 121 active protests which can be categorized as follows: 4 are pending voluntary arbitration hearing; 49 are pending compulsory arbitration hearing and that would include the ones at 50 Alpine; and 68 are still in process for a total of 121.

Of 80 protests settled by voluntary arbitration, 34 rents were reduced, 44 rents were upheld and two were dismissed because the tenants vacated. In compulsory arbitration 81 rents were reduced and, as quoted earlier, 55 were dismissed as the increases were found not to be excessive.

Now I might say that the 988 protests originated from more than 40,000 tenancy renewals that have taken place in that period of time. So it's something under 2.5 percent is the protest rate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (b) — pass; — the Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: I take it that the Minister then somewhat proudly is pronouncing that this 2.5 percent rate is indicative to him of seeming peace in the Landlord-Tenant Marketplace. I presume that this recommends to him the simple inference that everything is well and all is peaceful in landlord-tenant relations.

I would wonder, Mr. Chairman, if we could have some indication of the extent of the advertising campaign that was mounted in order to apprise people of their rights to enter into, or attempt to enter into, the arbitration process. Can we have some indication of the amount of money that was spent by the government and the sort of program that was launched?

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, as the member may know, extensive advertising was placed in Winnipeg and in several rural newspapers to advise the rental public of the provisions or amendments to The Landlord and Tenant Act and the specific information included the statutory time limit for protesting a rent increase; and secondly, the

statutory time limit for applying for a rent rebate under the provision of The Rent Stabilization Act; and that expired as the member knows on December 31st, 1980.

We're also in anticipation of rent increases which will take place in the mid-year which is the largest group of rental tenancy renewals that come up each year, approximately July 1st. We will be mounting another extensive advertising campaign between April and June of this year.

MR. CORRIN: I'm wondering if we could find out how much the extensive advertising campaign that was mounted in this past few months cost the department. Do we have any idea of the number of times advertisements were published and where they were published and what sort of format media-wise was employed and so on? Do we have any detail of the efforts made by the government to publicize its arbitration procedures?

MR. FILMON: As I mentioned to the member, the campaign included extensive advertising in Winnipeg area through the daily newspaper; as well there was some advertising in the daily newspaper in Brandon and weekly newspapers throughout the province.

As an example of what's planned for the forthcoming one and we're just looking up the figures for the previous one, but for the forthcoming one we're looking at an ad that runs three columns by 100 lines per column and this will be running on the following dates in the following papers — there are considerable number of papers here — they include the Winnipeg Free Press, The Winnipeg Sun, The Brandon Sun, The Portage Daily Graphic, the Flin Flon Reminder, the Thompson Citizen, the Pasco Times, Dauphin Herald, the Parkland Enterprise, the Selkirk Enterprise, the Manitoba Co-Operator, The WestMan Shopper, and the Central City News and for instance in the Free Press there will be three ads in March, three ads in April, for a total of 6; the Winnipeg Sun, two in March, one in April; Brandon Sun, two in March, two in April; basically two and two in most of the remaining newspapers. The latter three that I mentioned, the Co-Operator, the WestMan Shopper and the Central City News are one and one. We don't appear to have the information on the campaign that was run in 1980 at the moment; I'll bring that back for the information of the member.

MR. CORRIN: With respect, Mr. Chairman, to the compulsory arbitrations, I would be interested in knowing where the locations of the suites involved were. As I remember the legislation provided that compulsory arbitration could only take place where the Minister was satisfied that rent increases appeared to be excessive and where there was a limited accommodation in the same area; so there would be a very low vacancy rate in the same neighbourhood. I'm wondering where these compulsory arbitration locales were? Do we have any breakdown for instance as per districts in Winnipeg, so many in St. James, so many in Transcona, and so on? Do we have that sort of information?

MR. FILMON: We have it documented, Mr. Chairman, but it isn't with me at the moment. If the member can appreciate there are tremendous

numbers of files in this whole procedure and we can bring that information back to the House for him.

MR. CORRIN: In this regard, Mr. Chairman, there was as I'm sure members will remember, a report on rent decontrol prepared by the Rent Stabilization Board last year and it was a fairly extensive survey of market conditions at that time throughout the province because the decontrol in 1980 had altered the situation and rescinded the Rent Stabilization legislation throughout many parts of the province. I'm wondering if the Minister can advise whether a similar report detailing various aspects of decontrol revealing various monitoring aspects of the effects of decontrol, has been prepared by his department? Can we have advice on that, Mr. Chairman?

MR. FILMON: I have received some fairly detailed information on the overall process and effects. Can the member be more specific as to what type of information he'd like and just exactly what information I can provide him with?

MR. CORRIN: Referring once again, Mr. Chairman, to the report of February, 1980 prepared by the Rent Stabilization Board, I would note that the Board saw fit to monitor a variety of different things.

They assessed the distribution of the vacancy rate in various areas; they detailed and itemized that. They listed rent increases in a variety of different rental situations, in other words they broke it down into bachelor, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, etc., and they did that as I said, district to district, so that a person reviewing the report could get some idea of a variety of categories in reporting areas. We were able to discern at that time for instance, that in Winnipeg city's downtown there was in the older family style block where there might be two or three bedrooms, a very very low vacancy rate and a disproportionately high increase in rents, when controls were lifted. That was the sort of information that one could — I'm not suggesting that there was information directly on the inner City of Winnipeg — but comparable situations you could discern and glean that sort of information from the statistical data. I should also mention that they broke it down into rent categories. There were a variety of categories sort of descending from \$400.00 on down and reviewing the effects of decontrol with respect to each of these itemized categories.

So basically and generally one got a fairly comprehensive overview of what was happening when rent controls were lifted and you could see that in a variety of different situations. You could assess the varying effect from one situation to another, district to district, rent level to rent level and so on and so forth. That is what I'm wondering about this evening, whether we have a similar monitoring report or reports detailing the effects of the last stage or phase of rent decontrol brought in by Bill 83.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, that sort of information is being acquired but I think it's a little early. We were talking in terms of The Rent Stabilization Act proceedings which carried over a couple of years and we were able to gather that kind of information. At the moment I think it's premature to be able to elicit that kind of information. We were gathering statistics but we don't have any firm

figures on that. I don't think that it would be available certainly within the next few months. We have just an interim gathering of statistics and I can't provide him with specifics. If the member would like to give me some indication of what sort of statistical material he'd like to see gathered, perhaps I can discuss that with my staff. But I'm quite sure that we don't have all of that in specific detail to the extent that he is requiring. I think he's looking for what has happened in terms of rent increases in Winnipeg, area by area, since July 1st of the past year, and I think it's pretty difficult to acquire all that information in that short a period of time.

MR. CORRIN: As a passing observation, Mr. Chairman, I would note that the Rent Stabilization Board seemed to be able to accommodate a similar request when the Minister must have made it in 1980. They seemed to have been able to put together a fairly comprehensive report in the same sort of time frame, operating within the same sorts of time constraints.

Mr. Chairman, when we debated Bill 83 last summer, as a matter of fact I remember quite distinctly that we moved an amendment that would make such a monitoring report compulsory on a legislative tabling basis. We proposed an amendment that would require that the government each year table such a report in this House and we submitted at that time that there was no way that a responsible government could justify the absence of a rent control program without giving the public and the members of the Legislative Assembly recourse and access to that sort of statistical data. Mr. Chairman, I needn't remind you, the government's argument was that there was no need for rent controls and therefore they simply were a bureaucratic waste of time and that the normal market processes could accommodate all tenants' needs and would establish a just and equitable state between landlord and tenant.

Now we've come to these Estimates and if there is a purpose for these Estimates, it would be to examine statistical base in order to see whether the government's optimism was justified. There is no way that the Opposition, of course, not having privy to governmental records, can adequately review or monitor the situation without that sort of information being tabled. Mr. Chairman, we know one thing, we know that at least on an isolated basis that certain monitoring reports must have been submitted because that was a requirement as I recollect — and I know that was a requirement of Section 121 of Bill 83, or The Landlord and Tenant Act, brought in by Bill 83 — so that with respect to the 81 rents that were reduced as a result of compulsory arbitration, we know that with respect to all 81 rental situations that there were monitoring reports.

So we have at least a base upon which to build, and we know that the government is in a position to table 81 reports. The question is, has the government been sitting back and waiting passively for complaints or has the government been trying to objectively determine whether or not all is salubrious in the landlord and tenant world?

Now so far we've had a very vague sort of response. We understand that there are reports in progress but won't be available for a couple of months — I presume that means after the next

election, Mr. Chairman, which hopefully will be in a couple of months — but we know that there are at least 81 reports which will relate to isolated incidents of undue and I suppose exploitative rent increases. So I ask the Minister when we're going to receive this material so that we can prepare ourselves to deal with it.

MR. FILMON: I'd like to assure the member that the department is gathering that information. We're in the midst of a couple of procedures, one of which is to give our full attention to the rental arbitration process, and to make sure that tenants who have protested their rent increase are properly being attended to and that their concerns are being looked after as quickly as we can and in each case, it requires a very very thorough analysis of the availability of rent in an area, of rental accommodation in an area, the average adjusted rents for similar suites in an area, so there is a great deal of manpower and hours being spent in the research that leads into the background material that's supplied both to the Director of Arbitration and ultimately to the Minister, or to the boards that are reviewing on compulsory arbitration basis, these rents. So we are putting our priorities where we believe they should be put and that is, attending to those matters that are most imminent as far as we are concerned.

