

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 20, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the Speaker's gallery where we have with us today the Assistant Attorney General from St. Paul, Minnesota, Nancy Bode; as well as Rollie Hunter and Kathryn Swanson from the State of Minnesota, Department of Public Safety.

Also with us this afternoon in the public gallery from the Shaughnessy Park School we have seventeen Grade 4 students under the direction of Colin Stark. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux); and from the River Heights School, sixty Grade 8 students under the direction of Lynn Garvey, Leon Diller and Jeff Harwood. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Videon Cable TV Negative Option Sales

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connelly). Today at 10:30 a.m., Videon Cable TV announced that a new package of sports, news and entertainment will be available to their subscribers on a negative-option basis. What this means is that subscribers will be charged automatically unless they contact Videon in order to have the service cut. Can the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs tell us if it is acceptable policy to his ministry to encourage or even allow, within the Province of Manitoba, negative-option sales?

Hon. Edward Connelly (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): We have had in our department no complaints to the Consumers' Bureau vis-a-vis that particular method of selling. If the Member has some concerns, we will look at it, but we have had no complaints to date.

* (1335)

Consumer Protection Legislation Negative Option Disallowance

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is not good contract law. We do not even have a legitimate offer and a legitimate

acceptance, because an acceptance requires a "yes" and they are not asked for a "yes." Can the Minister assure the House today that his department will re-evaluate legislation in his department to ensure that type of protection is afforded to the citizens of the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Edward Connelly (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I thank the Member for that question. I can assure you that I will ask our department to review it to ensure that what they are doing is legal, and we will get the information back to the Member.

Mrs. Carstairs: It is not a matter of whether it is legal or not legal. It is perfectly legal, because we do not have consumer protection legislation which would make it illegal. Will the Minister investigate and come forth with legislation which would make negative option purchasing illegal in the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Connelly: Mr. Speaker, consumer legislation is being reviewed by our department. As soon as we have legislation ready to present to the House, we will do that.

Mrs. Carstairs: If legislation is being prepared, surely the Minister knows if it is going to include a negative option disallowance. Can the Minister tell us today if his departmental officials are looking at a specific disallowance for negative option sales in the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Connelly: The Member knows full well that legislation is not disclosed before it is presented to this Legislature. When the legislation is ready and prepared, we will present it to this Legislature.

Videon Cable TV Negative Option Sales

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Downey). Many seniors may not have the full knowledge available to them with regard to the specific programs, and yet they could find themselves paying \$35 a year fee for programs which they do not want but which they will get automatically as a result of this negative option policy. Will the Minister tell us what steps he will take to inform seniors of this negative option, so that they will not indeed be given a service they do not want?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) for that question. As we have done on all other issues, as we have done as a Conservative Party, we will consult very fully with the seniors as to how they feel this will impact upon them and act in the best interest of the seniors.

Mrs. Carstairs: With a final question to the Minister responsible for Seniors, will he go a step further and will he urge, since the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is obviously not going to bring forth his legislation in time, Winnipeg Videon to advertise in the seniors' publications so that we can ensure that this program is fully understood by seniors and that they have the knowledge to make the phone call and discontinue this service and, therefore, not be charged unfairly?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, it is my intention, as quick as this week, to be meeting with the leaders of the seniors' organizations in Manitoba to discuss not only that issue but other major issues and initiatives that this Government is putting forward. We are having Seniors Day on Friday and I will put that on the agenda to discuss with the seniors and my colleague who is responsible for any legislation, and this will be discussed fully with him as well.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The numbers are already coming in, in terms of the effect of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States. In the absence of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), I would address my question to—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Okay, I will not mention his absence.

An Honourable Member: Apologize.

Mr. Doer: I apologize. I will address my question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). A little touchy today, are you? It is early.

* (1340)

Free Trade Agreement Job Loss

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The trade surplus in Canada has declined dramatically with the United States under the Free Trade Agreement. It used to be sitting at about \$26 billion per year. The latest figures indicate that it is down to about \$646 million per month, which would leave us under \$10 billion in a surplus under the free trade, as opposed to the pre-free trade trading environment.

Given the fact we have had families in Manitoba lose their jobs at Molson's and Ogilvie's and Lipton's and Marr's Marina, in railways and other related industries, and that does not even include the Americanization of the unemployment insurance and their Medicare, I would ask the Minister of Finance, what is the analysis of the Government of how many jobs have been lost in Manitoba with the Free Trade Agreement in terms of the impact on families in this province since January 1, 1989?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there can be none attributed to the Free Trade

Agreement. Seeing that the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) is wanting to quote statistics, I might remind him that in the Province of Manitoba for March 1989 that we had an increase in the value of manufacturing shipments. It was up 9 percent. It was up 12 percent for the first three months of the year. Manitoba has the second-highest increase among provinces in all of Canada.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Minister will recall that the manufacturing increase the year before was 16 percent so this is a net decline from previous Governments, if he wants to talk about statistics.

Bottom Line Technologies Inc. Mexico Relocation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). He quoted the manufacturing industry, and the manufacturing industry is one of the areas that we were most worried about under the Free Trade Agreement. In Ontario, there have been hundreds and thousands of jobs lost recently with manufacturing companies relocating to Mexico under the loopholes in the Free Trade Agreement.

My question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), is his Government aware of a company named Bottom Line Technologies Inc., a company that is working with the Pinsa Group to attract Manitoba businesses to relocate their manufacturing enterprises in the less labour cost area of Mexico as part of their activity under the Free Trade Agreement? What is the analysis of what impact that will be on our province?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I understand that questions awareness are in order. In response to the question, I have to indicate that I am not aware of this, but I am aware that the Province of Ontario has imposed a payroll tax and that may be one of the reasons why a number of their firms are now looking elsewhere to conduct their business.

Free Trade Agreement Mexico Relocation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is a very, very whimsical answer to a very important issue. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is quoting manufacturing statistics. Manitoba has a strong manufacturing base. It is one of the potential areas affected in our economy under the Free Trade Agreement, and why has this Government not conducted a possible impact of companies relocating to Mexico when there has been an active campaign going on in our economy over the last month? Why can he not tell the Province of Manitoba how many families could be affected by this company that is trying to take jobs to Mexico as part of the Free Trade Agreement?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is a competitive world. Canada and

Manitoba have joined that competitive world by way of the federal election. The people of Canada indicated and the people of Manitoba indicated that they wanted to be part of the competitive world. I can indicate to the Member opposite that there are other jurisdictions in the world who are seeking outside investment capital, indeed as Canada is seeking outside sources of capital to invest in this country.

I can indicate to the Member that I do not have the list of those levels of capital that are coming to Manitoba now, but if he can recall the Premier's speech during the Budget, there was a long list of companies that are now setting up shop, bringing investment capital, creating jobs in the Province of Manitoba. He is well aware of that. That is reflected in these statistics that I presented to him, and certainly it will continue to be presented by way of the ongoing good news associated with the Manitoba economy.

Mr. Doer: Tell that to the Ogilvie workers, the Marr's Marina workers and the Lipton workers and their families, Mr. Speaker.

* (1345)

Job Loss

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), given the fact that there has been no study by this Government over the last month of the impact of companies that are being attracted potentially to Mexico as part of the Free Trade Agreement, would he guarantee Manitobans that they will indeed start looking at some of the potential downfalls of the Free Trade Agreement, start looking at the fact that this company is attracting companies down to Mexico with an incentive of \$20,000 less a year for workers' salaries, and if that is part of the competitive realities that this Minister is in favour of, Mr. Speaker, I know that many Manitobans do not support that position in terms of our economy.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Again, Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a definitive response to the question, but the Member has used the word "possible," in other words—or potential, pardon me. I indicate again the very thrust of our Budget, the very thrust of all our economic development plans are to try and again indicate to Manitobans there is a Government in place that is trying to improve the economic environment. So the fact that we have almost the highest personal tax regime within the country, the fact that we have the highest corporate tax regime within the country, the fact that we have a payroll tax in place, that there is a Government in place that realizes that and is trying to do what it can to make Manitoba competitive vis-a-vis other provinces, indeed vis-a-vis other countries within the world.

Unemployment Figures Job Training Initiatives

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Finance Minister has announced the one

positive indicator in this province, but the reality is after a year of his administration almost every other economic indicator is down. Unemployment is up, retail sales are down in real terms, housing starts are down again, and today we have another enormous increase in business bankruptcies.

It is the unemployed who are most severely impacted by these changes. I would like to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), where does he expect the jobless to turn, given the changes to UIC federally and his cutbacks in employment training programs here in the province?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The Member makes reference to business bankruptcies. I do not hear him talk about Liberal Quebec, where in the month of May, or for the year to date, there were almost 1,400 business bankruptcies. I do not hear him address that. No doubt, he will be coming specifically back to Manitoba's numbers.

As we have indicated on many, many occasions, and indeed as I have challenged Members particularly of the Liberal Party during debate on the Budget, to lay before us their economic development plan, because we have indicated that we are not going to follow the NDP approach and try and buy economic statistics by way of borrowing money to put money into the Jobs Fund to employ people to cut grass.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we have announced our economic development plan within the Budget with support of a \$30 million commitment to Venture Capital Development . . . small business loan guarantees, and I am saying to the Liberals, show us their way.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, after a year, what he has shown us is an economic destruction plan.

Unemployment Insurance Benefit Reforms

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Michael Wilson stated in the House of Commons on June 15 that no provinces have raised concerns with his Government about the cutbacks in UIC. Is it this Finance Minister's (Mr. Manness) position that cuts to the UIC are acceptable and that this province is willing to accept the additional burden to the social allowance program?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): There is nothing further from the truth. Certainly, when our Minister responsible for the payments in support of those in our society who have no employment, when that announcement was made to the Minister of Employment Services, certainly our Minister registered a strong protest to the federal authorities. There is no truth to the statement.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, it is Michael Wilson's statement.

* (1350)

Bill C-21 Manitoba's Position

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, just a final question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) now meet with the Prime Minister to impress upon him the very serious implications that Bill C-21 will have on unemployed Manitobans?

We now have a statement, a meeting actually with the Premier from Nova Scotia, and an indication that he is prepared to meet with Premiers of all the Atlantic provinces. Has a meeting been arranged with this Premier?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House, -(Interjection)- I am not certain if you heard the comment of the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), but I would ask him to apologize for that, please.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Chair did not hear the remarks of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus). Therefore, I cannot ask him to withdraw.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, an Honourable Member would have withdrawn that remark, but we know what the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) is like.

We on this side of the House meet regularly and have discussions regularly with our federal counterparts. We are always concerned with positive developments. We are concerned with having more development take place in the province, and I am proud to say, Mr. Speaker, that since we have been in Government there are 11,000 more Manitobans in full-time jobs than there were when we took Government a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we are discussing ERDA developments, we are discussing all sorts of economic issues that will have a positive long-term benefit for the Province of Manitoba. We indeed are committed to create more employment and better opportunities for all Manitobans.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) raised a point of order and, if there is any slight possibility of imputing of motives, I withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Speaker: The Chair would like to thank the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) and, as far as the Chair is concerned, that concludes that matter.

Head Injuries Services

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Health (Mr. Derkach). Every day, five Manitobans sustain head injuries in accidents, and this amounts to about 2,000 individuals each year. Medical advances will allow at least 1,800 of them to live, but almost one-third of them suffer emotional, physical impairment. Families of these

victims of head injuries continue to suffer under this rule. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us what services exist in Manitoba right now for the victims of head injury patients?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), I would like to take this question as notice.

Head Injuries Community-Based Programs

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). On February 1 of this year, the Manitoba Head Injury Association, a voluntary non-profit organization, presented to the Department of Health and Family Services a proposal to establish community-based resources for these victims.

Can the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) tell us why she has not responded with their request four months after a good proposal?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I would have to check back in the department to see whether I had responded or not, but I know that that proposal is before us and we are looking at it.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary question is for the Acting Minister of Health (Mr. Derkach). The good management in health care services is missing from this department. There are about 25 unfortunate victims of head injury at Health Sciences Centre. Can the Acting Minister of Health (Mr. Derkach) explain how he can justify over \$2 million per year to provide these patients just room and board, and no other services? Will they now reallocate these funds so that the community-based program can be given to these victims, so that we can do some service for the families and the patient, and also save taxpayers' money?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I have to indicate that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is cognizant and has been doing a good job in this area, but I will take this question as notice on his behalf.

* (1355)

Hudson Bay Mining & Smelting Pollution Monitoring

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings). Last fall, I presented a petition to this House with more than 700 names on it from citizens in Flin Flon who are concerned about the increasing environmental pollution that is befouling the City of Flin Flon.

Following that, a well-attended public meeting asked the Government directly for a monitoring of the pollution

and for some indication of the degree of pollution and the nature of the pollution that was emanating from the Hudson's Bay Mining and Smelting operation. Subsequent to that, the Department of the Environment did start monitoring the ambient air quality as of December. I would ask the Minister if he could indicate to the House what that monitoring has shown and if he can give us the status of air quality as far as he knows it.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): The monitoring of the air in the town site has shown that there are occasions when the levels of sulphur reaches unacceptable readings. As I have indicated to the Member yesterday as a matter of fact, by the end of the week, we anticipate having had further discussions with the company and with the Department of Mines that we will have an action plan in place.

Up to this point, we have received ongoing assurances that the company was doing the best that it could to try and control the emissions that were coming out of the mill house itself, but yesterday I am told that due to an inversion not only were there fugitive emissions from the mill house, but there was an inversion over the town site and the air quality did deteriorate badly.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the people of Flin Flon want the whole truth. That is what they want.

On June 7, this Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) sent a letter to—

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

POINT OF ORDER

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

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, implicit in the remark of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is a clear suggestion that somehow the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) has somehow held back or been something other than truthful. I think the Honourable Member for Flin Flon should reflect on that and perhaps withdraw that comment.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Thompson, on the same point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think any review of the citations of Beauchesne in regard to unparliamentary language would show that the statement made by the Member was well in the normal give and take that takes place every day during the Session. It was no indication of any deliberate untruth on the part of the Minister. I think the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) is perhaps being overly sensitive on this particular matter. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is not unparliamentary.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has

actually implied that the Honourable Minister was not telling the whole truth. Therefore, I would ask the Honourable Member for Flin Flon to withdraw those comments.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I did not say the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) did not tell the truth. I said the people of Flin Flon want the whole truth.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Government House Leader, on a new point of order.

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is moving from making statements that are clearly not proper in this place, but then to go on to disagree openly with the Speaker is not proper procedure in this House. The Honourable Member should know that with his vast experience in this place and come to his senses at this point—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point or order. I have asked the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) to kindly withdraw his remarks. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

The Honourable Member was implying that the Honourable Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) was not telling the whole truth. I would ask the Honourable Member for Flin Flon to kindly withdraw his remarks.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, I recognize the rules do not allow me to reflect on the motives of the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings). Then it is only respecting the rules that I withdraw those remarks.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

* (1400)

Air Quality Analysis

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I will let the facts speak for themselves. Even the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings), who has been the Minister of the Environment for a very short period of time, knows that the air quality in Flin Flon is not being downgraded only because of sulphur dioxide. There are in fact many different elements in the air in Flin Flon coming from the company, including arsenic, cadmium and other heavy metals that are creating health hazards in the area of Flin Flon.

The Minister of Environment, in a letter June 7 to the Concerned Citizens Against Pollution supposedly provides them with an update on the ambient air quality by providing them information, Mr. Speaker, only on sulphur dioxide. My question to the Minister of the Environment is, will he tell the people of Flin Flon the whole truth by providing an analysis of the air quality and not some PR exercise?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I will put my integrity in this House against his any day.

Mr. Speaker, I shared with the committee and with the Member for Flin Flon the information that we have regarding the sulphur and he, as well as anyone, should know in this House that the other information is not easily gathered from ambient air quality. It is gathered from the deposits that we find on the ground in the area. The concern, the immediate concern that we had was what was happening with the sulphur emissions and, particularly, the fugitive emission that from time to time got out of the mill house.

We are going to take action this week, in consultation with the Department of Mines, to make sure that the people of the community are adequately warned when inversions or when adverse conditions are in the state of the day at the mill house. The company has consistently said that during the period when high fugitive emissions come out of the mill house that they have attempted to cut back production in order to deal with that. There seems to be now, because of the weather conditions and because of the high throughput of the mill, increased amounts of emissions coming out which are reaching an unacceptable level in the community. We are prepared to deal with that, and I am prepared to release any information that I have regarding the sulphur emissions.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Storie: Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister continues to refer to sulphur dioxide emissions. We are talking about fugitive gases, not the gases that go up the stack. The gases that go up the stack create a problem when there is an inversion because they come down on the town. We are talking about fugitive gases that seep from the company almost continually. My question is: (a) will the Minister inform the people of Flin Flon of the nature of those gases, what harmful elements they include, what they should do to look after their health, protect the health of themselves and their families?

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

Mr. Storie: Will he do those simple things for the people of Flin Flon?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I am a little surprised at the vehemence of the questions that I am getting from that Member. He has been kept apprised consistently of what we have been doing in the department. I invited him to raise the issue if he chose to, and then to attack my integrity in dealing with the issue is bloody ridiculous.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: As Honourable Members know, this is a very contentious place and I would, therefore, ask the Honourable Minister to kindly withdraw that remark.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, if I said something that would offend the integrity of that Member, I apologize.

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

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, as I was stating a minute ago, I am prepared to release and did release to the community Concerned Citizens' group the information that we have regarding the sulphur. We have indicated previously, and I am indicating today, that we will be working with the company. By the end of the week, we should be able to have some announcements as to what can be done in order to provide sufficient warning to the people of the community. The longer-term problem will require some longer-term solutions.

Gold Mine—Shoal Lake Water Protection Plan

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Government Members for that endorsement.

With the assistance of the water protection group, I have just returned from a trip to Stevens Island, the site of the gold mine in the middle of Shoal Lake. The Consolidated Professor Gold Mine is, quite frankly, a mess. It is quite evident where the oil spill has been. In fact, one of the oil spills seeped all the way down into the mine itself. You could see the substandard tailing pond containment. You could also see where the ore itself is already into the lake and you could see the fuel tanks falling over and left in standing water.

The significance of that ore, I might mention, Mr. Speaker, is significant, and that is the arsenopyrite aspect of that ore. My question to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) is, what is he doing about the potential contamination of our water supply? Where is his strategy

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated consistently in the House that we have been in contact with Ontario. We will be having personnel from my department on the site quite shortly. But the simple fact is that I have maintained, along with a lot of other Members in this Legislature, that unfortunately very often in the allowance of exploration licences, there are a lot of things that are carried on under the premise of exploration that in fact are something that would require a lot of licensing if it was held as part of an ongoing process.

I am concerned about some of the waste that appears to be left on that island. Obviously it is in a jurisdiction controlled by a neighbouring province. They are, I understand, cognizant of what has been left on the island, and I would presume that they will be dealing with it.

Mr. Taylor: Well, I do not share the Honourable Minister's laissez-faire approach to this and that he is satisfied with what Ontario is doing.

My question to him is, in that we already have ore in the water, we have had a sunken barge and we have had numerous other instances, in fact two charges already laid, what is he doing in the sense of establishing an action plan by his officials to deal with incidents that might contaminate the water now?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, if the Member, by his question, somehow wishes to imply that I endorse that type of pollution, and I think that was the implication he was trying to make by indicating that I was somehow satisfied with the actions of Ontario, that is not the case. One should never be satisfied when there is potential pollution of a water resource. The simple fact is that our jurisdiction to go in and clean up is simply not there.

Correspondence Tabling Request

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Wolseley, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister, as usual, has missed the point.

In the final question, this Minister has admitted that he is finally getting communications back from Ontario. I would like to see if he would finally table all communications that he has had from Ontario, both ways to date on this issue, because we have not had much from him.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I will table the letter I received from Mr. Bradley and from Mr. Bouchard. I think, more importantly and no doubt as a result of some comments that were made after a briefing that we had with the City of Winnipeg yesterday, there were some comments made regarding discussions with Ontario. I think it should be made very clear that at the official level and at the ministerial level we have been discussing various offers and options and courses of direction that are available dealing with this potential mine site. It has always been my position, publicly and privately, that there is nothing that I can conceive of that would provide ample guarantees of water quality, and we have to be abundantly sure that any process that is used to evaluate this mine site protects the water quality of Shoal Lake absolutely for more than half the people of this province.

* (1410)

Winnipeg School Board Schoolyard Pesticide Spraying

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Tonight, the Winnipeg School Board will be making a decision with respect to the use of pesticide and herbicide spraying on its schoolyards. As the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) and I am sure all colleagues in the Government are aware, many concerned parents,

particularly the Luxton Parents Advisory Group, have been raising this issue and are concerned about the health problems.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) if he could tell us what actions he has taken with respect to direction offered to the school board, and what is the policy of the Minister of Education and indeed the entire Government, with respect to the exposure of children in schoolyards to very toxic dangerous chemicals?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows well, the care of school grounds is certainly a jurisdiction that is within the purview of school boards. However, none of us in this House, I do not believe, want to see children of our province exposed to dangerous chemicals and pesticides being used on schoolyards. I trust that the Winnipeg School Board and members who make up that board are cognizant of the dangers of these pesticides and will act upon this matter in a very responsible way. I do not think it is a matter for me to interfere into this situation at this stage.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, we obviously recognize the ability of the school board to make a sensible decision in this regard, but it should be clear that if it was not for the sweetheart deal between this Government and the City of Winnipeg, which has exempted the city from the new Environment Act, we would not have these problems on our hands.

Montrose School Pesticide Spraying

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings). I would like to know if he has taken any action to deal with the fact that dangerous chemicals were recently sprayed at Montrose School in Winnipeg when children were in the day care and when there was the great risk of toxic substances. Will he stop the sweetheart deal—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. There was a question there.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I am disappointed in the attitude of the NDP today. They are consistently accusing me and our Government of some wrongdoing in terms of the environment.

The question she raises about whether or not I was aware that a school division was spraying a chemical near a day care, obviously if they had a licence to provide that service I would be most disturbed, as I would be if any operator under any condition were to use a pesticide no matter where it is licensed under conditions that would allow drift or would allow deposits of it to come in contact with the skin or the breathing of young people, when in no way their systems are in any way able to react to those kinds of situations. Certainly, the fact that these chemicals are licensed

does not in any way forego the fact that they must be used carefully.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I appreciate that answer and want to simply tell the Minister that we would like to see some very good legislation involving pesticides control applied to the City of Winnipeg.

Noxious Weeds Act Amendments

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): My question to the Minister of Environment is, given the school boards feel some pressure to comply with The Noxious Weeds Act, will this Government and this Minister be prepared to change The Noxious Weeds Act so that school boards do not feel that pressure to comply and so that ordinary citizens who are growing geraniums, black-eyed Susan, baby's breath and so on do not feel that they are breaking the law by—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I will give the Member credit for one thing. She has identified a dilemma that many people in this province have to deal with on an ongoing and daily basis. The simple fact is that with The Noxious Weeds Act there is a desire to control those plants that are detrimental to the production of crops in this province, which is a very big part of our economy, but pesticides are not the only method to control noxious weeds.

If those people who have properties in heavily populated areas or where there are young children involved in schoolyards or where there are neighbours who have plants that would be susceptible to drift, certainly there are other methods of control that they can use. A \$55 tool with an electric motor on it will control most weeds.

Workers Compensation Claim Delays

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, on April 20—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order.

Mrs. Charles: On April 20, a claimant to Workers Compensation was told through my office that his claim would be investigated immediately. Just over 35 days later, the investigation began—so much for immediate. In the waiting period, the claimant was forced on municipal welfare, which is not unusual. The municipality receives only 40 percent of the welfare costs back from the province.

My question to the Minister responsible for Workers Compensation (Mr. Connery), how much are the

municipal taxpayers expected to pay for his corporation's bungling?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for The Workers' Compensation Act): Mr. Speaker, when we inherited Workers Compensation, there was indeed a mess and I can assure the Member that we have moved a long, long way into resolving the problems of Workers Compensation. If she would have talked with the Workers Comp. critic from her Party, he would have been able to indicate to her the progress that has been made at Workers Compensation.

Mr. Speaker, there are still some delays that are not acceptable to the Workers Compensation Board and the administration or to myself. These are moving, the time frames are being shortened, and it will not be a long time before it is going to be in a very proper time perspective.

Mrs. Charles: To the same Minister, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister therefore explain why the Provincial Ombudsman's Office and the Injured Workers Association say that under this Government, delays are even worse than before and hardship cases are even more apparent?

Mr. Connery: Well, Mr. Speaker, heaven forbid, should I take the word of the Member opposite as being the facts. We did inherit a long period of waiting - (Interjection)- If it is offensive, I will withdraw.

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

Mr. Connery: Mr. Speaker, the Member knows full well that the time frame for the concerns and the problems at Workers Compensation have shortened dramatically, and workers are now getting better service than they ever have and that will continue to improve. Hopefully, by the end of this year, it will be a very good system that was in dire shape when we took over.

Appeal

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

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Again, to the same Minister, time and time again the Workers Compensation doctors overruled the diagnosis of specialists on claimants appeals. Can the Minister indicate when changes will be in effect at Workers Compensation that will allow specialists' opinions to hold their obvious merit?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for The Workers' Compensation Act): Well, I would extend the invite that I have given to other Members to visit Workers Compensation and to ask those sorts of questions because -(Interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member is very welcome to come to Workers Compensation with us and to go over the program that they have in place to be assured of herself that the direction of the Workers Compensation Board is indeed in the best interests of the injured workers.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Orders of the Day, I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Parc La Salle School, 21 Grade 5 students under the direction of Amy Cyr. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus).

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

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, Agriculture in the Chamber and Highways in the committee room.

MOTION presented.

MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a grievance today because of what I consider to be a serious injustice done to the people of my constituency, in the Meadow Portage community, and as a result as well, the serious misstatement of facts by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) in this House on June 13, one week ago today.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, William Chornopyski, in the Chair.)

It was, Mr. Deputy Speaker, such a serious misrepresentation in my view as to the facts surrounding the unceremonious split of a community in my constituency that I contemplated seriously rising on a matter of privilege. But since a dispute over the facts has been ruled in the past as to not be a matter of privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I decided not to. But I will draw to your attention that I did rise on a point of order to protest the imputation of motives made by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) as to my involvement in this issue and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did take that question under advisement one week ago today.

* (1420)

I rise on a grievance because the Minister has demonstrated such insensitivity, such blatant incompetence in this matter affecting my constituents in Meadow Portage that I find it almost incomprehensible. What is so reprehensible about this Government's actions is that the Premier has silently condoned the actions of his Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) of this incompetence, insensitivity and callous treatment of my constituents.

When I ask questions in this House of the Premier, in the Legislature, to have him review the, what I term, Grade 5 level consultant's report or so-called consultant's report that was done by the Conservative

hack with its many errors, and which I pointed out to the Premier, he has taken no action on that concern and he has not even replied to my concerns. When I asked him to direct his Minister to put the decision on hold, this decision made by the Minister with regard to this community in my constituency, and go out to Meadow Portage, ask his Minister to go out to Meadow Portage to meet with those people affected, then the Premier takes no action or he does not communicate any action. Meanwhile, this incompetent Minister goes merrily on his way with his treatment of my constituents.

Let the record show clearly that I got involved in this issue when the people of Meadow Portage asked me to do so, not for political reasons that the Minister attempts to discard my concerns in this area as being merely to achieve some political benefit. I got involved when the people of Meadow Portage expressed their concerns. I did it because of my responsibilities as their elected representative. If that is dismissed as trying to make political points, then that Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) does not understand the duties and responsibilities of elected officials, then he has no business here.

Let him not try to weasel out of the real issue by trying to draw a parallel between the formation of Rock Ridge as a community in my constituency and the split of Meadow Portage. There is no parallel. They are as different as night and day. The Minister even inadvertently points out one of the major differences when he said on Tuesday in a speech in this House, "He," in reference to myself, "continually lobbied our office to have a meeting to form Rock Ridge." Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did that because the people of Rock Ridge came forward to me to ask for my help, not as the people in Spence Lake who continued to lobby in secret on the issue, but the people of Rock Ridge came forward after the election of 1988, not before the election of 1988 as the Minister said in this House last Tuesday, that he had this on his desk when he came in. That is not a fact.

The people of Rock Ridge never came forward with that request for community status in recent times until after the election of 1988, through their spokesperson, Robert Lavallee, and they asked me to help them achieve community status under The Northern Affairs Act, so they could get services for garbage pickup, for lighting, for water services, play areas for the children, general community improvements, and many other things just like the other communities that have status under Northern Affairs at the present time. They were a newly formed community made up of Metis people, having had, in most cases, left the Skownan Reserve just north of them because of recent changes in federal legislation. They had to get off the reserve, uproot their families and they settled in this new subdivision they called Rock Ridge.

They had no services, no local Government body and no budget. So they came to me as their MLA and asked me to help in arranging meetings with the Minister and so on. A new community, not currently served by a community, open and aboveboard with some 60 people living there, and currently requests for more people to move into that subdivision, in contrast, and the Minister

says they are very similar. How could he treat them differently? In contrast, Spence Lake representatives never contacted me in my seven years as MLA for Dauphin. They seemed wary of talking to New Democrats, never having called me, never having written me or visited me.

The Minister seems surprised by that. There was representation made, they claim, to the Manitoba Metis Federation, to the staff of Northern Affairs, but they never once contacted me in the seven years as their MLA. They were openly Conservative activists. That is why they did not contact me, Len and Lillian De Le Fuente. Len, who is not a Metis person, has now been named the contact person for that so-called Metis community by this Minister.

In any event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he may have raised concerns, as I mentioned earlier, about the Meadow Portage Council, but he never raised them with me. I made that very clear in my earlier statements here in this House.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister (Mr. Downey), on a point of order.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hope that the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is not in any way reflecting on either the racial background or personal individuals' well-being or worth or any other factor in his debate. I think he is verging very closely to reflection on people who are unable to defend themselves in this Chamber. I would hope that the Member would—

Mr. Plohman: Why do you not sit down and let me continue?

Mr. Downey: —consider very carefully his comments because he could well be called before the Human Rights Commission with his accusations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have not heard everything that the Honourable Minister said, so I will take that under advisement and come back with a decision at another time.

The Honourable Member for Dauphin has the floor.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the person who is making inferences here is the Minister himself because he is sensitive about this issue. It is not me making those inferences. I have always treated Native people, Metis people, all kinds of people the same in my mind, and I do not treat them any differently now. Clearly, it is this Minister who is sensitive about it and concerned about it because he talks about the Human Rights Commission.

I am talking about the fact that he calls this a Metis community and Metis self-government. That is garbage

and he knows it. It has nothing to do with Metis self-government and he had better get that through his head. He has never been able to get that through his head. He does not know the difference. If he thinks he is fooling anyone, he had better take another look at it because he is not fooling the people there. They know the difference between Northern Affairs contact status and Metis self-government. Do not let him think the people do not understand the difference.

Let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the representatives, in this case Mr. De Le Fuente, may have made representation, but they never made representation to me as their MLA. I think that is an important thing because that is the basis for one of my arguments right through, that there has been no representation made at any time through the MLA on this issue. They made it directly to the Minister's office.

I am led to believe that they had disputes with the council of Meadow Portage on snowploughing. They raised them with the Manitoba Metis Federation, as I said earlier, and the staff of Northern Affairs, prior to the election in this case. That apparently is the case, not with me, so I do not know first-hand, but apparently they raised it before the election with the council and with Northern Affairs staff.

* (1430)

I am talking about Spence Lake, not Rock Ridge. Rock Ridge, contrary to what the Minister said, they came forward with their proposals after the election. Following the election it is apparent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the representatives from Spence Lake—and there are only a couple who were representing the issue, there are only a few more involved all together, maybe 18 residents. There are 24 on a petition, as I will speak to later on. I believe that he saw an opportunity, this representative, to achieve his goal from his political friends, so he quietly worked with this Minister to have a separate community at Spence Lake carved out of Meadow Portage. He got a petition signed by 24 people, many of them elderly, and five I understand who no longer live there, asking for their own community.

Then under the guise—and I say "guise"—of historical factors contained in a misleading and error-filled so-called consultant's report, which was done by another Conservative campaigner, Bryan Dyck, for which the Minister says he paid \$2,500 of taxpayers' monies, the Minister proceeded with his plan to carve up a peaceful community in the name, and this is significant, of furthering Metis self-government. The whole thing was done quietly and in secret, and I reassert that.

The Minister did not ask for my opinion, nor did he tell me he intended to split the community. I heard some vague references when we were meeting on Rock Ridge, we met with the Minister, but I assumed the Minister was working on some plan in conjunction with the Council of Meadow Portage. Surely he would have been consulting with the people of Meadow Portage and, since I had never been told about a split or that there was one even being contemplated, that possibility never occurred to me.

So the secrecy continued. There was no communication of his plans by the Minister to the Meadow Portage Council, no mention of the petition, no discussion to try and reconcile these insurmountable problems if they indeed existed, no mention of a consultant hired to provide a recommendation to the Minister, and no consultation with the MLA. He was completely quiet about this. Then when rumours started filtering out, the Meadow Portage Council decided to seek clarification. When the rumours started coming out that there was a major decision about a split going to be made, the Meadow Portage Council decided to seek clarification from the Minister. They asked for and received a meeting with the Minister on October 24, 1988, to raise concerns and ask for clarification. I have their brief.

This is the meeting that the Minister brags about as constituting consultation with them. What he does not say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that 10 days -(Interjection)- yes, what else is he supposed to call it? Ten days after that meeting, after assuring the Meadow Portage Council that there was nothing drastic or hasty going to happen and that there would be further consultation, 10 days later, after that meeting, he sent a letter to Len De La Fuente, the person he named as contact person, and to Meadow Portage, saying the decision had been made and here are the terms, and here are the boundaries—the most autocratic and dictatorial act by a Minister that I have seen in many times. It may not seem, on the macro scene, on the broad provincial scene, to many people to be that significant but it is. It is the small things that demonstrate the true nature of that Government as to its sensitivity to people, and we see it from that Minister there, very clearly, in this act.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair.)

The fact is, he made a decision without going to those people and asking them for their input. He never answered their concerns, Mr. Speaker. He would not share information with them. He simply said, here it is, and then he expects me not to get involved and he chastises me for getting involved in this issue to represent my constituents.

When the Meadow Portage Council came to me in mid-November and told me what had happened, I was astounded. I was astounded. I did not believe that even a Tory Member, a Tory Minister, could be so insensitive, so callous, so disrespectful of a small community as to split it in two in a blatant act of political patronage to satisfy a few political supporters.

I advised them, the Meadow Portage Council at that time, that they should seek to have the decision put on hold while they ask for clarification on such critical matters as the so-called consultant's report, the petition, the issue of shared services, which they have not even been consulted on, on the issue of boundaries, and even on the need for such a split in the first place. I said, ask the Minister to put this on hold and come and discuss these issues with you first.

The phone calls to my office escalated. Cottagers wanted to know what this meant for them. Was this really Metis self-government? What does that mean?

Would their taxes go up? Would there be expensive new services that they would have to pay for to be provided? Why was this done anyway? Why were they not consulted? The cottagers were included in the original boundaries that the Minister sent out. That shows poor organization. They were included at that time.- (Interjection)- He says they are not now. Well, that is good. So they organized a petition. They were not told that they were included. This was sent out to Meadow Portage without the colouring. This map was sent out to the Meadow Portage Council when they received the dictatorial message that their community was going to be split.

The cottagers did not receive any information, but they found out from the various reports that in fact they were going to be included, and they started phoning me. They organized a petition.- (Interjection)- I had nothing to do with that petition the Minister says that I was responsible for. Contrary to what the Minister said on Tuesday, I had nothing to do with the formation of that petition.

Now he says that they are out of the boundary. Well, maybe it is as a result of the petition. Why were they included in the first place, I say? I suggest that it is because the Minister had not thought this out in his haste to impose it upon the people of Meadow Portage. He had not thought out the issue. It was poorly researched and ill-conceived in the first place.

Then the community circulated a petition. Individuals wrote letters, both from within and outside of the poorly planned boundaries, Spence Lake boundaries as they were called. The council wrote letters. They asked for copies of the \$2,500 so-called consultant's report, or consultant's farce would be a better way to put it. They got it from Freedom of Information, not from the Minister. They asked for a face-to-face meeting with the Meadow Portage residents by the Minister in Meadow Portage, but he refused. He refused to go to Meadow Portage for seven months now. He has still not set up a scheduled meeting in Meadow Portage, seven months after that decision. He will not go out to that community and see them. Yet his Premier (Mr. Filmon) and Ministers run out to Portage la Prairie when there is an issue there, but they will not come for seven months. The Premier will not send his Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) to go out there and hear the people of Meadow Portage. Is he afraid to go? He knows what kind of a mess he made. He is afraid to face the music, to listen to what they have to say.- (Interjection)- Those people remember.

He says he split the community in the name of giving the Metis an opportunity to carry out some of their activities, he said in the Hansard the other day. Well, as I indicated earlier, Len De Le Fuente, who is the contact person, is not a Metis person. Anyway, how can Northern Affairs contact status be construed as Metis self-government? If that is Metis self-government, Mr. Speaker, then there is no debate. There would be no need for Metis self-government across this country. All Northern Affairs communities have it already in the Province of Manitoba. It is not Metis self-government at all.