On the other hand, the department is able to accumulate a great deal of statistical data that indicates what's happening and it's a matter of time before we can put it in a form in which it's usable. As a for instance, we do have a report on five Manitoba communities that were involved in the rent decontrol proceedings in Manitoba or the whole rental process, from this past July 1st, 1980 onward, and it's Brandon, Dauphin, Selkirk, The Pas and Thompson, for instance. I can give some indication that the rental levels of increases were really quite modest in all of these communities, that the availability of suites appears to be good and makes for a very competitive market that has resulted in increases being certainly under the CPI in all cases, throughout these various communities that is on average, under the CPI. So that kind of information is being accumulated.

Winnipeg, because it's the largest source and because we're in the process of applying this new legislation to it, we don't have the final figures. I can say that based on the ongoing surveys — and this would have to be at the moment a ballpark — that the average increases that we've been able to establish on a survey without having final figures, are somewhere in the range of 10 to 12 percent, which is about the CPI for the past year in Winnipeg; and that's what it appears despite all of the suggestions of members opposite that it was going to be doubled that — it doesn't appear to have materialized — we don't have final figures on that but to the best of our knowledge from the accumulation to date, that's where it is.

At the same time, CMHCs figures within Winnipeg indicate a vacancy rate somewhere in the range of 5 percent. As the member probably knows that's adjustable for the area; that's also adjustable for the fact that CMHCs figures do not include block buildings of less than six suites; and they do not include construction that has been on the market for

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

less than a year. In those cases the vacancy rates are always substantially higher because they're in the sort of rent-up, fill-up process. I've just returned from a meeting of housing Ministers in Newfoundland and the suggestion is that whatever CMHC's figures are, the vacancy rates are usually about double that and that's again a ballpark figure, but that would be an indication that I could give based on preliminary figures and raw figures that are available to us, that the vacancy rate might be somewhere in the range of say above 8 percent in Winnipeg; that the rental increases since July 1st on average, have been in the range of 10 to 12 percent. We know of many instances in which the rents were decreased as a result of rent decontrol. We also know that there were instances of hundreds or cases but that's the ballpark estimate I could give the member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (b) — pass — the Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: I thank the Minister for those representations, Mr. Chairman.

First of all I would like to observe that the vacancy rate has fallen city-wide globally about 1.8, 1.9 percent since the passage of Bill No. 83, in July of 1980, which I think as an isolated fact is interesting. I have to speculate that the reduction is as a result of very low construction rates, there being many fewer starts over the past year than there were the preceding years. As a matter of fact, dealing with preliminary housing starts, Mr. Chairman, I'm sure the Honourable Minister will be interested to know, if he doesn't already know, that Winnipeg has experienced an alarmingly large decline in the number of housing starts, January 1981 over January 1980.

The CMHC report that came out yesterday indicated that the percentage change for January of 1981 was, believe or not, 47 percent to the negative. We had 47 percent fewer housing starts, and this includes single detached as well as apartment and townhouse type units in January of 1981, than we did in January of 1980.

Mr. Chairman, I daresay that it puts me in a little quandry because one of the arguments friends opposite gave for the removal of rent controls was the inhibiting effect it had on new construction. I can't understand now that rent controls have been removed, why we should have in one month, a 47 percent decline in new residence construction in the City of Winnipeg. It seems to defy the arguments made in this Assembly last July by honourable friends opposite.

It's even more alarming, Mr. Chairman, when one looks at the figures for other western provinces. I won't even bother to reflect on Alberta because I think it's literally two different worlds, obviously totally unassociated. You might as well be talking about the Third World when we look at Manitoba's figures and compare them to Alberta's. But I think in fairness we can look at preliminary housing starts and construction in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan enjoys of course modest wealth or a modest increase in economic activity. The CMHC figures for urban Saskatchewan reflect only a 101 percent change, that's plus not minus. That puts us 148 percent behind urban Saskatchewan in terms of housing construction. I think they still have rent

controls in the Province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chairman, but I suppose that's almost an irrelevant observation. I think the point is well made. I guess they need rent controls because they have a vital economy; a place where people want to live; a place where people want to invest; a place where people can work.

Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where Saskatoon, embarrassingly Saskatoon had 138 percent increase in January of 1981 in new housing construction over January of 1980. They did very well. They didn't experience a minus 49 percent decrease, Mr. Chairman. It even becomes more embarrassing when one looks at the figures community for community, it's rather incredible in the absorption rates; whereas you have in Calgary — I said I wasn't going to refer to Calgary or Edmonton or Alberta — but one notes that we have 40.8 percent absorption rate in Calgary in January of 1980. We have a slight decline in January of 1981 to 35.4 percent. Winnipeg enjoys a 1.4 percent absorption rate in new housing and duplexes, Mr. Chairman.

I could suggest that this documentation when reviewed by people in the construction trades of the construction industry must have a disastrous sort of emotional and psychological effect. Can you imagine someone making a decision where to work, where to live, and where to invest and having to peruse the CMHC figures? True, Mr. Chairman, they would have to take into account the fact that Manitoba has no rent controls, and that undoubtedly would weigh heavily on their mind and would be a factor in their decision. But they'd have to also look at the absorption rates in Saskatoon and Regina and Calgary and Lethbridge and Edmonton, and then they'd have to look at Winnipeg. I guess they would have to look at all the aspects. They would have to look at the appreciation rate in terms of what an investment might yield over a given time and they would have to do that admittedly in the context of very high interest rates. I think the interest rates are the same in Saskatchewan and Alberta as they are in Manitoba, Mr. Chairman. So one wonders whether or not we can really expect for a dramatic revival in the Manitoba construction trades industry.

I would expect, Mr. Chairman, that the fact is that as a result of our having lost so many of our most valued and experienced trades people and construction firms, that it's highly unlikely that Manitoba could look forward to that sort of turn-around. Even if one were inclined to invest in housing or new construction in the residential field in Winnipeg or Manitoba, Mr. Chairman, one of course would have a problem finding competitive rates, trades people and sub-contractors that could effect the work to be done.

I won't bother to bore you, Mr. Chairman, with the documentation which we all received from the Winnipeg Construction Association each month, but I think we all know that unemployment in that particular sector has reached alarmingly high levels; although, Mr. Chairman, in fairness it has been abated in the past 10 to 15 months as a result of out-migration. So I suppose to put things on a positive note, we can say that some former Manitobans and Winnipeggers have been able to relocate successfully in other communities away from

Manitoba; and presumably are contributing to the growth and general well-being of those new communities in which they dwell.

But I think, Mr. Chairman, that it's safe to say that the mere absence of rent controls, the discontinuance of the Rent Stabilization Program has not had the effect that members opposite suggested it would. If anything, Mr. Chairman, it seems to be going the other way; it seems that low construction rates, low levels of construction, is simply contributing to a lower vacancy rate. So, Mr. Chairman, what's happening, interestingly, is that by some elastic force the government is being drawn back into a situation, it's actually sort of poetic justice, I think, that the government is being drawn back into a situation where they may well, in another year or 18 months, if they're still in office, or any government that's in office, may well have to reimpose rent control simply to deal with the alarmingly low vacancy rate because it's coming down; it's inexorably and steadily falling.

So it's not the less than 1 percent experienced in Calgary, Regina and Edmonton, Mr. Chairman, but it's coming that way. And so one wonders in retrospect, Mr. Chairman, at the wisdom of the government, facing all these different factors, at rescinding The Rent Stabilization Act and the program it governed and administered.

I'm wondering, can the Minister give us any indication as to why he feels that the vacancy rate is falling so quickly, can he give us any indication, can he give us any idea what we might expect in the future?

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I have no idea what the source of the member's information is, because according to CMHC statistics for the City of Winnipeg, the vacancy rate has increased. In fact, it is now at the highest that it's been since 1972 in Winnipeg; in last year alone the figures for all of Winnipeg, between April and October of 1980, the vacancy rate went from 4.8 percent to 5.1 percent; and for the inner city, old Winnipeg that the member is concerned about, the vacancy rate went up 1.6 points from 4.8 percent to 6.4 percent. I repeat, it's at the highest levels that it's been since 1972. Based on this kind of raw data, without having, as I say, produced final figures, I can make the following remarks — perhaps I'll wait for the member to listen.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. While you are waiting, I would like to make an announcement. I would direct the honourable members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery where we have some exchange students. This group is under the direction of Mrs. Hanson. These teachers are from Germany, England, Scotland, Australia, and Canada.

I would ask the honourable members to join me in welcoming this group of exchange students here to the Legislature this evening.

I would also make a remark that we have some sort of a rule here about taking pictures with flashes because it disturbs the members and it gets them upset and they start to argue and then all heck breaks loose. I guess it's too late to warn you about taking pictures because it's already done.

SUPPLY - CORPORATE AFFAIRS Cont'd

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I'll repeat for the member's benefit, that based on the raw data, the CMHC statistics which I said are inadequate for our use because they don't include the units of rental accommodation with less than six suites, and they don't include accommodation constructed during the past year, most of which becomes vacant, or is still vacant because it hasn't rented to full capacity yet, and those statistics would increase substantially the numbers that are in the raw CMHC data, but based on that, I can say the following statements in an update of the rental accommodation market in Winnipeg, and this, as I said, based just on preliminary information, that compared to other cities rental accommodation in Winnipeg may be less expensive, appears to have had a slower rate of rent increase, and is more available than it was prior to the release of rent controls.