* (1440)

As a matter of fact, it is a step backward for the people of Spence Lake because in fact before the split they had full Northern Affairs status as a community. Now, after the split, all they have is contact status. So they have gone backwards in terms of Metis self-government. If you wanted to call that Metis self-government in the first place, it is a step backwards. It is nothing to do with Metis self-government, clearly. This Minister will stop at nothing in his political manipulation of issues affecting people in their communities. Is that a step forward, I ask you, Mr. Speaker? Many of the residents of Meadow Portage are also Metis, even the mayor of Meadow Portage is Metis. How did the split represent a step forward for the people living around Spence Lake insofar as Metis self-government?

He said on Tuesday, one week ago in the House, on the split, nothing that he did in this regard to the split: ". . . nothing that would in any way in my estimation take away from Meadow Portage community, nothing that would take away from their support." That statement demonstrates his casual disregard for the people of Meadow Portage because he does not understand them. He thinks that nothing he did would take away from their support, nothing that he did would affect them and hurt them.

How would that Minister react if we carved another community out of Virden or some other community in Manitoba or in the Arthur constituency, carved out a chunk and said, oh, there are going to be two communities there, just because a few political supporters asked for it? It is ridiculous, is it not? It is callous, it is insensitive, it is disgusting. You bet it is. But that is what this Minister did to a community in my constituency.

He also said in this House last Tuesday, there was never any justifiable reason to make them all one in the first place. Now he is referring back to the formation of Meadow Portage as a community in 1973, and again he is wrong. When Meadow Portage was formed, public information sessions were held, and there was no objection by anyone at that time. His so-called consultant's report, which supposedly provided the historical basis for the decision, was laced with errors and misinformation, and he does not seem to be concerned about that.

For example, the so-called Conservative consultant plagiarized a 1975 youth employment effort to document the history of Meadow Portage. It was a project that they did in 1975. Then they did this history on Meadow Portage. The so-called consultant used a portion of that history and referred to it as if it was Spence Lake, not Meadow Portage. So he stole the history from Meadow Portage and called it Spence Lake history.

I can quote from the documents that the students had prepared in 1975, when they talked about the first people who came to Meadow Portage. "The first people who came to Meadow Portage were the Sabistons. They came in the early 1900s. They were followed shortly after by the Sandersons, Spences, Gislasons, and Gaudrys. The Sabistons came from Fairford. They came in the winter across Lake Manitoba by horse and sleigh.

They set up their first homestead where William Sabiston now lives along Lake Manitoba. George Sabiston's grandsons started families of their own and started their own farms. Some of them are still living out here on their own farms or ranches." Then it goes on in another section: "In 1918, a store and post office was opened up. It was located in what is now known as Libreville and this was the first post office around here. The store and post office was run by Napoléon Paradis. His post office was where Paul Shewchuk now lives. He kept this open till 1921."

That comes from the youth report that was prepared in 1975 by those students. Then, along comes the Spence Lake Community Recognition Report prepared by Bryan Dyck for the Conservatives for \$2,500, as I indicated at about a Grade 5 level and I quote from it, and he is talking now about Spence Lake. Remember, I just talked about Meadow Portage. Now he is talking about Spence Lake. "The first people to have arrived in the Spence Lake area were the Metis. The Sabiston family were the first to settle in the area in the early 1900s and were followed shortly thereafter by the Sandersons, Spences, Gislasons and Gaudrys. George Sabiston's family and relatives came from Fairford by horse and sleigh across the Lake Manitoba, and set up their homestead where one of his descendants, William Sabiston, presently resides. The area today is still primarily the families of these homesteaders. The first store and post office were opened in 1918 and a school followed in 1920."

Those statements and that history is taken from this document almost word for word with a few changes. That was a documentation of the history of Meadow Portage. This Minister accepts that as fact and bases his split on historical documentation, historical factors contained in this so-called consultant's report.

It so convinced this Minister that he even uses it in the House. The other day, he says Spence Lake. Last week when he was talking, and I quote from Hansard, he said, ". . . which is and has been a traditional school division, historic in the sense that it was a Metis community, pretty much in control of itself," and he quoted from the consultant's report as it having been a school division. I refer him to the critique that was done by the Meadow Portage Council when they finally got a hold of this consultant's report through The Freedom of Information Act, and they went through point by point on that short report. Here is their comment on it. There never was a Spence Lake School Division No. 2266. It may have been a school district until April 7, 1967, when all rural schools were closed and were consolidated into what has become Duck Mountain School Division No. 34.

Later on, they say, the consultants suggested the boundaries enclosed with the brief closely resemble the existing boundary set now by the Duck Lake School Division. Duck Lake is in Saskatchewan somewhere. This is the quality of work by this consultant. They say there is no division by that name. Where did this professional consultant get his information from? That is in a statement made by the Meadow Portage Council when they were responding to what this Minister had done. In fact, there has never been a school division

there. There was a little school located there. There were little schools located all over Manitoba. They are not communities now. Some of them had a store or a post office. This one did not, but the Minister says it did because he borrows the history from Meadow Portage and calls it Spence Lake.

The Minister is now aware that 10 Spence Lake residents have changed their position, of the 24 who signed that original petition. They want the Minister to reverse his decision—10 of them. There are only 13 left. The Minister knows that if he reads his mail he would know that there is such a petition now from those 10 saying, please reconsider that decision.

The people of Meadow Portage, Mr. Speaker, feel hurt and belittled by this Government. The Minister has said by his actions, more than his words, you do not count. I do not have to listen to you. I can do what I want with you. You are nothing in my books. I do not have to consult with you. I do not have to listen to you when I make decisions affecting your community. You do not count. These are the facts. They are hurt and belittled. They feel betrayed, and legitimately so.

I say to this Minister, it is incumbent on him to place this decision on hold, as was recommended by his staff when they were at the meeting on May 15 in Meadow Portage when his director from the area in Dauphin was at that meeting stated, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Your buddy.

Mr. Plohman: Now he says my buddy. I hope that is on the record because that is the way he treats his civil servants, that now somehow this civil servant is somehow my buddy. Let him make that kind of a charge and substantiate that, as if that is something wrong. He is no more my buddy than he is any other Minister's buddy or any other MLA's buddy in this Chamber.

Let me say this, his staff said that they would recommend to the Minister that he put this on hold because he had not even worked out shared services, fire services, for example, firefighting services. He does not know how he is going to protect the people in that area, and yet he goes ahead with this without considering those important questions. It is incumbent on him to listen to the people of Meadow Portage in their community, to travel to their community, to answer their questions.

* (1450)

In all the reasons that I have listed today, the consultant's report is a farce. The petition is so small. It is almost meaningless. Ten people now do not even want to be on that petition, out of the 24. There are only 13 or 14 left. Based on the history, there is no basis for a separate community, but this Minister refuses to listen to facts. He would rather contrive facts. The issue of shared services has not been negotiated as I said. Duplicate infrastructure, of any nature, is wasteful of taxpayer's money. Yet his Premier and he says that they are trying to operate efficiently. This is how they operate efficiently.

There are paved roads in the area, and there is only a short distance between the Spence Lake community

as targeted by this Minister and Meadow Portage. If there was a need for separate communities 20 years ago, that need is certainly gone insofar as the roads are concerned. No effort has been made by this Minister to work out any differences that might have existed between the small groups of people involved, especially from Spence Lake, if there was a problem there. Could he not work a -(Interjection)- this Minister asked me how hard I tried. They never came to me in seven years, I stated earlier. They never asked me once for help or said there was a problem. They never wrote to me, they never phoned me, so I was not aware that there was a problem.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, if there was such a serious problem and they had come to me, I would have been the first to try to get those people together to try to resolve it, not to split the community as he did, and this Minister has made no effort to resolve those concerns. Instead he takes a political route to satisfy the political supporters in that area who have been campaigning for his particular Party. It is so blatant it is sickening. It is so blatant to all the people out there they can see it. It is transparent.

This is not an issue of Metis self-government, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister has tried to say. I say that the Minister should endeavour to try to treat these people fairly even if they are small numbers, and I say that if this was happening with municipal affairs they would have the municipal board arbitrate those decisions and they would consider all of the aspects of it as to whether it was in the best interest of those people to have that community split. There would probably be a referendum if this was done with municipalities, but there we have a Minister autocratically making that decision without consideration for all people concerned with the effect of that decision.

That indicates to me that this Minister has no sensitivity for people if he thinks he cannot be hurt politically. If he thinks he can be hurt politically he will respond. If he thinks he cannot, he will not respond, and that is why he will not respond to the request to come out to their community after seven months and meet with them despite the efforts of myself in writing to him, of the council in writing to him, of numerous residents in the area of writing and phoning to his office to ask him to come to meet with him in their community so that they can have a full and open hearing.

I want to say to his colleagues, if they knew the facts about this as I have put them on the table today, if they had considered them carefully -(Interjection)- they should be embarrassed, they should go to that Minister and say, listen Jim, we do not tolerate this kind of nonsense. This is ridiculous to treat people that way even if it is a small community, and we request of you, Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), to get out there and talk to those people. We will not tolerate this kind of behaviour by a Minister of this Government, but they have not done that and that is no compliment to the rest of them. They are all just as bad if they condone this.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger), the Minister of Housing (Mr.

Ducharme), they are all just as bad if they do not say to that Minister of Northern Affairs, we do not agree with the way that you make those kinds of autocratic decisions. We do not agree with the way that you treat the people of that constituency. We demand fairness and they would take this issue seriously.

I want to tell the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Pankratz) he has not even bothered to scratch the surface on this issue to understand it and he is making comments about, so do we. Well, if they believe in fairness, they will call on their Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) to review that case, and that is why I asked the question of the Premier in this House because I wanted him to go to his Minister of Northern Affairs.

I wanted him to go to his Minister of Northern Affairs and say, Minister of Northern Affairs, you have to have another look at this. You have based your decision on a ridiculous consultant's report that should not even be called a consultant's report it is so full of errors, so poorly done, it is so inaccurate. We want you to take another look at this issue and put it on hold, as your staff have done. Listen to your staff who have recommended to you to put it on hold until such time as you have worked out all of these things that I related a few moments ago, that you have talked to them on both sides and consulted to see whether there is a way to work these things out together in an efficient way, in a sensitive way, but he refuses to do that.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that if he is not willing to do it on his own, he should at least—and his Premier should appoint an independent board like the municipal board to take a look at it. I would very much like to have the Municipal Board or the Human Rights Commission or any group take a look at what this Minister has done to those people and to review that decision, all aspects of that decision, and to see whether they support that Minister in the way that he has acted. I will say no, they would not. They would not support actions by this Minister that resemble the actions of a dictator. They certainly would say to him, that has to be changed, that has to be reviewed, there have to be steps taken in due process. He does not even have a policy for separating communities. He at least should put that in place before he goes forward with this decision. He should put in place a policy that would spell out where there are problems.

Mr. Downey: I have one.

Mr. Plohman: His policy is an autocratic—and he says that laughingly, Mr. Speaker, I have one. He thinks this is trivial. This is the most serious matter affecting those people right now. They feel stepped on, hurt and violated and he does not understand it. I have tried to make that point to him today.

I hope that even he will understand and his colleagues, if they have some sensitivity and feeling, that they will understand what has happened to those people, understand how they have been violated, just like the people of Steinbach would feel if somebody came in and carved it up and said, this is going to be a separate community and this is going to be another one, without talking to them. The Member from Steinbach (Mr.

Pankratz) would be extremely upset with that if that happened in his community, but he does not care if it happens in another community in my constituency. I think that is terrible. It speaks ill of all of those people unless they stand up and say to that Minister of Northern Affairs, we will not tolerate this, we will not put up with this kind of decision making.

That is what I am asking for today. I have tried to, at various times, implore the Minister to take action in a reasonable and quiet way. I have tried to do it in a forceful way. I have tried to do it in writing. I have tried to do it verbally, but I have not been able to have him understand the magnitude of the impact of that decision on those people. I think that is regrettable. I can tell him that I have a great deal of difficulty respecting a Minister who acts like that, even after he knows he has made a mistake and he will not be willing to review it.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): He has not made a mistake.

Mr. Plohman: The Minister of Education, the Member for Roblin-Russell, has just supported and said he has not made a mistake. Therefore, he does not understand and does not care about those people either. It is unfortunate again that they would not be in his constituency, or maybe he will run in Dauphin so he will have the opportunity to come forward and campaign there. I would like him to have that opportunity, to come and defend the Minister of Northern Affairs' decision with those people at Meadow Portage in the next election, which will not be too far off. Come forward and do that. I want to see any of them come forward and campaign and support the Conservative candidate in the Dauphin constituency if they are not in this House now. Come forward and talk about it in the campaign. I welcome you there.

Those are my comments on this serious issue. I implore the Minister and his Premier to review this issue, to take another look at this issue and treat those people fairly. Treat the people in Meadow Portage fairly, as they have the right to be treated in this province, as all communities and individuals would like to be treated. Thank you.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Department of Highways and Transportation; and the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture.

* (1500)

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Chairman (Harold Gilleshammer): I will call to order this meeting of committee to discuss the

Estimates of Highways and Transportation. When we last met, we were on No. 2. Operations and Maintenance, Subsection (a) Maintenance Program, \$54,618,000—the Honourable Minister.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Chairman, with the indulgence of the committee, I had taken certain questions as notice the other day and indicated that I would be bringing forward certain information. I have a copy of the Seal Coat Program, one for each critic. I also have a copy for each critic of the distribution of our managerial positions. Then I have another one which addresses the affirmative action, again for each critic a copy. I have a further information thing based on the question raised by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) in terms of our roadway design system. I will have a copy for each of the critics on that as well.

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): Mr. Chairman, with the permission of the committee, I would like to raise a few points for the record. Last year, when one of my colleague's comments was out of order, I raised the point and apologized for his actions. Politics is an honourable profession and each Member, regardless of his or her political stripe, should be treated as Honourable Members.

Yet yesterday we saw the Second Opposition Party speaking to Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. That is their parliamentary right. We were to proceed with Estimates yesterday. It would have been a matter of a courtesy call to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), and of course the critics of the Official Opposition, that they are going to speak to this Bill all day, and now evening. We have no objections to such tactics.

It is time we start to communicate with each other, regardless of political stripe. Let us get this process in motion whereby, hopefully, by the end of June we would have terminated the Estimates for Highways. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Chairman, just before we go on to respond to what the Liberal Critic (Mr. Mandrake) has said, I had no way of knowing yesterday, when we started the debate on a very important Bill, how long that was going to take. I did not expect it would go into the evening. I was not certain that all of the Members were going to speak to it, and that did speak to it, so we had no way of knowing. It is difficult to predict those things, certainly insofar as the evening was concerned.

This uncertainty has existed in Estimates processes over the years. I know the Liberal Critic, having not been involved for that many years, feels that he would like to see the uncertainty discontinued, and everything be planned, which would be highly desirable. In the past, many times staff have waited around—waiting, waiting—for us to get into Estimates. It is really impossible to make that with any degree of certainty.

I think that although there perhaps could have been more notice given, especially for the evening. I do not

know whether the Minister—I think this is something that the Minister was aware of, but I think the House Leaders have to work those kinds of things out and they should be in communication. I think that is the responsibility for each of the House Leaders to bring forward to the other Parties information such as that. I am sure that the Liberal House Leader (Mr. Alcock) would have taken the initiative to raise it with the NDP House Leader (Mr. Ashton), if he had concerns about it at that time, to say how long is this going to take and should we give notice and so on, if he was concerned about it at that time. There is action that he could have taken at that time.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, just one comment, and again I would like to go back to what I just said in my statement. Treat each other as Honourable Members of this Legislature.

The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) could have come up to me and said, Ed, do not bother coming back this evening because we are going to be talking to the Bill. I do not begrudge him for doing that, but I stayed here until ten o'clock. The Member was not here, I was. All I am saying is, let us work together. I mean, if they want to talk to that Bill, I would never ever begrudge them of that. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Shall the item pass?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Mandrake: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In that particular section, there are several questions I have to ask and particularly the one, that is, last year his department had paved Highway 101 past Saskatchewan Avenue. I drive that road rather frequently and that road already is starting to break up. So now we are going to go into a maintenance program.

Could you be so kind, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, tell me who has done this work, how come this work is now breaking up?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will try to get the information as to who did the contract. That would come under construction. However, I would like to indicate, as I made in my opening remarks, that invariably the moment we do a capital program, a construction job, paving job, invariably the year after that, to some degree, we start doing maintenance on it because certain cracks appear. That is why we have the Seal Coat Program, which will sort of add to the whole life of the road. If there is a specific concern about a specific project, I will have to get that information.

* (1510)

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, I am not talking about cracks. I am actually talking about the asphalt lifting and simply disintegrating on the highway on this particular stretch of road. I realize it is a very, very high traffic area, but still I do not think something like this should be happening.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I hope I am getting the right location. We had a contract out on 101, and what happened in that case was the contractor did not complete the work before winter. He did one lift. That work has actually just been completed the last little while, if we are on the same location. I am not sure because it was—

Mr. Mandrake: Past Saskatchewan Avenue, Saskatchewan Avenue going north.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Once again, that project was let last year. The contractor did one lift of it. It was just completed, I understand, last week or something like that, so maybe the fact that there was only one lift of asphalt on there and it was not completed might have had a bearing on that.

Mr. Mandrake: On that, in the same section here, Mr. Chairman, what product is Highways and Transportation using for dust control?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We use calcium chloride and calcium lignosulphite.

Mr. Mandrake: In my travels, the one thing that I have found is that snowploughing of the highways always seems to be being done during peak periods of traffic. Why could this not be done during the low-traffic periods as opposed to high-traffic periods, particularly on 101?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Just to make sure I have the question right, the Member was referring to snowploughing?

Mr. Mandrake: Yes.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I suppose we can check into the timing of it, but it would be my understanding that, in many cases, you have your storms during the course of the evening or night, and in the morning as soon as they can get out there they start their maintenance program. Invariably that is the time when everybody is driving to work. The same thing happens in the rural areas where the school buses in many cases—I know municipalities as well as our snowploughs—they are out in the course of the night to see whether they can have the roads open, so that when the school buses travel to pick up the kids the roads are ploughed.

Invariably, that is probably the time when most traffic travels as well, but certainly if they wait until the middle of the afternoon possibly before they start their snowploughing, there would be a tremendous hue and cry in terms of saying why have you not done it sooner?

Mr. Mandrake: A question regarding winter, we are presently using salt on our roads to clean them up. Has the Minister, through his department, ever entertained the thought of using—there apparently are two chemicals on the market, sodium formate and sodium magnesium acetate, used for clearing off the highways. Has he looked at these products and, if so, what does he plan on doing about it?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that staff is constantly watching new products

coming on the market for exactly this purpose. One of the factors that of course plays a role in this is the cost factor of some of these chemicals. I often have concern about the amount of salt and sand that is being spread on highways but, however, driving every day as I have done in the last winter along highways when they are iced up, I am looking around to see where the sanding truck is because I would much rather drive through some of the calciums or the salt that they put on than have to drive on a slippery road. Certainly, we have to consider the safety factor in terms of getting the ice off the road.