Secondly, rental accommodation in Winnipeg is more available now than it has been for most of the past ten years.

Thirdly, the availability of units renting at relatively low rates in Winnipeg appears to be comparable or greater than that of units renting at higher rates.

Fourthly, rental accommodation in the inner city is more available now than it has been for most of the past ten years.

So I don't see any of the problems that the member opposite brings to bear on this situation and I say that it's all a fabrication of his mind.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Chairman, one never knows what do in these situations because the Minister has, of course, gloriously set himself up, as it were, as a straw man and I suppose he invites me to light the match. If he is suggesting that there is a higher vacancy rate I would suggest to him — and I'm not going to accept that, Mr. Chairman, mercifully, I am not going to accept that for his sake. If he suggests that there is a higher vacancy rate, I would suggest that it would confirm the suspicion of the Opposition that we have an unparalleled outmigration from this province. Because Mr. Chairman, with the low construction rates that have been prevailing in this city over the past three years there is no other explanation. But mercifully, Mr. Chairman, I don't accept that because you know his figures are contradicted by the HUDAM presentation which the other Minister relied on so extensively at the hearings into Bill 83. HUDAM, of course, was one of the very few supportive and responsible, I might add, organizations that came before the committee supporting the rescission of The Rent Stabilization Act.

HUDAM figures showed — I'll let the member have a glance at the brief — that the overall vacancy rate was 6.8 percent in Winnipeg as of July 1980. As the Minister has told us a few questions earlier, about 15 minutes ago, 20 minutes ago, we have a 5 percent vacancy rate now. The Minister is seemingly confused and stumbling all over himself trying to extricate himself from the situation, but I tell him that it's better for him to accept that low construction rates have tightened the vacancy rate. If he wants to

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

be politic, Mr. Chairman, I might suggest that it would be much more appropriate that he accept a slight tightening as opposed to confirming the outmigration thesis by suggesting that the vacancy rate is rising. Because he's not going to get it all ways; he can't play it all ways, Mr. Chairman. I personally think that the HUDAM information is reliable. If it isn't, Mr. Chairman, he might confer with the Minister for Government Services who accepted it hook, line and sinker and commended the delegates from that association heartily last July. This was, indeed, Mr. Chairman, for those who were there, the gospel.

So I would suggest to the Honourable Minister that all is not as rosy, one way or the other, all is not as rosy. I am concerned and I'm going to reiterate, Mr. Chairman, that I am concerned about the absence of monitoring data here today. If anything meaningful was to come out of these Estimates, it would have been a substantive debate on the effects of rent control in the City of Winnipeg, or rent decontrol in the City of Winnipeg. And without access to that statistical data which should have been made available, and which should have been prepared prior to these Estimates proceeding, this whole exercise is really much in the realm of the hypothetical and I don't think that's fair to the Opposition and, more important, it's not fair to the public of Winnipeg. I think that the government owed a responsibility, having decontrolled rents throughout the city, to assure the tenant public that there would be a substantive debate this session on the question of the effects of the rescission of the rent control program.

Now the government has, by its own lethargy, or perhaps by its own manipulative design, simply foreclosed that option. The Minister can stand up with a very pleasant smile and say he's only been in office for six weeks and gee whiz, hasn't had time to get familiar with the department, and Mr. Chairman, he can do that to his heart's content, but the truth of the matter is that if he was unprepared to proceed he should have taken another six weeks to familiarize himself with the situation in his department.

We suggested, Mr. Chairman, when the shift in portfolios took place, that it was done for two reasons: (1) Because the former Minister was a total incompetent; (2) because we reckoned that there was a need on the part of the government to cosmetically and cleverly disguise the effects of this particular program from the public, and they've been able to do that by allowing a new Minister to hide behind his novice status.

Mr. Chairman, again, ultimately I don't think it washes. I believe people are cleverer than that. — (Interjection)— He's going to be a very effective opposition member; I have predicted that he will be one of the most effective members of your opposition, because he's got it in his guts; it's almost a natural sort of thing. (Interjection)— Bob Wilson was a dog of another colour.

But in any event, Mr. Chairman, dealing with the matter at hand, not with the disturbance being raised by the Minister of Highways, we would ask the government whether they would consider postponing these Estimates in order that we could adequately review those monitoring reports. There is absolutely no purpose in proceeding with these Estimates at

this point. To do so would simply be a sham on the parliamentary process and so, on behalf of the public of Manitoba, on behalf of the tenants of Winnipeg, we would respectfully ask the government to consent to the adjournment of these proceedings in order that we can await the receipt of the monitoring reports.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (a) — pass; (b) — pass; (c) — pass — the Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Chairman, I presume that the government doesn't want to deal with that; that's a very delicate and sensitive area for them.

Mr. Chairman, once again, I ask the Minister whether he will be willing to consent to the adjournment of these proceedings in order that he can apprise himself of the results of monitoring reports and provide that documentation and that statistical information to the Opposition, and through the Opposition, of course, to the public of Manitoba, in order that we can assess and evaluate the aftereffects of rent decontrol. Can we have a commitment on the part of the Minister to postpone this particular item until such time as he's prepared to proceed? We're willing to acknowledge that he's only had six weeks. That is not the Opposition's problem, Mr. Chairman. We didn't advise the First Minister of the Province to shuffle his treasury bench some six weeks before these Estimates were reviewed.

We did in truth, Mr. Chairman, we did call on the Premier to retire certain members of that front bench, but we certainly didn't ask him to do it in such a hasty, ill-co-ordinated fashion. The First Minister could have scheduled his Cabinet shuffle for late last summer, early last fall. There's been ample opportunity to affect the transition and those opportunities were not taken. I don't see why the Opposition and the public of Manitoba should be punished and penalized because of the intransigence of the First Minister and the Government of Manitoba. I say that that's on their head. That's their responsibility. They did it knowingly. They could have waited until after the Estimates. The First Minister could have waited until these Estimates were completed. He chose not to. —(Interjection)— Well, that's exactly the point. The Minister of Highways says we wouldn't have anything to talk about. We would have a lot to talk about if this data was provided, but that hasn't been the case, Mr. Chairman. The Minister seems now to be willing to hopefully respond to my question. I'll gladly sit down in order to give him an opportunity to do that.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I think that we've already seen earlier tonight what happens to the member opposite when he gets statistics to deal with. He misconstrues them and he gets confused by them in any case and he doesn't even relate them to the topic we're discussing.

The fact of the matter is that earlier in his conversation he attempted to use the national figures on housing starts to prove a case about rental vacancy. What he doesn't even realize is that the housing starts include construction for purchase as well as construction for rental purposes and that they don't have a direct bearing on the topic we're

discussing.

He doesn't realize that factors such as interest rates and the availability of government programs such as tax shelters and AHOPs and MURBs and all those things, had a great deal to do with the change in statistics on housing starts over the past year. He doesn't realize that the statistics he presented to us from HUDAM cover only their own members. They don't include public housing in Manitoba and in Winnipeg in particular; they don't include all of the rentals by the small landlords such as those included in the Manitoba Landlords Association; they probably don't include any more than half of the rental accommodation that's available in the city.

I did not say that it was because of my short term in office that we did not have this information available, I said it was because of the amount of time that it takes to accumulate this data, that we have to take CMHC statistics, which I said were only applicable to a part of the rental market, that we have to take the HUDAM statistics, those of the small landlords, those of blocks with under six suites and all those, and put them together in a comprehensive package with information that would be readily understandable to hopefully, anybody who wanted them; and that is not available, and it is not possible to be available at this present time because our staff are working very hard on the resolution of all of the complaints that have been lodged, the protests under the rental increases, under the arbitration section and they are gathering all the information for it.

When it's available in a form that is readily understandable, that can be used for comparative purposes or whatever other purposes, I'll be glad to make it available to members and to the general public. But if we were to set this aside now, we may not even have that information in time for the conclusion of this session so that would be a pointless exercise. Besides all of which, we've already passed a couple of the appropriations and we can't stop at this point in the middle of my Estimates, so let's get on with it.

MR. CORRIN: That's a fine response from a Minister representing a government that's going to be facing the electorate in the next year, Mr. Chairman, and that's all it is. He's trying to put a brave face on it but the truth is, Mr. Chairman, that the process matters more and what they're doing is callously disrespectful of the people of the City of Winnipeg, and Mr. Chairman, I will remain steadfast and I will remain adamant. They are not being respectful of the rights of tenants in this city. Mr. Chairman, the issue at hand is whether we're going to have a meaningful review of the effects of rent decontrol and Estimates, or whether we're going to play a little sham game.

I don't care whether the Minister is the nicest guy in the world. I don't care whether the government's polls show them to be 10 points behind I don't care what motivates this government to behave in the way it does. The point is, Mr. Chairman, that this is a forum wherein the truth is supposed to be revealed and the only way is to have statistical documentation. Do you remember — I remember now the Minister of Government Services has made his contribution to the debate from the seat of his

pants, Mr. Chairman, — do you remember how we discovered the report on rent decontrol in Manitoba last session? Do we all remember how it was first leaked? As a matter of fact, there were denials. Do we all remember how the then Minister of Consumer Affairs denied its existence initially, suggested they were working on it, they were looking into the situation, the matter was under review and then it came to the light of day that in fact there was a report and that the Minister had seemingly misled the House.