Mr. Mandrake: That answer, Mr. Chairman, blends to another question. I appreciate that salt is a cheaper product, but if we take into consideration that salt permeates all of the ground beside the highway, damages the highways, the damage to the highway itself, to the ditches, to the grounds, etc., has his department ever done a comprehensive study as to what the cost over and above by putting salt on the road is?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that the percentage of salt that we use in our sand is a fraction of what is being used in the city or in other provinces comparably. I do not know whether a cost analysis has been done in terms of all the implications of using it, but certainly any time that you use chemicals of whatever sort on roads, there is going to be some side effects to it. I am very concerned about that. I think at a time when everybody is very environmentally concerned that these are things that we are certainly looking at all the time to see whether there is a more efficient and better way of doing it.

Mr. Mandrake: That is exactly my point, Mr. Chairman. Calcium magnesium acetate is biodegradable and sodium free. It might cost a few dollars extra, I am not exactly sure how much, but it would be safe for our environment and then maybe by us in the province to start using it. Then we can convince the city to use that product.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to repeat again that we are constantly looking at ways, as well as other provinces. Everybody is constantly looking at better ways to do things, and certainly we will be the first in line if we can find something that meets to some degree the cost criteria and still does the job effectively.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, one step further on a different subject, on the 10th of June, 1986, when this Government was in Opposition, they are quoted: "You were mentioning resurfacing. I wonder why are we not recycling our asphalt in Manitoba. I understand that we are the only province in Canada that does not do it. Every state in the United States is recycling asphalt at some 20 percent savings. I just wonder why we were not doing it in Manitoba." Now, Mr. Chairman, they are in Government. What are they going to do about it?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to inform the Member for Assiniboia that at the present

time we are doing exactly that kind of a program on Highway 75. We are doing a recycling job and we will be looking at that. This is not the first project. We are doing it on Highway 75. We are looking at the cost effectiveness of it and if it is going to be a positive thing. I have to indicate though that the only place where you can really do that is where you have a solid base to operate from. I think you have to have a concrete base to be able to do that kind of thing and we are doing it on Highway 75.

Mr. Mandrake: I have before me, Mr. Chairman, a paragraph here that states, "enhanced the image of Manitoba." There are two resolutions that were passed by the tourism industry asking the Minister to look at the possibility of the following and I am just going to read the resolved:

THAT the tourism industry of Manitoba request that the Tourist Information Centre continue to be fully staffed and remain in its present location on Highway No. 10 and the U.S. border crossing.

Has the Minister looked at that possibility?

* (1520)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether that comes under my jurisdiction in terms of the tourist information booth. However, I might indicate that I will try and work very closely with the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Ernst) in terms of where these tourist information booths are set up. With the ongoing program on Highway 75, we are looking at a very extensive one on 75 at Emerson, and certainly throughout the province.

I might also indicate at this time that we are also looking at truck stops. We are establishing one at Minnedosa at Junction No. 10 and No. 16, which we feel we can probably use as a role model. We are putting that in place this year. Staff are looking at the present time at other locations that would sort of be appropriate in terms of distances from places like Winnipeg in terms of having places where we can establish rest stops. Both tourist information booths, as well as rest stops, I think are crucial for the enhancement of Manitoba.

Mr. Mandrake: Just taking it one step further, again another resolution by the tourism industry and it says:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Province of Manitoba place a high priority on erecting "Welcome to Manitoba" signage at all Manitoba and United States border crossings.

Mr. Chairman, I must agree that our signages have a lot to be desired. I think we should be proud of our beautiful province. If it does not come under the auspices of this Minister, would he talk to the appropriate Minister and have some beautiful signs indicating that they are entering into friendly Manitoba?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Consider it done.

Mr. Plohan: First of all, I want to thank the Minister for providing us with a prompt response on the questions that he had taken as notice.

The answers dealing with the affirmative action are very interesting. It shows that there are no female or any affirmative action target groups at the senior executive level. There are only two at the director/managers second level of management out of 37, or 5.4 percent with no female, and at the third level, 13 out of 72 which is about 18 percent at the third level of management, so it would indicate that there is still a long way to go on affirmative action in the Department of Highways and Transportation.

I think I would like to ask the Minister whether he has reviewed the statistics from this point of view in the past, before providing us with the sheet at least, as to whether he feels there has to be some different approach taken. I note in the spread sheet that was provided, you know where we have substantial numbers, although the percentages are quite small in the overall work force of affirmative action candidates, but we really have very little at the upper levels of management in the department. Has the Minister discussed with his Deputy Minister and senior people as to whether there should be some more aggressive action taken to remedy this problem?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, looking at it from the affirmative point of view, I suppose one should maybe be concerned. However, when I look at the gentlemen who have served the previous Minister, myself, some of them with a bit of a graying top, I think it would be most inappropriate to try and suggest to these hard-working, qualified gentlemen that they should step aside to make room for affirmative action at this stage of the game.

I would like to just indicate that looking at it from that perspective possibly we should have some concern. I am very, very pleased with the staff who I have at the present time, and that has nothing to do with whether they are male or female. They are doing a very capable job, and certainly all Governments, past and present, are conscientious about this fact that we try and be as relatively fair on affirmative action as can be. Certainly over a period of time this will happen, but just because we talk and say, it is a good deal, does not mean that I would necessarily feel uncomfortable at all. In fact, I would resist very strongly any move to make changes of the people who I have at the present time just because they happen to be the wrong gender. I am sure that these things will be corrected over a period of time.

However, I would like to indicate when we talk of affirmative action that within various departments it is a different ball game depending which department you are with. The Highways Department is related in a lot of cases to outside work, construction work, hard manual work, and that is possibly why the figures maybe do not look quite as positive as they do in a department that is basically oriented more towards a different service type.

I do not necessarily have that major concern. I know that everybody is cognizant of the fact and is going to try and address it as reasonably well as we can, but certainly not to the detriment of the people who we have in place right now.

Mr. Plohman: First of all, the Minister knows very well that I was not suggesting that he should try and fire people who are there right now so that he can create openings. There is turnover and there are changes made, as the white hair gets whiter, and eventually there are people who retire and new people come in. There were a number of changes made when I was Minister as well, and of course the senior people remained men at that time, not without some concern in that there was an effort made, but the Minister is right in that there is a shortage of qualified people in certain areas. I guess the only way to remedy that is through affirmative action and through an aggressive program to encourage people to get involved in some areas, women particularly and other affirmative action groups, that they have not traditionally felt comfortable in or felt there were opportunities in.

I think there would be certain women's groups who might take exception with the Minister's statement that outside jobs can be handled by men better or other references that he made. I think that it is possible that there are a lot of women who would not mind that kind of work as well. So the Minister may want to make a renewed effort to accelerate his Affirmative Action Program in the future, particularly in the management level where we see a very small number. That has to be of concern, I think, to everyone.

I want to also thank the Minister for some other information that he provided on the Roadway Design System and the other newly developed system, the Interactive Graphics Roadway Design System. Both have saved the Government millions of dollars over the years because of, as I was saying in the last day of Estimates, the involvement of other jurisdictions in the States and in Canada. To share the cost of development, the Roadway Design System would cost some \$400,000 in 1988, and the fee for Manitoba was \$16,000, so that shows how good a deal we were getting for our money.

The new system, to develop so far from 1985-87, \$1.75 million as contrasted to Manitoba's share of \$70,000, so again a tremendous benefit that Manitoba is getting through this joint participation. The fact is that if we had to develop this ourselves it would have been an enormous cost, and if we had not developed it and just had staff doing the design work, according to the Minister's information, it would have required another 96 staff to do the same work that this computerized system is doing.

I think this is an important piece of information to put on the record because it demonstrates where the department, and it is to their credit, and Governments in the past have taken an initiative in decision making that has resulted in substantial saving of the taxpayers' money, and an example of where efficiencies have been achieved as a result of forward thinking and an aggressive approach to utilizing new technology.

* (1530)

I wanted to make that comment to the Minister. As well, I wanted to ask him a couple of questions about the dust control measures that were raised by the other

critic earlier, as well as the Seal Coat Program, which I want to thank the Minister for providing us with. It is only about half, or a little bit over half of what has been allocated for seal coat, heavy bituminous repairs, and so on and so forth—it is \$4.834 million. Is this the sum total of the Seal Coat Program for '88-89, or is this just a first go at it, and will there be some more mileage or kilometreage programmed for seal coat later on in the year that is not included now? If not, then is this the total budget and, if so, how much of the \$9.2 million goes to other areas of repair included in the extraordinary maintenance?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, if the Member looks at the sheet that I handed out, this is a proposed Seal Coat Program for the coming summer. The amount of 754.6 kilometres is what we are planning to do. The total cost of doing that program would be \$4.834 million.

We had used the figure the other day of about \$5,800 per kilometre. However, if you notice, on the bottom it says \$6,406 per kilometre. The reason why that changed is because we have to do a certain amount of maintenance and patchwork before we do the sealcoating. So that is all figured in there, in some cases, especially in the summer, where more patchwork is required before we do the sealcoat so that it is an effective sealcoat, that is using all those costs related to that in there.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, if the Minister looks at the Supplementary Information for Estimates, he will see that his Extraordinary Maintenance budget is \$9.21 million and he has given us a program of \$4.834 million, which is just over half of the total expenditures, and I ask the Minister where is the rest of the money going to go?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that sealcoating is only a portion of that money that is established there. The other portion of the money is used for heavy patching, for concrete patching where we have crews that go out there with jackhammers, take out bad spots and redo them, and that is a good portion of the cost as well. That involves the heavy patching which we have to do in some areas, and sealcoating takes half of that total amount.

Mr. Plohman: I am very aware of the other heavy patching that is done and I assume that from the Minister's answers then that there is some \$4.5 million that is spent on those other areas, which is a substantial amount, and we will not expect any additional Seal Coat Program to what has been outlined in the proposal here. That is the completed total amount that will be going for seal coat.

Can the Minister indicate—with the condition of Highway 68, insofar as the spring break-up and heavy patching that is required this year, it is one that traditionally has had a relatively poor base. I guess, although it stood up rather surprisingly well over the last probably close to 20 years, can the Minister indicate how long he feels his department will be able to continue to maintain that road in a usable condition with patching before it has to be rebuilt?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told and I think the Member is aware that Highway 68, located where it is, needs an awful lot of patchwork because, by and large, the soil conditions are such and possibly, initially when construction was undertaken, maybe it was not figured on the type of heavy traffic that we have on there. So we will be continuing to do heavy patching on that road. However, we have started survey and design on that road. Ultimately, I think it will have to be totally restructured in order to be able to get away from the patchwork that we are doing continually there.

Mr. Plohman: I just ask that, not under the construction program, I know there is some design work but in terms of the ability of the department to maintain it. It seems that it has outlasted its life already, probably outlasted the expectations of most of the engineers. That is why I asked whether they feel this will go on indefinitely or whether, in fact, it will get to such a position in the very near future that it may have to be returned to gravel unless it is reconstructed, say, within a five-year period.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that it is slated for upgrading. We are in the early stages of it but, ultimately, that is what will have to happen on that road and we are in the first stages of doing that.

Mr. Plohman: Just before I ask some questions about dust and ice and snow control, to follow up on what was asked earlier, the Minister just put out a press release, June 16, that I think is somewhat misleading and I thought he might want to correct it on the record here today. He said, "Driedger said the Estimates reflect a 7.3 percent increase in the Highways budget." Now, I know that the Minister did not get a 7.3 percent increase in the Highways budget, and that is the last sentence in the news report. I think he was trying to talk about the construction budget, but I feel that it maybe is an opportunity for him to correct that if, in fact, that news release does have a misleading statement or one that could be construed as misleading.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will have to indicate that maybe I should check with my communicators and maybe there is a wording error there. The intention was to indicate a seven point-some percent increase in the highway construction program. I thank the Member for drawing it to my attention.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I thought it was rather significant because I had just sat at this table a few days before, as a matter of fact, probably on the 16th, and said that the Minister should not be bragging too much because he got less than inflation actually, less than a 3 percent increase this year in his overall budget. Then this says a 7.3 percent increase. I thought it was around 3 percent, so I thank the Minister for correcting that today on the record. That does not take away from the fact that the construction budget was increased by some \$7 million this year.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask the Minister to provide us with an update on the extent that lignum sulphate

is being used for dust control. That was a product that we experimented with when I had the opportunity to serve as Minister for a number of years, and yet I have a feeling it was doing as good a job and yet we did not expand its use to the extent that I thought maybe we should be.

I wonder if the Minister can indicate today whether there has been a rather substantial increase in the use of lignum sulphate as compared to calcium chloride, and also indicate whether one is more environmentally sound than the other. If in fact lignum sulphate, I believe, was cheaper as well per mile done, is cheaper and No. 2, is a by-product of the pulp and paper industry, I believe, and is environmentally cleaner than calcium chloride, and does a comparable job, will the Minister look at seeing an acceleration of its use?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that the department has used it in all districts, however, using lignum sulphate works only in certain conditions, ground conditions. In some areas, it is not effective, so we have expanded the use where the soil conditions make it to be the most effective. This does not work in all areas. So in other areas we still use the calcium chloride. In the places where the soil conditions warrant it, it works well. We are very pleased with the results.

Mr. Plohman: What percentage of the overall dust control budget is now being spent on lignum sulphate as opposed to calcium chloride? Has the Minister assessed, and would he commit to assessing, asking the department to give a report on the comparative environmental impact of these two products?

It may be that their difference is marginal. I remember seeing some of the reports that the department provided. I want to tell the Minister that I did get information on this and it seemed that some of the differences were quite marginal, but nevertheless there. Sometimes it is worth it if it is just a marginal difference to use that other product, because of its effect on the environment and being less negative towards the environment or because of the cost. So, I would ask the Minister to undertake to provide some additional information on those aspects.

* (1540)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate the first portion of the question that the Member asked, we are using anywhere around approximately 15 percent of the lignum sulphate. However, a complete study has been done on this and we have a report that deals with all aspects of the calcium chloride, lignum sulphate. I am prepared to make a copy of that report available to both critics. I do not know how substantive it is, but certainly we will have it here for next time to have a look at so that they can view first-hand exactly what the report says.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, I believe I probably have seen preliminary reports or versions of that report, or maybe even that report at one time or another. This may be an update on it, but I think that the environment is becoming more and more of a concern in terms of how we treat our environment.

I know our Environment Task Force that was recently out in a number of communities heard reports from people concerned about the impact of the salt on our environment as a result of winter use, and so therefore I think those same concerns might, to a certain extent, be of concern to some in summer use for dust control. That is why I ask the Minister about the comparative impacts on the environment. That was not something that was being addressed, I do not think, and it may be in that report. If it is, I would be pleased to see that, but it was something that was being addressed as the paramount concern at that time. As I recall, it was more a comparison as to how effective each was in dust control and how the costs compared, as opposed to the impact on the environment that I would like to have the Minister address.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate to the Member that when he was Minister there was a report done but, subsequent to that, there was some testing done and there was a follow-up report, which addresses some of these things which might be beneficial to him, because it did not stop with the report that he had that was undertaken during his time. There was subsequent testing done in further reports and I will make that available.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the Minister for that commitment and at this time I would pass to someone else for a minute.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Mr. Mandrake: Just one question, I am bewildered by the terminology that is being used in his department, 92 beat crews and 81 drag beats. Why are we using language that nobody else can understand except them? (Interjection)- On page 21 of your annual report.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the Member asks such difficult questions, you know.

Mr. Mandrake: You should not provide me with these things.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Basically this affects two areas. One is what we call the maintenance beats and one is the dragging beats, which is the grading portion of it.

We have the provinces cut up into districts, and in each district they have the various eight different beats and that is the reference that is made. It basically deals with the maintenance crews, one does maintenance and the others dragging. Does that make sense?

Mr. Mandrake: I will take your word for it.

Mr. Albert Driedger: It is not that it is a secret formula to confuse you, though it did confuse me.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one question, Mr. Chairperson, could you be so kind, to the Minister, as to tell me where can I ask questions about the fuel tax that they are imposing in the new Budget of the 1 cent per litre?

Mr. Albert Driedger: My first response would be never, but we will make provision for it under our Capital Program, because that is basically what it is for, at the tail end, if that is acceptable to the Member.

Mr. Chairman: Item 2.(a) Maintenance Program—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, is the \$6,398,000 for snowploughing the actual for 1988, winter up to the end of March?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate that was what was voted for snowploughing. That is not the actual cost. If the Member is looking at the supplementary explanation—

Mr. Plohman: Yes, yes, I am.

Mr. Albert Driedger: —he notices that snow clean-up at intersections, town, villages, is another \$4.8 million in there. Sanding and salting, which is all part of the program, is \$5.6 million. I am just trying to establish whether that is the actual ploughing cost. Indications are that is not. We are trying to get the actual snowplough costs.

I have here figures of the cost of winter maintenance from '82-83 on, where it was \$10.9 million and then escalating each year to the point, with a decline in '87-88 in which there was not much snow, and then in '88-89 we have an estimated cost of \$17.5 million in the total cost of winter maintenance.

Mr. Plohman: Then it would indicate that the winter was much more severe, and the \$6.241 million for snowploughing there, and the other figures are probably a little low in terms of an estimate.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, if the Member looks at the estimate of \$6.3 million, plus \$4.8 million, plus \$5.6 million, it is not that far off. We had a heavier expenditure in the last winter because of more snow. In the year, '87-88, it was only \$12.6 million. Our estimated expenditure is \$17.5 million for last year. We have budgeted \$15 million for '89-90.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is indicating that \$17.5 million has been estimated. I understand that to be the best final guesstimate in this case, not the original estimate. Is that correct?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The Member is correct, yes.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, based on that, it would seem that the question should be asked as to what was the actual estimate when we were sitting here last year at this time, for '88-89, when we were doing the Estimates? What was the department projecting their estimating for the year when we reviewed the Estimates last?

Mr. Albert Driedger: If the Member looks, it says Winter Maintenance, \$16.875 million. That was the estimated total.

Mr. Plohman: The latest estimate is \$17.5 million?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is right.

* (1550)

Mr. Plohman: Considering that fact, why is the Minister estimating less this year than last year?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We have made arrangements to have less snow in the coming winter. I did not necessarily mean to be facetious. I want to also indicate part of the reason is that there was an extra pay period in that estimate of \$17.5 million.