There was a great deal of controversy as to why the Minister was unaware of the report and then there was more controversy when it was found that certain parts of the report were changed, that there seemed to be two reports; there seemed to be so much difficulty. We had so much difficulty and members opposite wonder why we're so cynical. They think that the Opposition is being too cynical, that there's no evidence to sustain our concern about this problem. This couldn't happen in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Chairman, oh, no, that could only happen somewhere else, but yet it only happened a short year ago.

True, Mr. Chairman, part of the problem was rectified, the responsible Minister was transferred out of the portfolio. But, Mr. Chairman, notwithstanding that, notwithstanding the rumour that the new Minister is much more responsible and much more liberally inclined in his disposition toward this matter. —(Interjection)— We have had no evidence. The Leader of the Opposition says to be careful and I would heed his caution and caveat, because we've had no evidence in the last few days that there's any real substantive change. We had the Minister for Consumer Services on virtually every issue, popping up as the official spokesperson on behalf of the commercial sector and conglomerate interests of the Province of Manitoba; he's defended virtually every commercial interest that's been discussed. But, Mr. Chairman, there's good reason for the Opposition to be cynical and to question the motives of the government in this respect.

This government's not been an open one, Mr. Chairman. There's no evidence that this government believes in any sort of open process. It's off-topic, but I tell you that if we had freedom of information legislation in this province, then and only then could members of this Opposition and people outside this building get access to this sort of information and that's why it's so imperative that this sort of legislation be passed and brought into law.

Mr. Chairman, we are going nowhere and I'm the first to acknowledge it and I'm willing to do that by virtue of an adjournment. I'm willing to wait. I'm willing to deal with all the other items on the Estimates pages and there are lots of them. —(Interjection)

The member of the Progressive Party, the official party supremacist of Manitoba says, "not me". He will remind us of course, he's going to win the election, take office and he's going to march into the Department of Consumer Affairs and open the books. He's going to stand in his place and he's going to filibuster for hours until he gets the information. —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, similarity of approach is striking, that's why I bring it up. There's such a similarity between the absurd tenets and philosophy of the new Progressive Party

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

and the very old and well known philosophy of the Progressive Conservative Party. The interesting thing is that the Conservative Party changed its name from "Conservative" to "Progressive Conservative" and the new Progressive Party has changed its name only using the prefix "Progressive". But we know that we're in a constant state of flux and evolution, so we expect that eventually perhaps the full truth will out, but I'm not that optimistic. I'm not sure that the New Democratic Party will indeed take power. — (Interjection)— I suppose that I should reflect that sort of confidence, but I say that the people of Manitoba will determine that issue; we will do our best and we've done our best. Mr. Chairman, the important thing is the process, because surely the people have to be given an opportunity to reflect on the merits of both arguments. We can't have submissions presented from both sides of the House until we have the monitoring data, so what the government is attempting to do is simply prevent the debate, they don't want the debate to take place. — (Interjection)

Oh, thank you very much. The Minister suggests from his seat that the information will be available next year. My friend from St. Vital wants to know whether the same Minister will be available next year.

The more important thing, Mr. Chairman, is the question as to whether we're going to give the public a fair opportunity to hear both sides of the debate, or are we going to preclude that debate from happening by simply stonewalling on the information and the access to it. What we're engaged in, Mr. Chairman, and what we're facing is simply a political stonewall. The government is sitting back and the government is saying in due course, be patient and we're saying that people can't wait that long. I want to know about these 81 rents that were reduced after compulsory arbitration. I want to hear all about the 988 rent protests. I want to know about the monitoring that's been done. I want to know if people have been hurt and frankly, Mr. Chairman, I'm not willing to accept the opinion of the Minister as to whether that is the case or not.

He sits in his place and piously tells us that they're looking after the interests of tenants and that no one's being hurt and we needn't be concerned. I want to know that for myself. That's my job as a member of the Opposition and when he takes his turn, because I think that's the way it should be — the cycle goes on and we play the game regardless of where we stand and where we sit — when he takes his turn he'll say the same thing to me if I find myself in the fortunate position he's in today. So he too, Mr. Chairman, will press for the same sort of information and he'll make the same sorts of arguments.

Mr. Chairman, I sat here a few nights and I heard members that are now sitting on the front bench, make very similar impassioned pleas and I remember the vitriol; and I remember the ascetic state of the comments and, Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate that.

When you're in Opposition, your only tool is information. You can't participate in a meaningful debate without the tools of your trade, which are statistical facts, data and this sort of data is simply unobtainable from any other source than the Minister. We did our best last year. We tried to amend Bill 83 in such a way as to require the

compulsory tabling in each session of this information. That was a responsible approach. The government voted it down and said no. The government would not provide accessibility to the public and the Opposition, so we took the first step; and now, Mr. Chairman, we're taking the second step and probably what will amount to the last step.

We're saying that we don't want to go on in the absence of this information. We want an opportunity to have it. We're willing to debate all the rest of the Estimates. We're willing to come back at any time during the course of this Session to deal with this. But we don't want this important vital matter to be left unattended to this session. I don't think that's irresponsible. The Member for Inkster may feel that that's irresponsible, Mr. Chairman, but I don't feel that there's anything untoward about that. I think that's quite respectful of both the government and the process. We are simply saying give us access to the information and take your time if you have to.

So once again, I would ask whether the Minister or any other member of that Treasury Bench is willing to co-operate, because that's really what we're asking for is co-operation, and provide us a suitable opportunity to have access to the information and review it. If the information, in fact, sustains the position of the government then I suppose the Opposition will be embarrassed but the important thing is that the truth will be revealed and the public will be satisfied that there was no need for grave concern and that the rent decontrol measures have not had an adverse effect with respect to the public interest. That's a very simple matter, it's black and white. I think it's incumbent on members of a responsible government to take some more expansive position on this point.

So, I'll sit down again, and presumably the Member for Inkster will now attempt to bash down the argument and play his role as Government House Leader, as always. If he can't defeat a government he'll at least defeat an Opposition from taking a government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, the Official Opposition needs no help from me in defeating itself; it is doing a very good job at that and the foremost weapon in this defeat is the member who has just spoken. Mr. Chairman, the member has said that I will not be reasonable; the member has said he's prepared to pass every other item; I am not prepared to pass every other item. The member says he will pass every other item; I believe that that is unreasonable; I believe that that is accommodating the government; I believe that that is being in bed with the government; I believe that that is electing the conservatives and I don't intend to pass every other item and when he says that we will pass every other item he does not speak for members of the Progressive Party, the next government of the Province of Manitoba. That is correct, Mr. Speaker, that is correct. And you know, Mr. Speaker, they are laughing now, like the Liberals used to laugh between 1962 and 1966 when it came from this corner of the House that we will be the next government of the Province of Manitoba; and that's how the Liberals used to laugh, the second party in the House.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with the question of information that is being requested, because it is a legitimate request to ask for the information and I do not criticize that request. What I criticize is the suggestion that, if there was freedom of information legislation, the information would be there. As a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, I think this is a good idea at which to reflect on the effect of freedom of information legislation. First of all the Minister says that he doesn't have the information available, that it is going to be coming. If the member doesn't expect that answer he can hire a lawyer, under freedom of information legislation, and he can go to court and ask for a declaration that he is entitled to that information. And there will be a lawyer acting for him, at considerable expense; a lawyer acting for the other side, at considerable expense; and they will be arguing about whether this information should or should not be released. That takes, Mr. Chairman, in my experience a minimum of three weeks; a minimum of three weeks; a minimum of who knows how long, perhaps three months.

After the decision is made by the court that the member is entitled to the information the Minister says: I don't agree with that and I'm going to appeal; that will take a minimum, Mr. Chairman, of three weeks, a minimum of six weeks. And then, if that decision is not liked the Minister can say: I will apply for leave to the Supreme Court of Canada; and that will take a minimum of 20 days. And then maybe the Supreme Court will say: Deliver the information. I think indeed, that has happened from time to time. The Minister will at that time say: But it's not ready. So there will be a Show Cause Order as to what is a reasonable length of time in which it shall be decided and all of those things will take place, Mr. Chairman, in the courts.

Now I venture to say that the information that has not been requested will be delivered sooner than that, Mr. Chairman, therefore, I'm not willing to postpone by making that particular suggestion. The member says that the views of the Progressives on this question are the same as the views of the Conservatives.

Mr. Chairman, at last count, the views of the New Democrats on that question was the same as the views of the Conservatives. So I am only echoing what was the position of the New Democratic Party on this question at last count and I don't think that is unusual. Now if they tell me that perhaps they are committed to that convention; but they have a new convention, Mr. Chairman. What we pass at convention doesn't mean anything anymore. For two years, Mr. Chairman, for three years, there were a minimum of seven meetings on legislation requiring us to say that when employees go on strike the employer must not hire anybody; then at two conventions it became the major issue. Now they say, Mr. Chairman, oh it doesn't mean anything, it's not going to be an election issue; we're not going to campaign about that; we don't even want it.

CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Member for Lakeside on a point of order.

ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering perhaps if there could be of some advice to us as to what item

on the appropriations of the Minister we're now discussing?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have no idea. The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with information under The Landlord and Tenant Act and I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there has been in my view a perfectly legitimate request for some statistical information, which the Minister should be obliged to give, and which we in this group are not prepared to say we're going to pass every other item on the basis that that information has been given, because we may think that there is information needed in the other items and we are going to ask for it in the same way, and we're not going to give the Minister a way of avoiding it by saying, "Go to court and get it." We're going to try and get it from him.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3 — pass — the Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to debate with the Honourable Leader of the Progressive Party, but in view of the fact that he has made reference to the New Democratic Party's position on freedom of information, I will simply say, because I wouldn't want to call him a liar, that he has demonstrated a considerable amount of mendacity. Mr. Chairman, he knows full well what the position of that party is, what our party is. He may not have accepted it but there is, as I think all members know from the debates during Private Member's Hour, there is absolutely no association between the position taken

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lakeside on a point of order.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I know we have a reasonable amount of latitude in the discussion of the estimates, but we do have some forms, Sir, and I must ask you again. We have heard now from the Leader of the Progressive Party and we are now hearing a response from the Honourable Member from Wellington, but I'm having a great deal of difficulty in understanding what part of the appropriations of the Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs that we're dealing with and I suggest that is a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On that point of order I would strongly recommend that we do get back to Consumer Affairs rather than freedom of information and New Democratic Party conventions. I thought that there was possibly something that was being led up to that would come in Consumer Affairs and I had allowed the debate, but seeing nothing coming from the previous discussion I would have to rule it out of order.

The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, if I were out of order. I didn't mean to enjoin the self-proclaimed ex-Premier of Manitoba in debate. Mr. Chairman, I also apologize if I interfered with the flow of communicative exchange on the red-green access.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

That's a very important line of communication in this House and we want to do our best to support it and make it as efficient as possible, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, getting back to the item at hand. We would ask the Minister if he's now had sufficient opportunity to gather his thoughts and make a decision as to whether or not we're going to be provided with the material. Also, Mr. Chairman, I know of no rule that says that I have to speak if the Minister wants to clench his fist and set his jaw and sort of grimly ride out this storm. I think I'm entitled to do likewise and stand in my place and take my time and make whatever passing observations I wish on anything, as long as they have something to do with rent, landlord and tenant or consumer protection. So by way of a mini-filibuster, Mr. Chairman, I am quite willing to pass the time of day or pass the time of evening with members present and discuss a variety of concerns we have about the way this government manages and administers its affairs in the field of consumer protection. If the Honourable Minister sees fit to interrupt me I will gladly step down in order that he can provide us with some information and position on this important matter. I can tell him that, I think I can say this this evening, if there is no affirmative reply provided, he of course will be facing a question virtually every day during the Question Period on the same subject, which probably would be an unnecessary intrusion into the time of members during the Question Period. I don't imagine it would be a desirable consequence from the Honourable Minister's point of view. So it would appear that it might be prudent for him to consider whether he wouldn't like to adjourn this portion of Estimates Debate in order that we can obtain the information.

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

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I admit that although I was present all evening I have not paid that close attention to the request of the Member for Wellington nor the response from the Minister, but I have the impression that the Member for Wellington has asked for information, which the Minister has indicated he does not have available to him. I also understood from the Member of Wellington that he made a suggestion that he would be prepared to deal with all the other items in the Estimates, setting aside this one to enable the Minister to see if he could obtain this information so that it could be dealt with at the right time. That's my understanding of what has gone on and I would like to know from the Minister if he feels he will be able to obtain the information and if he can, whether he would be prepared to submit it to us, so that it could be dealt with at the proper time. It is so often that Ministers say, "At the time of my Estimates I will deal with this or the other matter", and that has usually been agreed to be a reasonable response, although not always accepted that way. So may I ask the Minister whether he can make an effort to obtain the information and whether it could be made available in time so that this particular item could be discussed in the light of the information which has been requested.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I would be willing to share the information with members opposite when it's available. I said that in the beginning and I repeat it now. I indicated to the member that we had done something similar in the smaller communities of Manitoba and we'd done five of them — Thompson, Brandon, The Pas, Portage la Prairie and so on and that is already available, but in Winnipeg we have the largest percentage of all of the rental accommodation in the whole province; we have had to deal with in the whole process through the Rentalsman and the Director of Arbitration and then the Minister committing compulsory arbitration, some 988 protests of which some 121 are still in process. I can assure the members opposite that the information that has to be gathered to make a rational decision on these rent protests for arbitration includes gathering together information on rental accommodation throughout the entire area surrounding the particular block in question and arriving at adjusted comparable rents and bringing these all . . . the statistical data that has to go together is very complex. We believe that the priority right now for the people that we have available to gather these statistics is to settle these rent protests under the arbitration process.

As a result of that, all of our staff are on that. Now part of the information they're gathering will go together, in fact most of the information they're gathering will go together to bring together the statistical picture that he wants when it's all complete. But judging by what's happened in the past eight months since July 1st, since this whole process started, and how much we have gathered, then we have to correlate it with CMHC material, with the HUDAM material that he has and so on and so forth and bring it all together, we will not have it available I'm assured within the next few weeks, perhaps within the next few months when it's available. I believe that it will support the government's position on rent decontrol, because I believe in the statements that I made that indicate that rent decontrol is working to the benefit of all concerned including the consumer, the tenant, and I'm prepared to stand behind the statements that I made based on just knowing what is coming in without having a complete picture, that compared to other cities rental accommodation in Winnipeg is less expensive, it appears to have had a slower rate of rent increase and is more available; that secondly, rental accommodation in Winnipeg is more available now than it has been for most of the past 10 years; that thirdly, the availability of units renting at relatively low rates in Winnipeg appears to be comparable or greater than that of units renting at higher rates; and fourthly, that rental accommodation in the inner city is more available now than it has been for most of the past years.

I believe that the statistical information he wants will in fact support all those positions and support the government's decision to go to decontrol rents. I would be more than happy to place it on the table because I believe he'll be embarrassed when it is on the table. But I don't have it and I don't expect to have it within the next few weeks or even perhaps the next month or two, and I'm not prepared to let my Estimates sit on the table until it is available. The House may not even be in Session. I think he's being

totally unreasonable, I can't believe what's happening; it's like a spoiled child at work in this whole Assembly because he's decided that he's not going to go ahead. I don't know what I can do in response to that situation. I'll sit here and listen.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister has indicated that the information will not be available to him for a matter of months I think he said.

MR. FILMON: I don't know.

MR. CHERNIACK: He doesn't know, but he has said that it will be of embarrassment to . . .

MR. FILMON: I believe it will.

MR. CHERNIACK: He believes it would be an embarrassment to the Opposition. I think that at this stage it's the information that is needed, whether embarrassment follows as a corollary is a matter that is on the political side. At this stage the Minister is attempting to justify his Estimates and on that basis if he had the information, even if it were embarrassing to him, I would like to think he would produce it. I said I'd like to think he would produce it; that's not necessarily consistent with what I think would happen.

But, Mr. Chairman, what the Minister has said is that from all that he sees coming before him, it appears to him that it would such as to justify the position he's taking. Well then to what extent can he share with us all that information that is coming before him, partial though it may be, nevertheless there must be something that is coming before him? Even though all this information will take a long time to collate, surely there must be something available now. To the extent that the Minister wishes to be cooperative in the presentation of his Estimates, let him produce what he has and let's see what that's worth.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I apologize because the member did indicate that he wasn't listening to the debate, but I made statements to the effect of what the raw data appears to be in terms of the overall increase being in line with the CPI, not in the range of 20 percent that was alluded to by members opposite and suggestions about the availability and raw percentages given CMHC figures and knowing what else we know about them, so on and so forth. Those are what lead to my conclusion. I'm suggesting that I believe the information is information that I'd like to share with members opposite if I had it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, from what I've heard and I still don't suggest that the information, even if it's in partial form, should not be available, but from what I have heard there isn't a Freedom of Information Act in the world that could compel the delivery of the information that the Minister is talking about. It's not there and no Freedom of Information Act compels an administration to produce information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (c) — pass; Clause 2 — pass.
The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Just in short response to what my honourable friend has said, I want to indicate that, and I know I'm being repetitious, but there has to be a sticking point, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I would hope that when the honourable members are speaking, repetition is out of order, please do not preface your remarks with I'm being repetitious; let me decide.
The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Yes, well in that case we'll stress the point, Mr. Chairman.

There is no other format within this forum for this sort of intensive review analysis and substantive debate. I don't know where else in the course of this Legislative Session that we could adequately deal and dispose with the documented material that I have requested. There does not seem to be any other appropriate place in which such a discussion or debate could take place. So what I am suggesting is that, and it's obviously of more importance because we may be in an election and obviously the program and policy in question is of vital concern to tens of thousands of Manitobans and therefore should be a vital concern to both the opposition and the government, I am suggesting that it is very important that this last Session, this last pre-election Session at least devote and dedicate a portion of its time to the question of this very important issue. I don't think that's being unreasonable at all. That is what the process of the Assembly is about — that's why this forum has evolved and why we respect its processes. For the government to say that we simply have to wait; well, what they're really saying is the people of Manitoba are not going to have access to information through the Assembly and that they are going to tell their story. The Minister stood up, and without being disrespectful, he read from a report four or five points, he had scripted four or five points, and he says that we should take that as being the whole truth and nothing but. I submit, Mr. Chairman, that the truth in politics is always subject to debate and discussion. There may not be an absolute truth in the world of politics. So what he honestly believes, what he sincerely holds as being the truth and represents as such to the Assembly may in our submission not be so. It's a question for the public to judge.