Mr. Plohman: I still think the Minister is low, even if he gets Mother Nature to co-operate. I think what he is doing is a little bit low. That is the reason I was asking those questions. Based on the estimate last year, he should probably be at least at \$17 million this year and it probably will be running over under most circumstances. Again, I know it is just an estimate and is not something that can be forecast with any degree of certainty.

I also wanted to ask one question about the sanding and salting just to finish up in this area, Mr. Chairman. Is the department actively pursuing other products in tests and studies at the present time for controlling ice and snow on the streets and roads than the calcium chloride that is presently used?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we are at the present time not using anything else. However, there are ongoing tests going on and I understand that RTAC is doing a study. There are some other sources available but the cost is about 10 times of what we have here. RTAC is trying to deal with that on a national basis in terms of seeing whether we can get the costs down, or whether there are some other areas where we can probably find a product that would be doing the same job at a cheaper price.

I would just like to add that in the States, under the SHARP program, they are doing a very, very extensive test on that and we will be apprising ourselves of that information once the report comes down which deals very, very specifically with this. I think we are waiting to see whether that is something that we could apply here.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, SHARP stands for? Is this the organization that the Deputy Minister is involved with, the North American organization.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes.

Mr. Plohman: Well, then I was going to ask if the Deputy Minister is still involved in that organization and in what capacity.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, he is still involved with the organization and he is still working in an advisory capacity. In fact, they are using certain areas in Manitoba for trial projects itself, so I think we are very fortunate that we have our Deputy Minister playing a

role in there. The other reason, of course, that makes it very acceptable to us is that they pay most of the costs to do the testing out here. We think it is a very positive thing and we should be able to get good benefits out of it.

Mr. Plohman: I thought so too.

Mr. Chairman: 2.(a) Maintenance Program—pass.

2.(b) Winter Roads, (1) 100 percent Provincial, \$106,000—the Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I am appalled at the miniscule amount that is being allocated to Winter Roads for the tune of \$3,000, or 2.9 percent. This blends to a question and that is, could this Minister provide us a list of the winter roads that his department is responsible for?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I might explain to the Member that there is a winter road designation in place. The 3 percent, by and large, allows for the inflationary costs of fuel, etc., and that is the kind of arrangement that we have come to an agreement with these people on that kind of a settlement. We do not start building more winter roads at this stage of the game. This is a system that has been in place for a number of years. I can just indicate that the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), together with some of the reserves, are looking at seeing whether we would be prepared to expand that program, but to date this is what we are dealing with, the present system of winter roads that we have in place and that 3 percent we feel covers the additional costs.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry, but provides for the construction of winter roads in designated areas, provides for the construction of winter roads. This is obviously going to take money. Where is that money going to come from?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I was trying to explain to the Member that there are designated routes. When we talk of construction of winter roads, that means that once the weather gets cold enough we have agreements with the various reserves and companies that then go out and start taking and packing the trails to make sure that they freeze up. In some cases, you have to apply water because we cross a lot of lakes. The sites are there. When we talk of construction, it is not like building a road. This is to make provision for winter roads so that the trucks can haul in there. I hope there is not a misunderstanding about construction. We do this every year, that is why we call it that.

* (1600)

Mr. Mandrake: The word "construction" is what is confusing, so therefore we should probably rephrase that word and use proper wording.

An Honourable Member: You want to sell it?

Mr. Mandrake: I do not know, I am not the Minister of Highways and Transport, right? Well, the ex-Minister says it is okay. Then let it be so.

The other question I would like to ask the Minister, winter roads Shareable with Canada and Note 2, Recoverable from Canada \$1.327 million. His department has allocated \$2.654 million to this Winter Roads Shareable with Canada. Does that figure include that \$1.327 million?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, it does. I would like to indicate to the Member that our Winter Roads Program is cost-shared 50/50 with the federal Government. We undertake the work and then we recover from Canada 50 percent of the cost.

Mr. Chairman: On (b)(1)—the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, there is, I guess, one exception to that, the 100 percent provincial \$106,000 projected for this year for winter roads. Which road is that, that is not shared with the federal Government?

Mr. Albert Driedger: There are two roads which are not cost-shared by the the federal Government. One is York Landing to Split Lake, the other one is to South Indian Lake. In that case, it is not a reserve, I understand, and that is why it is not cost-shared.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister saying that there are no reserves involved in these roads?

Mr. Albert Driedger: It is my understanding that they participate in part of it to York Landing, but there is a section in there that does not qualify somehow under the arrangements, and that is the portion that we carry ourselves.

Mr. Plohman: Has the Minister had representation to extend the winter road system in any way this past year, and is he currently considering any additions to the winter road system, say, to Shamattawa, for example?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, I would have to indicate that I think we have five requests for additional winter roads. I am working together with the Minister for Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) in terms of looking at developing some extension of the roads. We do not have any extension in here. Depending on the negotiations with the federal Government and some of these things, we look at possibly expanding the program.

Mr. Plohman: Is there any indication from the federal Government that they are willing to expand the winter road system as it stands at the present time in terms of their contributions, and what method of funding are they using at the present time directly for the winter road system with dollars allocated, or are they lumping this in with the total capital budgets of the bands, and then they are then responsible for their own priorities on these?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The first portion of the question as to how we are making out or whether the federal Government is receptive to an expanded program, I have to say at the present time it is not very positive.

That is a nice way of saying no. The other portion of the question is that—what was it?

Mr. Plohman: The other question was, is the federal Government allocating a lump sum capital budget to the bands, and asking them to determine if they want to spend that on the winter roads?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate that we are having some difficulty and some confusion at the present time because part of it is funded through the reserves in terms of their block funding, and part of it is done otherwise. We are trying to get some kind of a formula that is going to be more acceptable because it creates confusion and problems right now, and we are trying to see whether we can alleviate that. I think provincial Government is much easier to negotiate with than the federal Government. It takes a long time to draw their attention to some of these problems, but we are getting there.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate whether there is a three- or five-year agreement with Norwin Construction for winter roads, and what year we are on, if indeed there is such an agreement?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, this coming year is the last year with the Norwin Construction Company, so after this coming year we would be negotiating a new contract with them. This is the third year of a three-year agreement.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, is it the Minister's intention, the Government's intention, to negotiate another multiyear agreement? What has been the assessment of it? This agreement that we are going into the third year on now is the first such multiyear agreement. I wanted to know from the Minister their assessment of it, by the department and by his staff and the Government as a whole, as to whether they feel this is a method that they would like to pursue in the future.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate that we think it has been relatively successful. My first reaction would be that everybody has had more experience with what is happening right now, and that we look right now, under these circumstances, favourably towards entering into a similar type of longer-term agreement with them.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, I guess the advice to the Minister, which his staff is well aware of, is that they have to start discussing it soon, although now at least they have a format to use. In the past, this was new and it took longer to negotiate the first agreement, but it might be something that the Minister has to obviously have started this year in order to have it done in time for the Budget so that there will be an accurate estimate of next year's costs, and also so that it is in place before the next construction year so that the company is able to get the kind of credit it needs as a result of that contract from the lending agencies, and keep its equipment in good shape and so on, purchase new equipment, whatever is necessary. I just raise that with the Minister now.

The question I had was regarding the Norwin contract last year. I had phoned to the Deputy Minister's office, but I have not had a chance to get information back, so I want to ask. It is a serious concern regarding some employees who were working for Cherier Construction, as I understand, a subcontractor to Norwin. The employee is a constituent of mine, Alex Hrychuk of Fork River, has indicated that he is owed some \$4,800 in wages that he has not been paid by Cherier Construction.

I would like the Minister to indicate whether Norwin has received its full payment from the Department of Highways or whether there is still a hold back and whether, through the hold back process, if there is still a hold back, they can ensure that before Norwin gets the money and in turn pays it over to Cherier Construction and Cherier will be bound to pay their employees with this money, as opposed to paying it somewhere else and perhaps the employees being left out in the cold. They have been back for some time now obviously, since the end of March or whatever. They were maintaining that road for Norwin and now they have waited three months and still do not have their money.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate to the Member that there seems to be a bit of a disagreement between the two companies. What we have done, we have not paid out the full amount of money, that we have kept back that portion that is under dispute at the present time. It is our understanding they are negotiating, and I think they are almost at an agreement at this stage of the game. The moment that happens, the money will be paid out. It was the position of the department, while this matter was in dispute, not to pay out that money to Norwin until it is resolved.

Mr. Plohman: That certainly is a good position to take in terms of hold back, but I guess the question is, is someone looking after the employees there or is it just a matter that Cherier Construction will be trusted to pay them out once they receive this money from Norwin? There has been some claim filed at the Labour Board. This person has had a lawyer involved. I am concerned that this individual employee may be forced to go after this on a civil suit to collect, as opposed to being paid his wages. I would be concerned that the Minister would allow this money to be paid out without ensuring that those workers were going to have their wages paid.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate that is exactly what we are doing. Because there is a claim by Cherwin—

Mr. Plohman: C-h-e-r-i-e-r, I believe.

Mr. Albert Driedger: They have put a claim against Norwin. Our contract is with Norwin but we are holding that back until this has been negotiated. I would expect that the Cherier Construction would have a responsibility to their employee. We will hold this until it is resolved. We think it is on the verge of being resolved, and then the money will be released.

Mr. Plohman: Just to be more explicit, Mr. Chairman, would the Minister ensure, within the extent of his jurisdiction, that the money is not paid out until he is assured the employees will be paid who work for Cherier, not for Norwin?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I assure the Member that we will try and deal in that way. My understanding is affidavits have to be signed that everybody is finally satisfied with it. We will not release that until that is done.

* (1610)

Mr. Plohman: Could the Minister indicate, and one final question, so I can assure my constituent of this because he is very concerned about this, understandably so. He is a farmer and he was counting on this money as operating funding for his farm this spring. He has had to try to make ends meet other ways and he is much in need of this money. Can the Minister give me any assurances as to the time line we are looking at here, so that I can assure my constituent that this should be resolved to his satisfaction within a certain time?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, no one has indicated to us that they are prepared, or they feel they will have it settled in a very short time. However, I would like to have—if the Member would give the name of the individual to my staff, not necessarily on the record but to the staff, then we can possibly respond by way of letter to letting him know what the circumstances are and what our approach is on that. Would that be acceptable?

Mr. Plohman: No, Mr. Chairman, the name is on the record already. It has also been conveyed by telephone to the assistant in the Deputy Minister's office, so they have it and I would appreciate the Minister following up on that commitment.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, it is my understanding that the Minister is contemplating on having a winter road from Middlebro to Goulds Point. Would he explain that please?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We had some discussion with the people from Middlebro to establish a winter trail from Middlebro to Goulds Point for basically ice fishing, etc., and we had great difficulty getting it to qualify anywhere at all. We worked with Northern Affairs to see whether we could give some kind of assistance. They were not looking for very much assistance. What has happened in the past is that the people of the community have banded together to sort of pay it out of their own pockets just to get access down there.

I would have to indicate to the Member at the present time that there is no provision for a winter road out there, other than what I will personally get myself involved and help to get them a winter road down there, nothing to do with Government.

Mr. Mandrake: I value what the Minister just said, but what does he mean, but I am going to involve myself personally. Would he please clarify that?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to say that if they have a fund-raising program of some nature that I will probably participate in the fund raising.

An Honourable Member: An MLA's job.

Mr. Mandrake: No, I applaud the Minister for that, I think that is a very admirable thing to do. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: We are on Item (b) Winter Roads (1)—pass.

(b)(2) Shareable with Canada, \$2,654,000—the Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Just on this item then, there is an estimated approximately 3 percent increase. Is that what the Minister had said earlier.

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is correct.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, has that been negotiated with Norwin as to the increase they will receive next year, or is this just an estimate?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, that is just an estimate at this time. We have to sit down, as we do every year, and negotiate the final figures with them. I went through that pleasure last year and we will probably be doing it again this year, but that is the figure that has been established.

Mr. Plohman: I understand that within the parameters of the three-year agreement the actual dollar figure is negotiated each year. What was the increase last year? Was there any increase?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate that last year it was 3 percent and the year before, I believe, it was no increase. It was a straight figure, but last year they received a 3 percent increase, and we have estimated a 3 percent increase this year.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, that is fine.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass.

Moving to Item (c) Operations and Contracts: (1) Salaries and Wages \$1,649,300—the Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Could the Minister please advise this committee, last year, the department in the Permit Office, Revenue Statistics had acquired \$247,000.00. Where is this amount recorded, and where does it go? Does it go to the Highways budget? Does it go to General Revenue? Whereabouts does it appear?

Mr. Albert Driedger: It is my understanding that this goes into the general coffers—General Revenue, pardon me.

Mr. Mandrake: The Minister says it goes into General Revenue. Yet, in the brochure that was given to us whereby the department accumulates various amounts

of money, it is not listed in there. How are we, as critics, to know what is being extracted out of the Highways budget, or the Highways revenue?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, when we come to the Permit Section under Transport Compliance, that is where those two items further down are addressed in terms of permits and are included in that aspect of it.

Mr. Mandrake: All I am asking, in your Revenue Estimates in the 1988 or '89-90 Estimates, Own Source Revenue, nowhere else can I go down here to find that amount of money, \$247,000 from permits. I go through here and I can find fines and costs, shared tobacco tax, other tax, so on and so forth, but I cannot find that particular revenue. Where does it go? Where is it listed?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we are not trying to hide anything here. We are trying to find out where this would show. I am told that it would show under the Finance Estimates as revenue.

Mr. Mandrake: The Finance Estimates, is that what I heard?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, that is my understanding. But my colleague, the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld), has been trying to get into this action maybe as a clarification. I am trying to find out where this money went. Maybe somebody put it in their pocket.

Mr. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): I am not intimately familiar with the Estimates for Highways, but I do believe that all revenues go to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) and will be shown in his Estimates. All revenues for the province goes to the Finance Minister and are shown in his Estimates.

Mr. Mandrake: That is all well and good. I do not care where it goes, but if in our book, the one that you people give us during the Budget, saying our financial statistics, Revenue Estimates, and so consequently all of that should be listed. Now if we have a revenue of \$247,000 coming into the coffers of this Government, it has to be listed some place. It is not just to be eliminated and placed in the hands of the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness). Where is it listed?

Mr. Neufeld: All revenues go to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness). We are responsible for the expenditures and are allocated monies for those expenditures. The revenues, as in my instance, we get \$150 million in mining taxes that goes directly to the revenue Minister, and we never see it.

* (1620)

Mr. Mandrake: We never see it, but I think it would be more appropriate for financial accountability if we did have it listed someplace. It is just a suggestion.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will try and answer that under the Detailed Estimates of Revenue of the Province of Manitoba, and that portion of it.

An Honourable Member: What page?

Mr. Albert Driedger: In this thin book, page 4, where it is Highways and Transportation, where we have Automobile and Motor Carrier Licences and Fees, the revenues; Drivers' Licences, the revenues; Licence Suspension Appeal Board, the revenues; Municipalities Shared Cost Receipts, and under Sundry, we have - (Interjection)- It says under Highways and Transportation, Sundry which is \$1.624 million, which we anticipated should be in there. The reason I do not have it here in mine and have difficulty explaining it is because it is under the Department of Finance. We think that is where it is. The Members can certainly raise it with the Finance Department. Is that acceptable?

Mr. Mandrake: Totally acceptable, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister.

Mr. Plohma: Could the Minister indicate the extent that private equipment rental rates have increased both last year and this year?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I could just have a little clarification from the Member whether he wants the total in what we have paid in private or the hourly rate increases?

Mr. Plohma: The hourly rate schedule, please.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we do not have that. We will get that for the Member, in terms of what the rates are that we paid.

Mr. Plohma: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to actually know what the hourly rates are. I want to know what percentage they have increased this last year and what they are projected to increase this year. As a matter of fact, I would think for this year it has already been agreed on or has been communicated because the construction season is obviously upon us and people want to know how much they are going to be paid on an hourly basis for their various equipment categories.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would have to indicate that last year there was a 5 percent increase in the rate, and that this year we have not established a rate but there are ongoing negotiations at the present time.

Mr. Plohma: I guess the Minister would not want to jeopardize those discussions, but does he see a similar kind of increase again this year?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, without jeopardizing our position in this, staff take into consideration things like increase in gas prices, etc., etc. We feel it was a relatively good settlement last year for the contractors. Naturally, we would try and improve on that if we could for ourselves.

Mr. Plohma: So there is an attempt being made to even reduce it a little bit then?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I think as a responsible Government we have to try, yes.

Mr. Plohma: We have to first of all find out if the Minister is responsible.

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is what we are establishing.

Mr. Plohma: Yes, we are attempting to establish that.

That is an interesting area because the amount of hourly work has decreased in the last number of years. I would think because of the change in tendering process, which we put in place a few years ago which sees a lot of the smaller work being done through tendering process, it has meant I believe that the department has gotten the work cheaper than if they had done it hourly.

I would like the Minister to indicate whether that has been the case, that there has been a substantial reduction in the cost because of the tendering process at the smaller contracts, rather than going with the hourly, and whether that has put pressure to increase the hourly.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate to the Member that he is correct, that what has happened is there has been less custom work done, by and large, because most of the projects, the tendering processes actually help bring the price down, and less work has been done by the private sector.

Last year, it decreased a little bit from—I think it was a decrease from \$9 million to \$5 million, and last year we had a bit of an increase because of the soil conditions, in some cases the blowing of, the drifting that we had in spring with the cleaning out of the ditches along the highways, etc. That raised it a little bit, but generally most of the projects are being tendered and that have helped bring things—you know, less money spent, a lot less money spent.

Mr. Plohma: Mr. Chairman, for obvious reasons I would like to get an idea of how much money the Government is saving as a result of this change on a yearly basis on average. Could the Minister indicate whether his staff has done an assessment of how that has impacted on the budget, on average, over the last two or three years or so that it has been in place, four years perhaps?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Staff has done some preliminary checking on this. We save between 10 percent and 15 percent by going to the tendering process, but we will be reviewing that, trying to get more definitive figures. Approximately 10 percent to 15 percent is what we can indicate at the present time as the saving.

Mr. Plohma: I would appreciate it if the Minister would provide more definitive information on that. In the meantime, is this 10 percent or 15 percent of—did the Minister say \$9 million?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Initially, it was about \$9 million and it went down to \$5 million, so we are operating on the basis of a little over \$5 million that was used last year. Mr. Chairman, I am informed that we should be below the \$5 million, but in the last year we had

anticipated approximately \$5 million and we went up to \$5.8 million, basically because of the conditions, the additional work, the emergency situation that we were in. We are anticipating that it will be less than \$5 million. I will, however, try and get some better information, more precise information to the Member next time we meet.

Mr. Plohan: I would appreciate that because I am confused. If the Minister says it is 10 percent or 15 percent saved, somewhere in there, and then he mentions \$9 million down to \$5 million, that is \$4 million less. So it would indicate much more than 10 percent or 15 percent if it went from \$9 million down to \$5 million. Maybe I got those figures mixed up in terms of their relevance, so if the Minister could clarify that in the future I would appreciate it.

As well, I wanted to ask questions, Mr. Chairman, about the road information being provided through this section. Is this the area where the computerized road information has been developed and provided in several districts? How is that program working now, the automated road information system or whatever it is called, in the districts, which was put on, and also in the Grassroots system, I believe too, for television so that people would have road information very quickly and at one source, and efficiently for the whole province rather than having to phone various points to get road information. Is that computerized system continued in the department? Is it expanded and where is it at the present time, the status of that system?

* (1630)

Mr. Albert Driedger: First of all, I would like to get back to indicating to the Member that the information he wanted when we talked from \$9 million to \$5 million, the reduction there, that was because we did more tendering so there was less work done that way. So the 10 percent to 15 percent saving that we have, that is basically based on the figure that we expended. I will get all the detailed information for him so that we both have a good understanding of it, if that is acceptable.

Then I want to indicate about the Telidon. The Manitoba Department of Highways and Transportation offers a comprehensive and accurate road information through a Videotex road information program at specified district offices on cable television and through Grassroots Information Services, who also provide computerized information on grain and commodity prices.

Videotex, introduced in late 1984 as a pilot under the Manitoba Telidon project, is based on the Canadian-developed Telidon system which enables two-way communications of graphic and textual information through computers. I would like to indicate that the program is still ongoing. We have slightly expanded it. I believe personally that it is a good program and I would like to see it expanded more. It is a matter of getting sponsors or the funding for it, and we are working on that.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Chairman, at the present time then the Minister is indicating that it is still a pilot program,

not on its own, a fullfledged program that the pilot has been completed, evaluated, and the department is moving ahead now on a successful program. It is still being tested, in other words, as a pilot?

Mr. Albert Driedger: It is an ongoing program. I would not necessarily consider it as a pilot anymore. I would like to see it expanded. Certainly the program is there. I think it is a good program. I would like to look at seeing whether we can possibly expand the program, but I do not know whether we necessarily regard it as a pilot project anymore. It is working well. It is well received and I would like to enhance it.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to ask about weight permits also issued by this section. Have these been increasing? The weight limits now have been increased on our highway system. Have we also extended the maximum permits allowed on an occasional basis?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, we have an expanded weights and dimensions program on certain routes, like Highway 1, interprovincials. Actually we need, in some cases, less permits because of the escalated permits that we are allowing them to haul. My information is we do not have an expanded special permit for overweight at the present time. Am I correct—yes.

Mr. Plohan: What I was asking was whether, not the numbers have expanded, I would expect that they might go down if there is higher weight limits, but whether the upper limits of the special permits had increased correspondingly with the increase overall on those highways. The Minister is indicating that is not the case. That is good news, I think, because heavier weights certainly take a toll on our bridges and our highways.

One of the questions I just wanted to ask the Minister before I finish on this area was the access roads to communities. The Minister has announced the increase in weights to PTH loadings, I would say, through the Community Access Program which allows the PTH loadings on those roads to communities within eight kilometres of a major highway. Is this being done as a blanket policy or is it being done through special permits or how is it being done?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would like to indicate first of all I think we came forward with a very positive program in terms of the Community Access Program which allows PTH loading on PR systems to communities within eight kilometres and a population of 50 or more. The rationale for that was that we have industrial communities—I will use the example of Rosenort who have quite a bit of industry, have major loads coming with PTH loading to within a certain distance from the community and then they cannot drive the balance of the distance.

So staff reviewed this and felt that many of the roads basically had been reconstructed within a relatively reasonable period of time and that they would be able to carry those weights. However, we have \$200,000 which is not that much, but we have \$200,000 which

we will be addressing just to try and maintain those kinds of roads to allow it. It has been a very well-received program. I think we are accessing 147 communities.

I would also like to indicate that, aside from that, your question is then what happens to the community past the eight kilometres if it is just outside of that and we have—incidentally, this has been done by regulation, so we have that by regulation. We are looking at whether extreme circumstances—not extreme circumstances—where there is maybe a reasonable request coming in beyond the eight kilometres, where there is that kind of industry being served, that we will consider the condition of the highway and, if application is made, staff will review the highway itself to see whether it can accommodate it and try and accommodate that community. In the event the highway is not strong enough, then we are looking at somewhere along the line of prioritizing that kind of a road so that the communities can have the benefit of that.

Mr. Plohman: Well, that is very interesting that the Minister is now looking at expanding that because then there is no limit and the limit then becomes whatever the decision is that is made an any particular request that is made and how strong the representation is from a particular area, and that gives me some concern. I think the policy itself obviously would be well-received and I think it is probably reasonable.

However, if the Minister is now going further, he is going to have a rather substantial impact eventually on the road system as he is having to make more and more of these roads capable of carrying the higher loadings and that is going to be a considerable cost. I had asked that of the Minister last time, the potential cost of these access roads policy, the Community Access road policy.

I do not think this is the time to discuss it, although we could, just asking under permits if it required special permits or whether it was done by regulation. The Minister has indicated it has been done by regulation, but since he has raised it, I would just ask him if he could provide us, when we get to that section dealing with the construction program or maybe it is appropriate here to ask him what other communities beyond eight kilometres has he approved up to this point, and what other communities have asked for consideration for it beyond the policy that he has in place now?

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would like to indicate to the Member that we have various applications. We have really not processed any one of those applications by regulation. We are looking very carefully. If the Member raised a concern about just extending it all the time, that is not the case. We are very, very tight on this thing. There has to be full justification. We do a very good assessment on the road and that is why we have not processed any further applications. We are working on some of them at the present time. I will use as an example, Landmark.

I used wrongly the reference to Rosenort because Rosenort is not within the eight kilometres. That is another community that we are working at trying to

get that kind of consideration. We are doing that very selectively if we go past the eight kilometres, and that is why nothing has been finalized.

* (1640)

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, not wanting to drag this on, but I note that those two communities are pretty close to home and the Minister has got to be very careful with his—

Mr. Albert Driedger: Hold it, hold it, Mr. Chairman. I take exception to that. The Rosenort community happens to be in the constituency of the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) and Landmark happens to be in the constituency of the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz), so I take exception to that. When you see one coming down my way, I will let you know.

Mr. Plohman: I would just ask that the Minister ensure that the policy is very tight. I can assure him if he is starting to make exceptions, and he has already opened the door because he is considering them already and he has indicated he has got a bunch in the mill there, then he is going to have a real problem on his hands. We are going to watch this pretty carefully as to which ones. I can tell him, I know it is popular, but he has to also look at the overall costs and the impact on our highway system as well.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am very concerned about that.

Mr. Plohman: I guess so. Thank you.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one last question before we continue, could the Minister explain staff turnover for a tune of \$5,000.00? Why is it that we have such a staff turnover? Could he explain that, please?

Mr. Albert Driedger: That is really not a very big issue. What happens is that from the time somebody stops until you have that position filled, basically, it might take you a month or two until you have somebody who fills that position. That is basically all it is.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass. 2.(c)(2) Other Expenditures, \$350,500—pass.

Item (d) Bridges and Structures (1) Salaries, \$1,772,700—the Member for Assiniboia.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, several questions in that particular area, last year—oh pardon me, it is this year January 10, 1989, the Minister is quoted in the Free Press as saying the following: "Spent \$6.8 million less than anticipated on its \$95 million road construction budget. Unfortunately, in the winter you do not have that many options," he said, adding the department is putting the savings immediately into bridge repair and gravel crushing operations. Would he now tell me and the critic for the NDP where that excess money went, into what bridge projects and would he be so kind as to table those projects?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I was trying to do that the other day. Maybe I was a little motivated at

that time and did not take enough time to do it properly. I would like to indicate that when we work on our highway program, the Capital Program, the staff does every project that we have. We have an engineer's estimate, our staff estimate as to what the contract will be.

Let us use the figure of a million dollars, that our staff estimates a project will be a million-dollar project. We tender that project and the project comes in at \$900,000 instead of a million, so we have \$100,000 supposed saving. What happens is that our cap was \$95 million and we had allocated the tenders out to the tune of a little over \$95 million.

What happened is by the time the smoke cleared—some tenders came in higher, some came in lower, you know the contractors bid very competitively—we were actually underspent by \$6.8 million and we could see this developing in the fall.

My budget says I could spend \$95 million in that direction. What I was trying to do, rather than let that money lapse and go under the table, we have projects "till the cows come home," if I can use that expression. What we did, we picked up certain projects. Should we get into this business of explaining the 1.6, you know how we estimate?

In order to be able to spend \$95 million in the year, we overestimate or have more projects on stream to the tune of, let us say, more than the \$95 million, because in some cases maybe we have problems with the survey design, we have problems with the right-of-way, we have problems with a contractor who gets a job and then does not do it. It is a real juggling act that the department does. It is very sensitive in order to be able to draw as close to the line of what you are allowed in terms of capital expenditure. In this particular case, in the fall, we saw the tenders were coming and we were very pleased.

I never sold that story right to the media and it has been going on ever since that I have somehow saved \$6.8 million, then spent it foolishly. I mean, it is all part of the program, really. What we managed to do is pick up some projects during the course of the balance of the fiscal year so that we could get as close to the \$95 million, which I was trying to explain the other day. I think our total expenditures in capital were around ninety-four-something—the final figures, right?—ninety-three-five, so we did not quite make it up to \$95 million, but because we are not allowed to overexpend that portion of it, it is a real juggling act.

That is what we did. We were pleased in trying to illustrate that the tenders had been very competitive, that the bidding had been good, and that we had gained something through this process. That is why we were trying to explain to the public that we were pleased with what had happened. By the time the smoke had cleared, we had \$6.8 million somewhere that we were trying to rush to spend, which was not the case at all.

Mr. Mandrake: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, correct me if I am wrong. In other words, under page 20 of your Highways Construction Program, '89-90, Projects Previously Scheduled, there might have been some

additions to this that you normally did not have, because of this supposed savings?

Mr. Albert Driedger: How will I do this?

Mr. Mandrake: In other words, the money that you supposedly had saved, that \$6.8 million, was it a savings or was it not a savings?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am going to try again. The Member in his hand has a book with all the projects. The cost of those projects comes up to approximately \$160 million for the projects that he has in his hands, to carry over all the various projects, not \$95 million or \$102 million which I have in the budget this year. Those are all listed there. What we try and do is move these projects forward as fast as we can get them ready for survey design and acquisition of right-of-way and tendering them.

Some of them we do not get ready in time, so we are continually tendering projects to try and get to the \$102 million in this case of this year. Any one of those projects could come into -(Interjection)-

Some Honourable Member: It is a juggling act.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Yes, it is.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one more question, the Department of Highways is apparently going to be replacing a bridge on Water Avenue in Killarney. The cost of that replacement is \$350,000, and from reliable sources, I have been told that the bridge is very, very functional, and there was no need in replacing it. Could the Minister please now explain as to why we are doing that?

* (1650)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, let me first of all explain under Bridges and Structures here, what we are addressing here is not the actual cost of bridges or the Capital Program. What we are addressing here is the bridge crew that does the assessments and things of that nature. The Member is getting into the Capital Program. We can do that, but I would just as soon say that this is related to the staffing and the equipment that we have to do the designing of the bridges.

Mr. Mandrake: That is exactly what I am trying to get at, Mr. Minister. Here we are, we are quoted as replacing this bridge. All I am asking is, has a functional study been done as to why this bridge is going to be replaced? My source is that there is no need to replace this bridge.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the reason that bridge is being replaced is because from our perspective, it is a narrow bridge, but not because we wanted to change it. It was requested that we take and replace that bridge. Because of the situation that the Member has been there, he knows exactly what it involves. He wanted to have that bridge replaced, and we have accommodated them by designing it in such a way that it will serve further purposes for them as well.

Mr. Plohman: I am not familiar with that bridge, but I hope the Minister is balancing that against the many other bridges that need replacement that are not serviceable at all when he is making those kinds of decisions. Has the Minister, in fact, accelerated the bridge replacement program?—(Interjection)—I did not get that.

Some Honourable Member: I said, was that a shot?

Mr. Plohman: Well, it may have been a shot in terms of priorities, if it is just a matter of convenience as opposed to necessity in terms of some bridges not being able to handle the traffic at all. I would ask the Minister if he has undertaken an accelerated bridge replacement program within the department, not with his special bridge replacement for municipalities, but on the bridge replacement program itself? Is he and the department making a special effort to replace bridges on a faster scale than was previously the case?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I would have to indicate to the Member that, yes, we are escalating the bridge replacement program. I do not know specifically how dramatic, but what has happened is that when we looked at the requests from the Manitoba Trucking Association in terms of establishing under the RTAC system, certain routes, that we have more and more bridges that are coming up that need replacing. We also look at it from the replacing the narrow bridges for safety reasons. The Member is well aware, in many cases, we have a wide highway and then we pinch into bridges. We are looking at replacement and so I would say, yes, we are escalating that program in terms of trying to accommodate that.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, what is particularly important, of course, is that the structures are the limiting factor for many of the highways that have been designated for the national highway system or the system that would accommodate the higher weights. Could the Minister provide us with a listing of all of the bridges and the costs of those bridges that have to be replaced as a result of the higher weights that are now being allowed and what the timetable is for replacement of those bridges? Obviously, it is not just a matter of keeping up with the responsibilities as they existed prior to that increase in weights, the whole new area of responsibilities, part of which we were attempting to get the federal Government to pay for. The Minister does not have to read it into the record—if he would just provide it for me, at least. I do not know if the Liberal Critic would want that, but I would like to have that information.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I can do it either way, whichever way the Member wants, but we will try and maybe get a list for both Members in terms of bridges that have to have replacement.

Mr. Plohman: As a result of that program, of that agreement.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Of the provincial program. Just to give an example, maybe PTH on the west Perimeter

is a \$4.5 million project. We will get him a list of those, of replacements in those that need upgrading and the cost is substantial. We will have that for you next time.

Mr. Plohman: Just on the other issue that was raised as well, Mr. Chairman, that the Liberal Critic raised about the cash flow and the budgeting, the Minister was attempting to explain how the fact that the program that he submits to the Legislature is actually about 1.6 times as much as actually is flowed each year. So there is about \$150 million or \$160 million worth of projects in this program and only 102 can actually be flowed. So each year, near the end of the construction season, the department attempts to flow to the maximum amount, or as close to it as is possible.

I guess the comments—I did not see that article—the Minister must have been commenting that last fall they were 6.8 million short on the cash flow, and, therefore, it was possible to build a few more bridges that could be done in the wintertime or do some rock excavation or stockpiling or something like that, so that these dollars would actually be flowed in a meaningful way for projects that needed to be done within that program.

Mr. Albert Driedger: The system has not changed.

Mr. Plohman: The system has not changed from what it has been in the past. In the past, there have been years where there have been poor weather conditions, where in fact the cash flow was much lower than was budgeted for, and then there was not enough flexibility in the program to do a number of winter projects. Therefore, it ended being left on the table, if we can call—or lapsed. In this case, the Minister has indicated that he has lapsed 1.5 million. So the program last year in actuality was 93.5 million as opposed to 95.

Mr. Mandrake: That is exactly what I was trying to ask. The \$6.8 million, where was that money spent? The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) just mentioned it, and that is exactly the answer I was looking for. Unfortunately, I do not have the expertise that the two gentlemen have. This man was a previous Minister and this Minister has got one, two, three, four, six people right beside him. I am just only one lonely person, but thank you very much for the information, to the Member for Dauphin and to the Minister.

Okay, let us carry on.

Mr. Plohman: I just wanted to ask whether there are any bridges that are being designed, major undertakings now that are being done by consultants outside of the department, as opposed to by this section of the department, Bridges and Structures.

Mr. Albert Driedger: This is sort of the minimum staff that is being kept for design work—to the Member for Dauphin. We hire consultants on various bridge projects. Those that we cannot handle ourselves, we hire consultants to do that.

Mr. Plohman: I am aware of that, Mr. Chairman, and there have been some notable examples such as the

north of Selkirk bridge that was designed by consultants. I would like to ask the Minister, are there any special major projects that are now being assigned to consultants or in the process of being done by consultants?

Mr. Albert Driedger: We have about half a dozen of them right now. For example, the Brandon bypass, there is a major bridge there. Is it in Flin Flon where the Bakers Narrows bridge is?

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Chairman, it would be okay if the Minister wanted to provide—

Mr. Albert Driedger: I am prepared to come forward with a list.

Mr. Plohman: If the Minister could provide that, we would be prepared to, from my point of view, pass this item before five o'clock.

Mr. Mandrake: Just one question, there is one question, Mr. Chairperson. There is a bridge apparently on the road to Flin Flon that is very low. I do not know which bridge that is, maybe the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) could—(Interjection)—probably Bakers Narrows. Is there any plan to have that bridge—I think it has a canopy over it or some darn thing, and they cannot transport vehicles of a certain height.

Mr. Albert Driedger: I would just like to indicate that it is on the program.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass—pass.

The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

* (1500)

SUPPLY—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please? This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture and we are on Item 1.(b)—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.—(Interjection)—

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): I do not want to let it move that fast, Mr. Chairman. There are a couple of questions I would like to ask the Minister regarding the Agricultural Advisory Committee. He indicated that one of their major chores was going to be the review of the method of payment. My question to the Minister is, has he requested them to actually provide a report with recommendations, and is there a time frame associated with that? In other words, when does he expect to hear something specific from them regarding their recommendations regarding the method of payment?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I can tell the Member that we have asked them to address the issue from the standpoint of we expect to have laid in

front of us sometime in the near future a White Paper or a proposal from the federal Government as they go into a review of the method of payment. We still do not have that. We just expect it to be laid in front of us.

If I was to give a time frame, I would say we would expect it to be laid in front of us within the next month, but that is always subject to whatever they decide to do. I have instructed the advisory council to try to position itself so it can be ready to respond to that proposal shortly after it is laid in front of us, because we expect—and I say, we expect—that the proposal will be laid in front of us and we will be given two or three months at most to respond to it.

I kind of expect the reason that they want to review it is because there have probably been some questions asked with regard to what proposal we are going to take to the GATT table, and the next round of GATT discussions are going to commence in the fall. We believe we are going to be asked to respond to the method of payment review during the course of the next three months, with some kind of a Canadian position to be evolved by fall to deal with whatever questions are asked at the GATT level.

That is the time frame that I have laid in front of the committee. It is a projection, a bit of speculation on my part because we have no clear signal, no proposal in front of us, only speculation that it is coming and for those reasons.

Mr. Laurie Evans: My concern is I get the impression from listening to the Minister that he is prepared to be reactive rather than pro-active. I am concerned, Mr. Chairman, that we have already an indication from Cargill that they are fully behind the concept of the method of payment going to the producer. I would like to know from the Minister whether in fact he supports the proposal Cargill have put forward to the federal Government?