So I don't know why he's so intransigent. I have very few weapons. In this particular forum the only weapons the Opposition have, I suppose, are strong legs and strong jaws. But, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that the Minister, notwithstanding the fact that he is a new Minister, is being in truth disrespectful to the forum and the process. It's not a personal matter at all. It's a question of whether or not he respects the process and is willing to abide by it. He says that his government's program was justified, he suggests that the limited data which he has perused and observed sustains their position. But notwithstanding that, Mr. Chairman, many other Canadian provinces have retained rent controls. Manitoba has taken a fairly isolated position with

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

respect to that issue. So it's not really a case of Manitoba being with the pack; it's not a question of Manitoba being in concurrence and enjoying the consensus of all the other governments of the country. Here we have a situation where Manitoba regrettably in our submission is in the vanguard or in the rearguard. Manitoba is going the wrong way from our point of view. The Minister says that when the data comes in, he will prove that the decision taken by the government was justified and that it was responsible. Maybe — I'm not suggesting that that's an impossible conclusion. Occasionally governments are indeed correct. But the point is that the public has a right to judge that for itself.

It's not suitable for the Minister simply to read from a scripted piece, four or five points and say, well, that settles it, I'm looking after the interest of everybody and it's done — that's not a full discussion of an issue — there's no probative value to that sort of exercise.

Now this isn't a court of law and we can't subpoena the Minister to give evidence and we can't force him to reveal documents on which he bases his case, but we can at least ask questions. I think the Minister should respect that and be willing to simply suspend that portion of his Estimates while we review the others. He may be able to do more than he thinks in the next few days. It's possible that he'll be able to put together a good deal of material in the next three or four days, but if not, we can always leave the Estimates unconcluded and at an appropriate time we can reconvene and we can deal with this particular item, and on the presumption that the government is able to pass all the other Estimate items in this appropriation. I presume with its majority it will.

So we're simply asking for the opportunity to deal with this. It's not to me, actually I'm quite surprised, when I originally raised the question frankly I thought that the Minister would be disposed to grant my request. I thought that it would be a rather common sensical sort of approach and he would say, well we had nothing to hide, we're not afraid of a debate, we can tan your hides in a debate, we were right and we're going to prove it, we're going to verify the conclusions reached prior to the decontrol decision. It's an opportunity really, Mr. Chairman, it is an opportunity for the government to shine if the Minister is correct. This information, when it's revealed, will corroborate, confirm and sustain his position. He and his predecessor are going to be heroes; they're going to be publicly acclaimed as being far-sighted politicians, men who had a vision and men who were able to implement a vision. So they should be willing to take what would appear to be a not very bold chance and gain the opportunity to gain the upper hand. As I said before, an election is probably in the offing, this is an appropriate time for them to demonstrate their wisdom.

So I don't understand why we have this resistance. One almost is moved to comment that the government seems to be acting covertly, attempting to conceal the documentary evidence, keep the data away from the Opposition, away from the public. That's the impression that's given that they don't want to reveal this information and no amount of smiles and "ah, shucks" good intentions makes it any different, Mr. Chairman. The process is what is

important and if we're being disrespectful of the process we're only making fools of ourselves and fooling ourselves. We are deluding ourselves because we all take turns; we would have it no other way. That's the competitive system we like; I'm sure everybody in this House agrees, we don't want to change that aspect of this parliamentary process. We want the competition, we want the opportunity to prove our cases.

So what we're doing is we're simply asking the Minister to give himself and his government an opportunity to prove a case, which he says he can do handily, which will reveal his government's wisdom and which will undoubtedly embarrass the Opposition, make hash of the Opposition's position over the last two to three years, so I can't understand why he continues to . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, perhaps somebody can guide me as to what's happening here, because I could accept the criticism that the Member for Wellington is laying at me. I might even be able to understand it if only he could tell me how it is that — if I had the information and wasn't revealing it, then I could accept the criticism or I could at least understand it. But I said to him in the beginning all my judgments are based on at the moment are samplings that are based on the kind of gathering of information that's going into the rental arbitration review process, they may not be statically valid, they're gathered from areas where we have protests so they don't represent an across-the-board view of things and that's gone into the information that I've provided him with in hopes of being of assistance to him. But what he's asking me to do is like my standing up and demanding that he provide for me on the spot an analysis of all the members of the New Democratic Party in Manitoba by age, by income, by ethnic origin, by colour preference, by everything, and he can say to me, well, we don't have that information. That's the kind of analysis that we don't have at the moment but we're doing a computerized . . .

MR. GREEN: It would be very easy to do.

MR. FILMON: Then, you know, I could stand here all night and keep demanding that he provide that information for me. That makes as much sense to me as what he's asking me to do. He's asking me to produce something I've already said isn't available even to me in the form that he wants it, which is a complete review and analysis that will enable him and his party and we on this side with the opportunity to evaluate just how rent decontrol has worked in this province since it occurred from July 1 onward. I don't have that information. Because it's going to take so long to produce, I can't guarantee him that it will be available this week or next or even before the end of this Session, but as I say to him because I believe it will be very important to us in proving our case, not only to him but to the people in Manitoba, I can assure him that kind of information will have to be made available in order to once and for all settle the arguments of rent decontrol. But because it's obvious that he's going to spend a lot of time on this issue and we're

debating it philosophically and the statistics are meaningless, they're just something that he has seized on that will enable him to keep speaking tonight; let me tell him what some of the experts are saying with respect to decontrols. A quote from the Winnipeg Free Press, Tuesday, January 13, the headline, "Manitoba Praised For Dropping Rent Controls. Manitoba and Alberta get top marks for dropping rent controls says Dr. Walter Block, the senior economist of the Fraser Institute, an independent economics research group based in Vancouver, citing that the two provinces as being the only in Canada to terminate controlling provincial legislation. Block says extensive studies have shown such a rent limiting program reduces incentive to supply new rental housing. Rent controls, he says, don't benefit anyone and especially hurt the poor who suffer most from lack of available space. The MLAs of Alberta and Manitoba are to be congratulated for their wisdom in terminating rent controls. The other Canadian provinces are heading for a rental housing crisis. The findings are published in the institute's new book "Rent Control Myths and Realities". The book is a collection of some of the many conclusions discussed in a number of studies on rental housing experiences in six countries during the past 50 years. Block says surprisingly a low opinion of rent control is shared by all economists, regardless of ideological bent. Economists appear to be unanimous in their opinion about the effects of rent control. In many cases rent control appears to be the most efficient technique presently known to destroy a city except by bombing, Block says.

A section by Professor Edgar Olson, co-editor of the book, and Dr. Michael Walker, Director of the Institute, sets forth alternative means of achieving goals sought by rent control advocates. Block says their positive proposal features a housing allowance as the most efficient and equitable means of subsidizing poorer tenants." Interesting that we've been doing that as well. He notes, "Tenants in many cities are clamouring for additional and strengthened rent controls in the face of record low vacancy rates and he adds politicians in provinces other than Manitoba and Alberta are unwilling to end rent controls for fear of adverse political reactions. In a synopsis of the new study Block says rent control is all too often initiated without clear understanding of its effects or consideration of alternative means to the same ends." He goes on to note, "It is frequently alleged that rent controls are inevitable in a democracy because tenants greatly outnumber landlords and this voting strength sways the election minded politician. Yet at least until recently rent control has been the exception rather than the rule in the United States. In Europe where it has been pervasive since World War I, governments have been moving slowly toward decontrol for more than a decade. Therefore it would seem more accurate to say that introduction of rent control is politically feasible only in areas with no recent experience because only an electorate uninformed of its consequences will support it. The institute decided to undertake and publish this study because it contends the more deeply a harmful government program is entrenched and thus the more politically impossible it is to change, the greater the need there is for economists to speak out. If the economists kowtow

to uninformed popular opinion in such cases, the citizenry will never learn the truth."

In addition to that, as I mentioned to the member, I just returned from a Housing Ministers' Conference in Newfoundland in which eight of the ten provinces were represented and I can tell you that even those who have rent controls would like to be out of them today. (Interjection)— Oh, you've managed to speak long enough, you now have somebody to carry on, that's fine.

But this is what I've been saying, I do not have the information that the member asked for and therefore that's why I can't produce it, not because I'm unwilling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I am going to criticize the Minister in a way which I think makes what he has done here tonight, and I think that he should reflect on it and not let it happen again, because to a great extent he is to blame for what has occurred, not with respect to the information because there isn't a Freedom of Information Act in the world that has ever been devised that could elicit information that isn't there. If the Minister doesn't have the information and it isn't there, then there's no Freedom of Information Act that can elicit it and if there is going to be one devised, Mr. Chairman, that merely indicates the danger of Freedom of Informations Act, because you will have the judges telling you not only to release information which you have but requiring you to compile information and administering the government.

What I criticize the Minister for doing is for making several statements which he says are based on analysis of the facts without having any analysis to back them up and therefore if the Minister is merely going to read to us the speeches that have been made by various economists on one side of this question and repeat what has been said and drummed into our ears on numerous occasions, that rent controls are the fastest way of destroying a city except for a bomb. I mean we have heard that repeated numerous times. These are opinions with respect to rent controls. We know the Minister has his opinion with respect to rent controls and the Minister should therefore not get up and say that on the basis of what is available to me I am able to deduce the following things: one, two, three, four, because, Mr. Chairman, he says he has a basis for it. If he has the basis for it, then as I said earlier, the Member for Wellington is perfectly right in asking for the basis.

What we now know, Mr. Chairman, is he has no basis for it, that the statement that I have a basis for making these statements is a baseless statement. I tell the Minister that much of the last hour's debate is his own fault; it is the fault of nobody else. If he wants to get up as is his right to do and to explain that his government, on the basis of their understanding of it, and on the basis of everything that occurred last year, and on the basis of what economists have said, thinks that getting out of rent control is going to proven to be right, then he is engaged in a philosophical debate. When the Minister gets up and says on the basis of what I

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

know these four things are going to be proven, then I think that members have a right to say what do you know? And we found out that he doesn't know anything. So on the basis of not knowing anything, he finds out that the Conservative position vis-a-vis rent control has been proven. Well, Mr. Chairman, that is about the basis of all of the Conservative proposition, on the basis of knowing nothing. So if he is saying that the know-nothing proposition that he is advancing has no basis, then I don't think that the Member for Wellington can ask for the basis which we have determined is nothing.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Member for Inkster wasn't here through the whole thing. At various times I quoted from CMHC's statistics, which are available, which the member opposite has. I quoted from other and this is an interpretation which I have of the statistics that are available, but he has asked for more than that and I am saying that will not be available until we have done all those. We do have the HUDAM, we do have the CMHC, but they aren't the basis by which we can give him the complete statistics of what's happening area by area, type of accommodation by type of accommodation, percentage increase by percentage increase. We only have pieces that are being put together and this is my interpretation based on that information, because he gave his interpretation, which I disagreed with. So based on that . . . we don't have the information and we won't have what he's asking for, for quite sometime.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Chairman, can you imagine that we've actually had Walter Block quoted, an economist who had actually in this time and place commend Alberta for discontinuing a rent control program? And that was part of the record read by my honourable friend. Can you imagine somebody commending the Government of Alberta for suspending a program when they have such a housing crisis? It's suffice to say, Mr. Chairman, that the philosophical disposition of such an economist is rather apparent. He is, and I think as most of us know, an ideologue of the neo-conservative right wing and frankly I'm rather shocked that the Minister would rely on that particular reference to sustain his argument.

This is, Mr. Chairman, nothing but an ideological approach to rent control and I think it should be an embarrassment for the government that in the final analysis, three-quarters of a year after they decontrolled rents in Manitoba, they have nothing better than to fall back on than Walter Block, a neo-conservatist ideology. That's not rational stewardship in government, Mr. Chairman, that's simply old dogma.

So, Mr. Chairman, I don't know how this Minister expects us to be able to pass these Estimates. What he's asking us to do in effect is to pass a pig in a poke. He can't tell us why he feels he's justified in taking the course of action he has as a Minister. He indicates that the information and the evidence isn't in. He can't confirm the case that he says is justifiable. But yet, Mr. Chairman, he would have the

Opposition come here and pass his Estimates. Well, Mr. Chairman, I will say, as one Member of the Opposition that I cannot do that and I think that I can speak on behalf of all Members of the New Democrat Opposition and say that as a group we cannot do that. We can't accept this particular item. The Minister has not satisfied us that he has control and command of the situation. He has indicated on numerous occasions that he's new to the post and I commiserate with that. I appreciate that that puts him in a very difficult position but as I said earlier, we did not, we did not dictate that there should be a transition or a transference of responsibility as between members of the front Bench. It wasn't this side that made that decision, Mr. Chairman. The First Minister and the government decided to do that. If they put themselves in an awkward position and subjected themselves to this sort of criticism, that's on their head and we don't have to answer for that. So without further ado, Mr. Chairman, I can say that we regard the government as being completely irresponsible. We think that the government owes an apology to the electorate which it purports to govern on behalf of and frankly, Mr. Chairman, again we remind the government that it simply provides us with another election issue, because whether they want to sweep it under the rug, whether that is part of their concerted plan, whether that's part of their hidden agenda, as so many things are, Mr. Chairman, these days, whether they intend to dissimulate, whether they intend to conceal the truth or not, Mr. Chairman, the public of Manitoba will be reminded that this information was not forthcoming and that the government was unable to confirm its position with respect to rent decontrol and the public ultimately will make a decision. So, that's fine, the government has had it's way once again, Mr. Chairman, but surely some time or other there will be a price to pay.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Clause 2 — pass; Resolution No. 37 — pass.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,436,900 for Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Environment. Consumer Affairs \$1,436,900.00 — pass.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Chairman, while you have been busily reading there are two members on this side who have been standing.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well —(Interjection)— Order please. It's a little embarrassing to be corrected for making an error. I don't mind being corrected for not making an error but after I had called Resolution No. 37, I looked to see if there was any member standing and there were not any members standing; there were not. The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Chairman, I wanted to deal with another subject briefly with the Minister. Is the Chairman advising that that Resolution was passed?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I just finished passing it to the Honourable Opposition House Leader. The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. WALDING: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, you might have called Resolution 37, and then looked up, but following that you read the resolution that was before the House, "Resolved that there be granted, etc." When you had finished reading out the motion, surely that would be the time to look up to see if anyone wished to speak to that motion that you had put before that committee and by that time, I know that both my leader and my colleague from Wellington were standing up and waiting to catch your eye.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, to the Honourable Member of St. Vital, I didn't look up. I had not assumed, I had just taken it that it was so, when I had made the call on Resolution 37 and if I have erred I would be happy to acknowledge one of the speakers. The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was standing; I trust then I can proceed on this subject, according to your ruling, Mr. Chairman. Is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, my questions I'd like to direct towards the Minister rise out of the bankruptcy which took place this past year involving a furniture company.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): On a point of order. That item that my honourable friend now wants to discuss comes under the next item, 38. If you pass the previous item then you can get on that particular one. I think there is a rule in this place that compels a member to speak on the items that are under discussion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was just starting to get my thoughts together on what the Honourable Opposition House Leader was speaking and if it's on Corporate Affairs, the Honourable Opposition House Leader:

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm dealing with the matter of Consumer Protection and that is the reason why I rose to speak. I can await the next item, but this is Consumer Protection that I'm going to be dealing with and if the Member for Morris wasn't so jumpy and if he had waited for a few moments then he might understand the basis for my comments under this particular item, and we would be thus saving everybody a lot of time this evening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, only in the interest of saving everybody time perhaps the Leader of the Opposition would like to consult with his colleagues because that specific matter was raised and discussed this afternoon under this appropriation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions that I believe were not raised this afternoon; if indeed they were then I'm ready to be

corrected. Mr. Chairman, the area of concern that I have and I don't mean, because I can see the Minister is somewhat impatient, somewhat impatient to take a great deal of time but we are dealing with a matter that has affected some hundreds of consumers during the past year, some hundreds of consumers that lost considerable sums of moneys and I have personally received considerable correspondence, as I'm sure the Minister and every member of this Legislature has received.

Mr. Chairman, I would first ask the Minister if he is contemplating any legislation that would deal with protection of consumers in situations such as this, that place deposits on the purchase of goods and those goods are identified and later the company enters into bankruptcy.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I can confirm that that specific question was asked and the answer is in Hansard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: And I would apologize, it's the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, the area that I would trust that the Minister would be examining and I want to make this representation to him this evening that legislation would provide for goods that are indeed identified as being the goods being purchased by a consumer, would be considered as goods being held in trust for that consumer, so that if deposit is paid, that the deposit would be properly reflected upon credit of that particular item. I think there's a serious gap in the present legislation in the Province of Manitoba in this area of consumer protection that apparently this is not the case. Certainly I was surprised that it was the case, that deposits of \$500 or \$1,000 could be made in any given transaction — goods identified, goods still being held in storage, a firm going bankrupt. At the present time there is a void in legislation that does not protect a consumer in any given situation such as this, so specifically, I want to then ask the Minister and again if the Minister tells me that the answer is in Hansard I will accept that. I will accept that, but if it is not in Hansard then I would expect the Minister to provide me with a response.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I can advise him if the goods can be identified for which the deposit specifically refers to, that they do have a prior claim under The Bankruptcy Act and I did say that in response to a similar question that if the members were suggesting that we could enact legislation that would change the order of claim priority and in bankruptcy that's under federal jurisdiction and nothing we could pass could alter that. Now, there were other suggestions made that might come in the way of bonding that would provide a pool of funds to people who might, at a time of bankruptcy be disadvantaged this way and not be able to claim their money because it was just a general deposit and there wasn't a specific item that could be attached for prior claim, that that was very complicated and I explained what the considerations might be and agreed to take it under advisement and discuss it with my staff for future consideration.