Mr. Findlay: I guess I would almost take objection to the statement that we are not pro-active. I mean the very fact that we are trying to position ourselves to develop a unified voice out of the Province of Manitoba is very pro-active. You show me any other province that is trying to do that, you show me any other province that is attempting to be as pro-active in terms of getting together a unified voice, because the Pools do not want to have to stand alone, nor does the general farm organization want to stand alone, nor does the Government want to stand alone and have to fight amongst our various groups in this province when the issue is laid in front of us.

We are getting together, trying to develop a consensus position that we can all live with in terms of reacting to the proposal that is going to come before us. How can we be prepared for something that may never come, or we do not know in what form it is going to come? The Western Grain Transportation Act is a federal Act, so we are not going to say I am not going to take this side or that side, I am not going to support the Cargill proposal, I am not going to support anybody's proposal until we have had an opportunity to see what the

position of the advisory council is and see what the proposal is going to come from the federal Government with regard to review or change of the WGTA.

I can tell them that we are very pro-active in the sense of being prepared for what is coming to us and we are going to look at all the angles and try to get all the organizations and major farm groups together to attempt to be unified in the position of what is best for the Manitoba economy, farm economy first, general economy second.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I would just like to indicate to the Minister the stand that the railways have already taken and see whether the Minister agrees with that particular stand. The railways argue that any change to the method of payment must be accompanied by further deregulation of the transportation system, including more a flexible freight rate structure and more freedom to offer variable freight rates, less regulation of grain car allocation, and equal treatment for railways and trucks.

My question is to the Minister. Is he sympathetic or support the cause of the railways on this, particularly in the terms of increasing the flexible rate structure that the railways have already started to utilize?

Mr. Findlay: There is no question that the number of challenges, the number of questions are going be in front of all of us in the agriculture industry with regard to what you have just identified and what the railways want.

* (1510)

A few years ago, we were all against variable rates because they were going to do this or going to do that, and then variable rates came in. The CN put them in place and now the CP is doing it.

The trucking industry has, I guess in some cases, developed into being very competitive with railways for moving certain commodities in certain directions and certain distances. I think we ought to analyze everything with regard to what is good for the Manitoba farmer, for the economy of the province, and analyze it in the total perspective rather than say we will look at this issue in isolation from all the rest of the issues. I would not want to give any clear direction to the Member that we have answers on any of them, other than we are going to evaluate the pros and cons of all the questions he has raised in the context of any proposed change to the WGTA.

Mr. Laurie Evans: In the Minister's response to our opening statement to the Estimates, I believe it was, you made reference to the fact that you appreciate, and I know you appreciate the fact, that we are the furthest producer from tide water and many other things. That would mean that a method of payment proposal that may be ideal for Alberta would not necessarily be ideal for Manitoba.

Alberta is already pretty well on the record as having stated that they support the concept of the payment going 100 percent to the producer. Saskatchewan is

already on record, and you say that they have not identified what they want to do. Grant Devine has already indicated that he supports the concept of a 50-50 type split with half of the payment going to the producer and half of the payment going to the railway.

So my question still to the Minister, will he, through his advisory council, have a clear-cut set of recommendations on behalf of Manitoba for the method of payment prior to getting the White Paper from the federal Government so that he can clearly state that this is where Manitoba stands without having to react to something else? I am very concerned that we are faced with a federal Government that is quite prepared to take a divide and conquer role on this thing. If they can get Alberta on side and say, yes, we are paying the railway, and if you can get Saskatchewan to say, yes, we will pay for the producer, regardless of whether that is the best thing for Manitoba or not, we may find ourselves as the odd province out and end up with little leverage. This is why I think it is imperative that there be a made-in-Manitoba set of recommendations for the method of payment so that you can go in there with a much stronger position, saying this is what is acceptable to Manitoba with the idea that if there have to be some trade offs, at least you are being heard. This is why I say that it is pro-active versus a reactive one because I have not a great deal of faith in Manitoba.

I am not reflecting on the Minister, but I have not a great deal of faith in Manitoba's ability to have much impact on a decision that is made by the federal Minister of Agriculture. I do not think that he goes around soliciting advice from other people too well, because if he does he would have made a lot of decisions that are smarter than the ones he has already made on some of things, so I do not think that he is the type of person who goes out seeking a lot of advice. My advice is to, for goodness sake, be very pro-active on this so that you are not caught in a bind where you are reacting to something that is already cast in stone.

Mr. Findlay: Well, I think what the Member has just said is exactly the path we are on, and the made-in-Manitoba position is what we are trying to develop. I think the strength of that position is going to be determined if we have a unified voice to back that position up. If I come out and say I want this and then another organization or a farm group stands up and says, no, it is wrong or it is off base by this amount, then we are fighting amongst each other, and the federal level can play the divide and conquer role.

We are trying, through this process, to have a made-in-Manitoba, a unified position that says this is what is best for Manitoba in terms of how method of payment should be changed or should not be changed. That is clearly an option that is there. If it is said to us by the other two provinces and the federal Government that we want to change it this way, we will have a made-in-Manitoba position to put on the table to counter it if it is different. That is the process that we are in. I think the unified voice is a lot stronger than a splintered voice.

I am not prepared to put on the record any position that I believe in personally until I know what the Advisory

Council is going to recommend to me. I think that is a responsible position we have taken. It is a pro-active position and we may well have that recommendation out before the proposal comes forward. That is the process we are in.

I think every organization, and I would say myself and the department do not want to get splintered and fighting amongst ourselves because then we will be divided and conquered because the process of the method of payment of the Crow benefit, if it is going to change, is very critical as to how we have the pie divided up with respect to Manitoba producers now or into the future.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, I do not think there is any major disagreement between the Minister and myself on this. The Minister knows as well as I do that this was the contentious issue that essentially broke up the Manitoba Farm Bureau back in 1984. The fact that we now have a certified farm group, which is all of a sudden going to expand from something like 5,000 members to perhaps 14,000 or 15,000 members, I think I do not need to impress upon the Minister the need for that group to be unified because, if they are not speaking with a unified voice and with the satisfaction that every one of the members has had some opportunity to have some input into that decision, the risk is always there of the Keystone Agricultural Producers following the path of the Manitoba Farm Bureau in terms of this being a very contentious issue. I am satisfied that the Minister has taken my point and I do not think there is a great deal of disagreement.

* (1520)

My question is to the Minister. Is this fund that is available for the Agricultural Advisory Council the same fund that the Red Meat Forum would have access to as far as any funding that they may find necessary for the conduct of their meetings?

Mr. Findlay: This is policy study money and if the Red Meat Forum group came forward and said, we need a study on this or that, the same source of funds could be available to them and to whatever degree we felt was advisable to give them, yes.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, I want to put it on the record that I have absolutely no reservations about the makeup of either the Advisory Council or the membership of the Red Meat Forum. I am satisfied that the selection process has been good and I have no concerns with the membership, but I do have concerns with the mandate or lack of mandate as far as the Red Meat Forum is concerned.

I would like to ask the Minister what sort of directive he has given to the Red Meat Forum in terms of the approach that they will take as far as attempting to do something to revitalize or rejuvenate the whole packing and processing industry here in Manitoba? To me, if anything has been a serious problem within the meat industry over the last decade, it has been the demise of the industry in this province. We are down to the point now where here in Manitoba our capacity as far

as the slaughtering facilities is very, very minimal. It would seem to me that we are in a position where we are going to have a difficult time trying to increase the productive capacity in this province unless we have some way of handling the processing of that meat. I think that is where the major limiting factor is. I would just like the Minister to respond as to what he hopes or expects the Red Meat Forum to do in this particular aspect of their mandate.

Mr. Findlay: The reason for developing the forum was based on discussions that I have had with the producers and with the processors. I could see that there was not a good interrelationship between the two levels. There seemed to be some mistrust between the two levels. Then a recommendation came along from MASCC, the Manitoba Agricultural Services Coordinating Committee. They recommended the same to bring the two groups together because what is good for one, by and large in the long run, is good for the other.

I know that in the past I have felt that the primary emphasis had to be to get the highest level of production in terms of cow-calf, feedlot, and get the highest market price for them, whatever product the livestock sector is selling. I have said to the processing sector that I do not think it is the responsibility of the Manitoba farmer to subsidize their operation, that Manitoba farmers should sell to the highest bidder, whoever he should be inside Manitoba or outside Manitoba.

So to take the Member's comment that we have to have processing here in order to have production, I do not think that is necessarily true. We can produce calves or we can produce finished animals and still sell them to a market to the highest bidder, who may be west, east or south. Our producers have been doing that and can continue to do it. For the overall health of the Manitoba economy, it is not desirable to see our processing sector decline.

So we have brought the various groups together, the different players, the producers and the processors, to see if there is some method that they can support each other, make recommendations to this level of Government, to the federal level of Government or to other people in the industry or attract other processors to this province or attract feedlots.

The range of options they can use to promote the industry at either the production or processing level is wide open to them. We have asked them to sit down, have discussions, see what common ground there is to develop a strategy and a strategy for the agribusiness sector, a strategy for the Government level that we can help promote both the production and the processing here in the province. But to say that we absolutely have to have processing in order to have production, I do not think it is tied that close together. Processing is nice, production is the primary desire of me, as a Minister of Agriculture. It is production that we are going to concentrate on, and we would like to see the processing follow in line. I think the Red Meat Forum is a small step to try to work together to develop the total industry for the good of the province.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Here again, I think I agree with the Minister that you can have the production in this

province and the processing somewhere else. The processing component of the meat industry is the one that is the most labour intensive and obviously the processing, whether it is here in Winnipeg or is in some other location in Manitoba, would be a tremendous job creating potential.

I think here is where the philosophical differences between the Parties may come in. I would like to know from the Minister whether he, through his Cabinet, has taken any initiative in attempting to attract a packing industry into this province, even to the extent of looking at something such as a joint venture between the Government and some industry that is prepared to come in?

We are willing to look at an aluminum smelter and other things that might come into this province, but there seems to be a tendency on the part of the Conservatives, or at least it used to be that unless it was a mega project, it tended to be something that was shifted off to the side.

I would like to know whether there is a pro-active stance in attempting to attract something in here in the way of a company that would take on a major component of the slaughtering and packing of meat that is produced in the province?

Mr. Findlay: Before I answer the question, Mr. Chairman, I would like to let everybody know that our Deputy Minister, our full Deputy Minister has joined us, Greg Lacomby, recently moved up to the position from acting to full Deputy Minister. We also have with us Marv Richter, Acting Financial Administrator in Budget and Finance Section, have joined us here this afternoon.

Certainly, what the Member asks is, are we working towards trying to attract the industry, and very clearly we are, in conjunction with Industry, Trade and Tourism. Certainly, other provinces have done a fairly effective job in that in the past number of years. The big Cargill plant is being built in Alberta and some processing plants that are being modelled or remodelled and built in Saskatchewan. Some things have happened in the past number of years that we need to catch up on. No question that we are trying to see if we can attract something here.

My own personal feeling is that I think our future in this province is probably targeting specialty markets, processing certain, I guess I would call them, off the main track kind of products for which there is a market, whether it is the ethnic market or whether it is the Japanese market or wherever it is in the world. Where there is a specialty market that we can develop a product for, usually that product is more highly priced and therefore can afford a little higher cost of processing.

I have said to the processing section, look at the opportunities in the specialty markets. There are specialty markets all across this country, and see if we can find a niche that we can accentuate our ability here in this province. Whether it is in cattle or hogs or in sheep or in poultry, let us look at the specialty market to see if we can develop our processing sector with that idea in mind.

Mr. Laurie Evans: A final question in this, for me at least, in this particular area, Mr. Chairman, and that is with the passage last year of the checkoff for the Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association, there was some concern about the fact you had two factions there, the cattle producers and the feedlot operators.

My question is to the Minister. Has that split been resolved and are you as a Minister satisfied that now they are operating as one group without that, what appeared to be at least, some strain between those two sectors of the one production group here?

Mr. Findlay: Clearly, the discussions I had with those two groups last year, during 1988, was saying, you have the same objective in mind. Get together and do not fight each other. If you are going to come to us with a recommendation, please come as a unified voice, not as two different voices.

To the best of my knowledge, that process has moved along, because I have not heard anything to the contrary, either personally or publicly, that there is still that split. I do not know whether the total fence mending has occurred, whether they are really together and unified, but to the best of my knowledge they have moved in that direction and there is nothing to indicate that there is any major split between them right now.

* (1530)

Mr. Laurie Evans: I was remiss in not complimenting the new Deputy Minister on his appointment. I certainly compliment you, Mr. Minister, for a wise decision. I could not have done better myself. I want to congratulate Mr. Lacomby.

My question is still related to this same issue, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister indicate whether or not the checkoff for the Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association, is it being fully implemented now, and can he give me any indication of just what level of funding is coming in to the association through that mechanism at this time?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I do not have the answer to that right now. All I know is that they are collecting it. There seemed to be a little bit of a dispute between the auction marts and the association with regard to the collection process. Initially, they have certainly been meeting and attempting to resolve it and, as far as I know, they have resolved it.

The volume of dollars, I do not have right now. When we get to Vote 6 we will answer that question at that time and we will bring the information forward but, to the best of my knowledge, the process is moving along the way it was intended.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, there are a couple of questions here that our Minister can indicate whether it would be preferable to ask them somewhere else, but it seems as though this may be a logical place.

That is, of the 679.07 staff-years, how many of those positions are actually vacant at the present time, and the follow-up to that, can the Minister indicate how

many retirements took place in the '88-89 fiscal year? What was the total salary of those retirees? How many new appointments took place in '88-89, and what was the total salary of the new appointments? How many retirements is he anticipating in the current fiscal year? I understand that there are quite a few senior personnel within the Department of Agriculture who have already retired in the first three months of this fiscal year, and quite a number who are anticipating retiring before the end of this fiscal year.

I do not expect him to have all of those answers at the tip of his fingers, but if he is able to provide them later on, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, the number of vacancies as of May 31 was 41. The number of retirements in 1988 was 13. The number of retirements expected in 1989 is 12 to 14, so pretty well the same. The amount of salary, we would have to get that for him in terms of amount of salary and those retired and those hired. The number of positions filled in 1989 up to March 31, 35 positions filled; the number of positions filled by female, 21; and by male, 14 out of the 35.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Maybe I should just follow up a little bit on this line of questioning and ask the Minister, have there been any categories of retirees or job positions in middle or upper management that have been filled by target groups and through the Affirmative Action Program?

Mr. Findlay: I will just tell the Member that of the number of positions filled in this past year, 17 out of 29 were filled by affirmative action target groups. That was 59 percent, so there is a fairly high predominance of filling up positions by affirmative active target groups.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the move. My question was in management, in management only. How many management positions, of those that are there, were filled and were targeted to have affirmative action apply? Maybe none of those positions were management positions, I do not know. That is really the question I am asking.

Mr. Findlay: We will have to get that information for the Member.

Mr. Uruski: The last time I believe we discussed this area of policy studies, the Government had produced a report on the question of glyphosate and the work within the Government. In this whole area, some of the funding that came out in the study dealt with this whole question of patenting and the need to remove some of the protection that companies received, basically monopoly control, for I think up to 16 years that the present legislation, federal legislation allows. I would like to know what has occurred in the last year in this whole area or has this question basically been set aside?

Mr. Findlay: I will not say that the question has been set aside, but in terms of the follow-up action, what we are in right now is a process of complete pesticide review Canada-wide.

The federal Government has announced a review of the pesticide registration process, and that review committee was named here about two months ago with the former Deputy Minister of Quebec as chairman, Ghislain Leblonde. He is now employed with the federal Government, I think it is as Associate Deputy Minister, and is heading up this review process. On that committee, there is a Jim McCutcheon, a producer representative from Manitoba—Jim McCutcheon from Homewood; Zero Tilthaine (phonetic) is on the national committee. We have repeatedly asked for provincial representation on that committee and our indication, at this point in time, we may well get an individual from our department on that review committee. It will be somebody with the expertise to do an effective job on the review committee.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the federal Government is doing and the involvement of representatives from Manitoba, who were at the forefront of leading the debate to institute some change in this whole area. The study that the province had undertaken went beyond the review and looked at, specifically, the possibility of challenging some of the protection that is afforded now in view of the fact that, specifically, glyphosate monopoly was going to be removed.

* (1540)

I think it is probably a year, a year and a half or two years to go before that protection is lifted and, quite frankly, there has been some movement on price, of course. One of the basic tenets of that study was to see whether or not we could gather together expertise that may be available within the province, and even entrepreneurship to bring about a challenge to the existing patent holder and put the produce on the market, or be able to convince the federal Government to put the product on the market as really a separate thrust to what is being undertaken by the federal Government. Mr. Chairman, I do not think the federal Government is in any rush in this whole area, and I say that not in the sense of being negative to them.

Clearly, several years ago at a ministerial conference, it was not even perceived to be a problem and yet the one, Jim McCutcheon, who received responses from John Wise, who was then Minister, was flabbergasted at the lack of understanding by the federal Government of the impact of reducing costs to farmers, and the impact that a reduction of even \$4 or \$5 an acre would make to farmers' costs of production. I just get the sense from this Minister that this Government has basically said, we will take the easier approach, we will let the feds do the work and we will not challenge the system. Really, I think that is regrettable if the Minister has taken that approach and perhaps maybe he wants to clarify that.

Mr. Findlay: I would like to correct the Member's interpretation of what is going on. I think there is probably no province that is more active in wanting to see some changes to make that particular chemical available to the farmers at a reasonable price because of the incentive we have put on conservation tillage.

In order for farmers to go to less tillage, or what we call conservation tillage, it means more problems with weed control.

The best chemical, particularly in dealing with perennial weeds, is Roundup or glyphosate, and clearly the price has come down. It is approximately \$14.50 an acre now, where it was \$25; and it used to be \$40 or \$50.00. It is more in line with the farmers' ability to pay for it. We have written letters over the past year to the federal Minister saying that product-specific registration is a hang-up to any private individual being able to manufacture glyphosate after the registration, the 17-year period is up. That 17-year period is up some time in 1990.

Product-specific registration means that any other group, like Focus on Inputs, who may want to manufacture that product has to go through the registration process with their specific formulation and have it registered, do certain kinds of efficacy work, and delve some toxicological information on that chemical, which is really a repeat of the information that is already on record from the previous registration that was in place. We have asked him to address product-specific registration to remove that impediment to getting a low-priced product on the market by entrepreneurs who are prepared to produce the product and rechallenge the large companies.

To the best of my knowledge, Focus on Inputs people are trying to move in that direction. We have attempted to support it by asking them to have some address made to this product specific registration process that is presently in place at the federal level. Their response has been, let us review the entire pesticide registration process before we make piecemeal changes to the program of registration. You must remember that on the other side of the coin is desire for protection of the health of individuals, health of wildlife and concern for the environment.

If we were to advocate some irresponsibly, he would be the first person to jump on us and say we are not being environmentally conscious. So in the process of trying to do everything together, we cannot just jump in and cause or ask for piecemeal approaches to a very large complex problem that has been around for a long period of time. We are getting a lot of emphasis on it right now because of legislation coming off registration in 1990 and our desire to have a low-priced product available to farmers who want to be conservation conscious in their tillage.

I might even just add to that, just on a lighter side, I just had lunch with a delegation of six people from Russia, who are over here meeting with various people in our department, brought over by Monsanto, and they are looking at the various techniques that we use in the extension to our farmers. This is one of the major chemicals of interest to them because they have the same desire of mind—conservation tillage. We had a very good meeting, a good discussion on the kind of problems they have in their agriculture, the kind of problems we have here.

Mr. Uruski: I understand and the Minister indicates that the committee is still working on it. What assistance

is the Government providing to them, or have they provided to them over this past year to move them along this line to see whether in fact a challenge can be made? There were some legal ramifications that had to be checked out, I believe. Some other areas of work, has anything occurred? Has the department basically said we will shut this whole process down that began some two years ago or more by myself and followed up by my former colleague, the Member for Swan River, and was handed to this Minister? What has occurred, because what I am hearing basically we have removed ourselves from the advocacy role in the acceptance of the review that is occurring. Quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, that is one side of the question.

The side of the question that we were attempting to get is to deal precisely with the question of the ability of a group, providing the general formulation or the ingredients in the herbicide were similar that there would not be the requirement to go through the kind of testing that would have to in fact take place. There is no one, and I will be the last to say to the Minister that anyone should be advocating totally untested herbicides to go on the market. That is clearly not the case here.

* (1550)

What the question remains, and really I guess the committee will have to get at is, what is the break-even point for whoever is involved in the manufacture or in the breakthrough of new chemicals? Where is the break-even point below 16 years? Clearly, it has been very obvious from the pricing of the herbicide on the market now, and the Minister well knows, and he mentioned the comments where it came down from the \$20 to \$30 an acre range, and now it is basically cut in half. After the testing is done, is there a shorter time frame in which a herbicide could in fact be put on the marketplace and allow competition, rather than giving the kind of protection of right now, 16 to 17 years. Is it six years? Is it five years? What kind of costs are included in the—calculable as a normal operating cost in terms of dealing with this question so that, quite frankly, in an attempt to really speed up the process, but recognizing—and I believe that the federal process will take one to two years. It will be at least one to two years away.

I do not believe that there will be any swift resolution. On this one area, and I am not suggesting that we can do it in other areas, something likely could happen before the patent expires and somebody could be on the marketplace having some fairly sizable saving to the farm community across western Canada in particular. Maybe the Minister is saying, look, there is just no hope in this whole area, and that is where it is. I am not certain that is the case.

Mr. Findlay: There is no such time that I would ever say there is no hope. I have already told them that we have been advocating on the side of trying to have product-specific registration looked at. I have asked for that issue to be on the next federal Minister's national meeting. I cannot tell him at this point in time whether it will be on the agenda of the next meeting. I think the desire at the federal level, and probably at some of the provincial levels, is that we have a process

now to deal with that. We will wait for a recommendation to come back.

I do not want to appear to take the side of the companies, but I will give the Member the reality that exists out there. The farm community is faced with a number of problems in regard to weed control. We have a variety of crops in which we want to control the weeds. There is always a challenge out there saying to the chemical companies, develop products that will do the job that I want done, whether it is controlling buckwheat in sunflowers, or millet in wheat, whatever it is. We want new chemicals always coming on the market that are responsibly priced, or priced in a range that they can afford them, to do the job that they want done.

I mentioned millet in wheat, because it has been a problem area. There has not been really effective chemicals at a low enough price. Just this past spring, in almost a rush basis, a new chemical came on the market, Laser, at a lower price, apparently will do the job. I have not seen it in action.- (Interjection)- The Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) says it works well, and I take his word for it. It has been well advertised, and I hope it does do the job.

But we have another problem coming in millet and that is resistance. There is millet out in southwestern Manitoba that is resistant to trifluralin, the problem that the chemical companies are going to have to deal with in terms of the new chemicals they bring on stream. The reason I raise that is the 17-year patent period allows them to generate certain profits from whatever product they have on the market, and it is my expectation that they take those profits and they convert it into research to develop these new chemicals that we want, need and must have. If you say there are certain profits, therefore the patent period should be shortened up and anybody could produce in a shorter period of time. You run the risk of telling the chemical companies, hey, we do not want you to be in product research and development. You expect the companies then to say, well, you as Government then get into the research and development and develop the new products.

I say we have had a reasonably good process of product development. I do not know whether it has been economically fair to all the players. I can assure the Member that Keystone Agriculture Producers, as an example, want the pricing system reviewed in this pesticide review because they have some concerns about whether there is fair pricing going on, and it is an open question. I do not think that I would advocate that we pry into the private affairs of private companies, but I think it is fair to ask them to be somewhat accountable in the process of how they utilize the profits in terms of research and development for products of the future that the farm community needs. We have many examples of success in that direction.

Clearly, we have some chemicals in the minor use area, in the vegetable area, which chemical companies say we cannot afford to register them in Canada because there is not a large enough market. You might say, well, you have overall a big market, serve also the niches in the total pesticide market as well as just the

large volume products. So there are a number of challenges out there. The pesticide review process will look at them all. We all know it will not happen as fast as we might like it to happen, but we are moving in the right direction. It has taken a long time to get this process under way, knowing that the farm community and the chemical production industry is going to be challenged by people concerned about residues. It is going to be challenged by people concerned about the environment, and they are going to have to be able to protect themselves in terms of continued use of certain products as this review process moves along.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, in this whole area, what is the intent of the Government and how do they propose to deal with the legislation now before the House of Commons dealings with the plant patent?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I will tell the Member that my position has not changed on this topic. The plant patent legislation is a step in the right direction to generate research dollars for the plant breeding scientists to have the resources to continue to do a bigger and better job.

I congratulate them for the job they have done in the past 20 years. It has put us at the forefront of being able to produce varieties that are good for farmers of Manitoba and western Canada in terms of the quality of crops we produce and the ability to produce under our climatic conditions. We need more dollars. There are more challenges out there to produce yet better varieties. The source of funds that will come from that will only augment the ability of the scientists to do their jobs.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister has not answered my question. He gave us his particular bias, and we all do have biases on every question, and that I would hope is acceptable that there are particular views on the issue.

The Minister has not addressed the question as to whether the Government will be involved in this process, whether the Government rejects the number of concerns raised in the document that was brought forward by my colleague, the Member for Swan River (Mr. Burrell), a year ago, that was published, raising some fairly specific concerns that should be addressed by the federal Government before legislation is implemented, not in total rejecting the legislation but raising a number of concerns. That document was published fairly extensively.

I want to know how this Minister intends to deal with those kinds of concerns in light of the legislation now being before the House of Commons. Is there going to be a provincial view? Is the Minister going to be making representations to the committee on agriculture? Is he going to consider or at least raise the kind of concerns that the department and my former colleague raised, that needed to be addressed before this matter would be in fact enacted? Those concerns, by everyone around, really have not been addressed by the rhetoric that has been in place over the last decade.

It is true my Liberal friends here support the legislation, just as their colleague, Eugene Whelan, was

bringing it forward, then dropped it, said it was necessary. In the process, in the political debate that occurred across this country over the last decade, there were a number of fundamental questions that were raised by people who were concerned about the question of patenting that have never been answered by politicians, scientists and researchers and have never been addressed. Some of those questions were raised in the document put out by the Department of Agriculture under my former colleague, the former Member for Swan River. I can appreciate this Minister's biases. We all have our biases. I have my concerns about this whole question. How is this Government intending to deal with those questions?

* (1600)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I guess if we have any concerns that we are going to raise with regard to the legislation, they will be strictly scientifically based concerns. I will have to tell the Member that some of the rhetoric that occurred under his administration with regard to opposition to this particular piece of legislation was making comments that I do not think were scientifically based. I think it got the argument off track. It got it on a political playing field rather than a scientific playing field.

I do not share many of the concerns that were raised in his document or his previous colleague's document with regard to concern about ability to maintain certain gene pools and whatnot, or whether the federal Government was going to continue to put research dollars into plant breeding. We are going to request the federal Government maintain their level of support and that the money available through the registration process will augment those research dollars. If we are going to raise concerns, they are going to be strictly on the scientific basis of information available on a worldwide scheme.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, clearly it has now come to the floor that the political biases of my friend will take precedence over this issue. While there is a great debate on the scientific side, clearly the debate will be just as great on the economic side, on the cost side, both to producers and to consumers. Quite frankly, my colleague, the present Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), is telling us that he intends not to do anything about this issue.

Quite frankly, the federal Government, and it is very clear over the last number of years, has been and continues to cut back on research, both on the technical side in terms of industrial research as well as agricultural research. All one has to look at is the number of positions that have ceased to be funded over the last four or five years, the amount of money that has been cut out of the research dollars. They are hoping and they are gambling, and I say gambling because this is a gamble, on the premise that the private sector will be able to take over the kind of basic research required and will take the place and produce the kind of results that have occurred, and some of the great research that has occurred publicly over the last number of decades.

I am not as confident that will occur. As a private entrepreneur, my time line may not be, and my financial resources, unless of course I am very, very huge in terms of the backing, my backers, my time line and my horizon will be far shorter. Much of the research and the success in the research that has taken place over the last 50 to 60 years has been I believe—maybe I am out in left field or somewhere out in the field—that my knowledge of this is not as accurate, but I want to say that the successes have been because of the investment publicly to basic research that has produced the kind of result, and it has taken many years to produce those results. If the results are there to produce returns to the investor, basically patent protection as we have in herbicides, as we have provided it now under the drug patent legislation, all of these are interconnected. Whether we want to admit it or not, each of those is there, interconnected to produce monopolistic benefits and capital gains to the companies involved.

Generally speaking, those benefits historically have gone to the companies with the greatest clout and it has been their, I would say, corporate planning that has come at the forefront of which research and how that research will be undertaken.

The bottom line is that the line on the corporate profit remains in the black, and it is our shareholders' bank accounts and their investments that we have to cater to. As long as we get the kind of protection we are prepared to give them in drug patenting, which has given basically billions of dollars in profits to the multinational drug companies—we have done it in chemicals in terms of the length of time for protection. All the Minister has to do is ask his department to say look, what are the sales, how much has been invested into research, just to see from that whole area on the herbicide question how much money is being made by the chemical companies on herbicides and how much the price has been able to decline when the chemicals have become generic.

Quite frankly, the same will occur in the question of plant patenting and the like. Mr. Chairman, this Minister is really showing the—well, I should not say this Minister because the Official Opposition here in this House, I guess you could call them two peas in a pod on this issue. They both favour the question of patent protection and they basically, one can clearly say, are pandering to the whims of the large chemical companies and oil companies of this world.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) and I go back all too many years in this House. Mine is only 12. His is somewhat longer, and it is clear that he ought not to prolong the agony.

Mr. Chairman, this argument has been broached before in terms of plant breeders' rights legislation. It is an issue that has been debated in the public forum and I will submit that my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), put it succinctly. He said there has been a political argument on plant breeders' rights of which my honourable friend, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), takes the Party line of the New Democratic

Party that anything private sector is evil and wrong and hence ought to be opposed.

We expect that, but it does not shed too much light on what is to be achieved through plant breeders' rights for the producers in Canada and in Manitoba. My colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), has indicated that the scientific arguments are what we will present. He will present them very well. Mr. Chairman, I know you know that, and my honourable friend from the Interlake even has to admit that.

I want to tell you where there are two areas where I have some concern, and I hope that they are addressed in the plant breeders' rights issue. First of all, I do not want to see a reduction of public research funding because I think it has been an important initiative. My honourable friend says it has happened already. Well, my honourable friend has all the answers when he is in Opposition and damned few when he is in Government.

Mr. Chairman, I want to tell my honourable friend that I think the Public Research Program has worked fairly well. I believe that in instances where plant material, genetic materials, are sold in terms of the private sector involvement in plant breeding, that those revenues ought to be refocused back into the public research effort. I am not certain that provision is part of the legislation, but that is a goal that I think would be a reasonable one to try and achieve, rather than to have the proceeds go into the maw of General Revenues and possibly be lost.

* (1610)

My honourable friend, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), ought to, I suppose, come south of the No. 1 Highway once in a while. If he came to my constituency in particular, he would see two rather significant initiatives, one of them just immediately south of Carman, and the other one immediately west of Rosebank. Both of them involve major grain firms, one of them Conti-Seeds, the other one United Grain Growers, a company that I do not think my honourable friend philosophically feels is threatening the farmers of Manitoba, maybe he does. They are involved in a very, very substantial investment in research.

The focus of their research currently is in canola in the hopes to develop hybrid canolas. If they do succeed and they will, I think there will be offered to the producers of Manitoba and western Canada a significant production advantage in a very competitive world which will allow our producers an opportunity for enhanced revenue opportunities from a farming operation. Lord knows, anybody who is involved in farming today, as many of us are, wants those enhanced opportunities to make a good return from crop production.

If we lived in my honourable friend's world, the Member for Interlake's world, we probably would not have a number of crops that are currently hybrid on the market because most of those have been developed in private research, hybrid sunflowers and other hybrids, that allow our producers to produce economically and make a profit in farming. I do not want to deny farmers in my constituency that opportunity.

Now, one of the old shibboleths that the New Democratic Party and my church, the United Church, have often come up with in opposing plant breeders' rights, is that oh, goodness gracious, they will put the price of seeds up. These horrible multinational, private sector firms will drive the price of seed through the roof so that farmers will not be able to afford to grow their grain crops anymore. That is an interesting argument, and that presumes that every farmer is so stupid and ignorant in his business practice that he is going to purchase seed at far greater investment in dollars than its economic value to him as a producer. Those farmers are no longer part of the fabric of rural Manitoba. They are long gone like the dodo birds and the dinosaurs.

To presume that somebody is going to charge a farmer an exorbitant price for seed and rip him off so that he does not have an economic advantage presumes an ignorance of the farm community that my honourable friend from the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) ought not to have. Farmers will utilize hybrid seeds when they economically return additional dollars to their cropping program. I want those opportunities to be available to farmers in my constituency and the rest of this province. I want that opportunity myself.

Now, I will admit that there would be some, maybe in the New Democratic Party, who would call that a conflict of interest, but it is not. That is just plain common-sense economics in agriculture. If we get into this argument of right versus left, the socialist philosophy of anti-private sector investment, we are never going to solve the plant patent legislation issue. I believe that agriculture has been served well with plant breeders' rights development in terms of the development of new and better varieties with disease resistance, insect resistance.

Let us talk about sustainable development as an issue. If you have varieties that have bred into them genetically, a resistance, for instance in canola, the flea beetles, then producers will not be forced to go out with the Furadans and the insecticides which have some downside in—environmentally, is that not a laudable goal in plant breeding? Is it not a laudable goal to develop other varieties that have resistance to rust and other diseases that strike our grains?

That has been going on for generations and generations and an enhancement to that effort, through plant breeders' rights, is welcomed by thinking farmers across the length and breadth of this province. That is why those political Parties who have supported that direction tend to represent those farmers and those who do not represent other constituencies, sometimes.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Mr. Chairman, I have to get into this debate to some extent myself, but I suspect if we went back to the Hansard of last year, that this is almost verbatim as to what was said last year and I do not think anyone has changed their position. But I would like to correct both the Honourable Minister and the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) for what, I think in the case of the Member for Interlake, may be a deliberate attempt here, and that is the confusion that exists between plant breeders' rights and plant patenting. There is a distinct difference.

It is not correct to refer to plant breeders' rights as plant patenting because there is a major difference there. With a patent, you are under the issue where you have to pay a royalty for the use of that patent. Under plant breeders' rights, when a variety is released, that variety is available for plant breeders to utilize without any cost and that is why that distinction should always be made clear.

The other thing that has to be made clear is that there is a serious difference and a major difference between gene patenting and plant breeders' rights. If one is of the mind of the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) that he is opposed to plant breeders' rights, then he has to be extremely upset with the concept of gene patenting, because that is a much more serious issue.

As a plant breeder and one who has worked in the public sector for many years, I am very concerned about the concept of gene patenting because you could have a situation where a variety is released, whether it be by the public or the private sector, and that variety is then a predominant variety and it does not matter what crop it is and you want to use that variety as a parent in the development of a new one. You would be faced with a situation that you may have to pay royalties on a number of genes that exist within that particular variety in order to use those genes to transfer them into the development of a better variety.

So I want to make it very clear, Mr. Chairman, that there is a distinction between plant breeders' rights, plant patenting and gene patenting, and if you are of the opinion that they are all bad then they certainly have to be on a scale where the plant breeders' rights, even to the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) would be, I would hope, a more acceptable one than plant patenting or gene patenting. But there has always been, and I think this goes back to the time when Gene Whelan first introduced the Bill, which was quite a few years, and that Bill has essentially been introduced now four times in essentially the same format, twice by John Wise and now by Mazankowski.

There have always been two caveats associated with that and I am sure the Minister is aware of the caveats. The one is that there should be the retention of the current, if not an enhanced, level of support to the public sector and I am concerned, as is the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), that there has been some erosion of the support to the public sector over the years, not only through Agriculture Canada but through the support that has been available to the provincial research where there is provincial research and to the universities. It has not been adequate, but one cannot go back in time and I do not think there is any mechanism that we can bring into place that is going to re-establish the level of support that might have been there a decade or more ago.

The other caveat that has always been in place is that there has to be the retention of the merit system when it comes to the registration of varieties, and that simply means that there should not be a variety released that is not superior to the varieties that were registered prior to that. I am concerned here again, Mr. Minister, that there is already some erosion taking place where

varieties are now being registered which are just equal to something else that is already in the marketplace.

* (1620)

This concerns me because I think there will be tremendous pressure put on by the private sector where they have something that is equal to something that is already out there, arguing that there is no reason that they should not be able to get their share of the market if what they are putting out is equal to what is already there. While this may sound meritorious on the surface, I think the Minister and everyone who is aware or familiar with agricultural testing knows that is not as specific as we would like it to be.

So it is quite possible that something that is identified as being equal may, using the jargon, just be barely equal which may mean that it is not quite as good as something that is already out there. So I am concerned that level of merit is not being retained as far as the registration system is concerned.

I have already gone on record, not only with the Agriculture Critics in Ottawa in my Party, but also with the Minister of Agriculture indicating my support for plant breeders' rights. I hope that the document the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) is referring to that came out some years ago, I hope there are no copies of