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

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I just want to get it clear. The member indicates that under The Federal Bankruptcy Act there is a right to protect a deposit for an identifiable object. I think probably he means something that has a serial number on it which is clearly definable as being that particular article. I'm thinking more, Mr. Chairman, of the occasion when there are, let us say, there's a dining room table and orders are accepted for that dining room table, not for that particular piece of wood, or fabricated wood, but for replacements or for similar. I am not under the impression, and it's been a long time since I've looked at The Bankruptcy Act, that a deposit on that kind of an order is protected. If it is, then I'd be happy if the Minister could, now or in due course, give us a citation that supports it. But if my impression is right and there is no protection now in law then the question that I would raise, and I listened to the debate on bonding and that's not what I have in mind, the question that I would like to raise is the extent to which the customer can go back into the workshop to see whether or not there are those fabricated articles in the warehouse that could be identified, not by particular serial number, but if there are say three of them in the warehouse and there are three deposits or only two deposits outstanding; I don't know whether it can be protected. My impression of the law is that there is no protection for that. So I say if there . . . Oh, the Minister agrees, there's no protection. Then the question that I would oppose in connection with the first, the complaints that my leader referred to, could be something that could be reviewed by this Minister and his department. I should remind the Minister that his department is one of the newer departments in the Government of Manitoba and that 15 years ago, or very little more than 15 years ago, there was a great deal that was missing in the law and therefore there wasn't even a justification at that time for a department for consumer protection; now there is. And his department no doubt should be looking for greater and greater opportunities to protect the public in commercial transactions so I'm asking the Minister in the same line as my leader has asked — what thoughts have been given by him and his department to protect that kind of a situation.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I repeat for the third time my willingness to have my department look into that.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, then I conclude that the department has not looked at it at all, in spite of these complaints. But the Minister, and I'm glad that he is saying, and that's why I think I said to him, was it only yesterday, I welcome him in this department because I'm looking for the possibility that the department will start doing a little more than is done in the past under his predecessor and if he is willing now to undertake to look at new ideas, then I think that's worthwhile. But I'm assuming now that that particular problem has not been considered by the department in spite of the fact that the problem has had a great deal of publicity over recent, over all the bankruptcies that have been taking place. The Minister for Economic Affairs is about to make a contribution, I'm sure, because his mouth is open and his lips are writhing and if he's going to make

that contribution, I who was going to leave, am about to stay and listen to the pearls of wisdom which no doubt will come forth from him at any moment.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Chairman, I believe that there have been similar circumstances in the past, perhaps again through furniture bankruptcy in which similar circumstances occurred and I'm sure that the previous speaker's government took a close look at it. Obviously the problem still exists, so I'll ask my department to take another close look at it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 37 — pass; Resolution 38.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to speak on 37. I wanted to discuss the question of travel agents deposits, something that came before the House in 1978, came before the House again — the Member for Transcona raised it in 1979.

The Government of Ontario, of course, has taken heed of the problem and has now passed revising legislation. I believe the legislation's format is one that requires travel agents to have central bonding so that defaults within the industry are covered by the bonding company or by the bonding contract, I suppose. I'd like to know whether this Minister has any different disposition to this problem than his predecessor and whether he is going to take some affirmative action with respect to this problem.

This caused, as you will remember, Mr. Chairman, many problems for people who had contracted for trips with companies that went bankrupt and as my colleagues say in the context of the current Manitoba economy, this is an ever-present problem. My Leader reminds me that there was a promise in the Throne Speech several years ago that there would be, and I remember it now well, that there would be some remedial legislation introduced in order to deal with this problem. Now that wasn't forthcoming, Mr. Chairman. The government seems to have forgotten its pledge, of course having taken the benefit of it by virtue of having it included in its Throne Speech in 1978. Can the government now advise what the status of this promise to the people of Manitoba is and whether any reforming legislation or regulations will be coming into force?

MR. FILMON: I can confirm that my predecessor did have extensive discussions and correspondence with members of the travel industry and that upon my arrival on the scene I've been in contact with the Chairman of the Legislative Committee that's been set up by the Manitoba Travel Industry Association, and because of his business commitments he could not meet with me until after March of this year: he and his members, he could not get them together. The matter is under consideration for self-regulation type of legislation and they are interested in it and we are interested in it, but it has to be further discussed and that's a matter that will be resolved I would hope at some point in the near future.

MR. CORRIN: Yes. I was wondering with respect to the many bankruptcies that have taken place, Mr. Chairman, whether there have been any further complaints received by the government from disappointed travellers or would-be travellers who have lost deposits to insolvent agents. Can we have

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

any advice as to such predicaments as may have arisen in the last two years?

MR. FILMON: I can only advise that we are not aware of any bankruptcies that have occurred within the travel industry in Manitoba that have resulted in loss of deposits or moneys to people. The only incident that we have on record is the one incident that occurred a number of years ago where a couple lost, I believe, \$2,500 in deposit. So it's not, shall we say, a hot situation that could erupt or a volatile situation; it's one that we recognize as something that would be advisable to do or would be a good thing to do and obviously it would be best handled by regulation that the industry could live with on a self-regulating basis that wouldn't involve a whole lot of new government bureaucracy, and that's the kind of thing we're aiming for and working towards.

MR. CORRIN: I wish the government well in the execution of its responsibility, Mr. Chairman. I would publicly note that I regret that it's taken the government so long to deal with what the Minister describes as a relatively simple problem. It may be simple, but it's always pending and there's always the possibility that more people will become ensnared in those sorts of circumstances. I think that the government, knowing that the problem exists, should take some sort of effective course of action in order to prevent it from happening.

While I'm up, Mr. Chairman, I'd also like to ask about class action legislation and whether the Government of Manitoba has decided whether to follow the Province of Quebec and several American jurisdictions into this particular area? Is there any policy discussion relative to enabling legislation that would allow classes of consumers to participate in litigation?

MR. FILMON: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CORRIN: I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that as a matter of cost because of the nature of the economy we live within that there are some aspects of this sort of legislation that should recommend itself to a Minister responsible for Consumer Affairs. As I'm sure a lot of the members are aware, litigation costs in consumer actions in the courts can be exceedingly expensive. One of the ways that other jurisdictions have found to curtail these sort of costs is to allow consumers in a representative capacity on a class action basis, to present litigation within the jurisdiction so that one person or one association, one legal entity, can present a suit on behalf of all consumers who have the same problem. Mr. Chairman, I think it's very important that we give consideration to this because you know every day we have evidence that as a result of the nature of our heavily industrialized society that these situations are arising at an alarmingly increasing rate. Just last week there was an announcement from General Motors that several models of their cars for the years, I believe, 1979 through '81 were to be recalled. Mr. Chairman, we know that there have been cases in the United States involving deaths and injuries that have occurred as a result of certain malfunctions, engineering defects in automobiles and other consumer items. It seems to me that it's a hardship on any one individual to be forced into the

position of having to bring forward their own action and perhaps even a greater hardship, I'm thinking about the, not just necessarily the impecunious litigant but even the ordinary middle-class litigant because court action is very expensive. But it's also a hardship, I would submit, on all the others, on all the other people who should necessarily be included and have a right to bring an action on a similar basis. It seems as a matter of common sense and good reason that these sort of matters should be presented jointly at one time and in one forum.

So I would suggest that the Minister should look very closely at the legislation that's being adopted in other jurisdictions with a view towards recommending its adoption in Manitoba. I can just think and it's from my own personal experience; I was involved in a case not too long ago that involved a community of, I don't know exact numbers, but 3,000 to 5,000 people. I believe as a matter of fact, Mr. Chairman, most of the residents resided within your constituency. Mr. Chairman, we had a great deal of difficulty trying to determine which individual would act as a representative in order to bring the action in the courts. There was a lot of difficulty because a number of people were reticent to add their names for a variety of reasons — people have different reasons.

There was also considerable concern, Mr. Chairman, about the costs associated with the action. As a result it required the people to go through what I thought were unnecessary hardships and difficulties in bringing the case before the court. I can imagine in a variety of consumer contexts this would also be the case.

So I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that Manitoba should certainly look at the legislation that's been adopted in other forums and give serious consideration to this. I'm wonder whether the Minister in indicating his negative disposition does so with any background. Is there a reason why he is opposed to this particular approach to consumer law and litigation? I presume there must be a very good reason because obviously it repudiates the position taken in other jurisdictions, and the position that I know is recommended by the American Consumer Association; I know that they're lobbying Congress in the United States and they're asking for reformative legislation there. I would like for once, Mr. Chairman, I would like to see Manitoba lead the way. There was a time, Mr. Chairman, not too long ago that we were in fact leaders in the field of consumer innovation and reform. We boldly struck out and did things which were emulated, subsequently emulated by other jurisdictions. We were proud of it, Mr. Chairman, and I think there was good reason for many people to be proud of that. So I would ask why the Minister is resisting this particular reform?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 37 — pass. Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,436,900 for Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Environment — Consumer Affairs \$1,436,900 — pass. Resolution No. 38, Clause 3. Corporate Affairs (a) Corporation Branch (1) Salaries.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was just wondering if there's any disposition to adjourn.

Thursday, 5 March, 1981

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, when I hear somebody wanting to adjourn at 11:00 o'clock, I move that the Committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise.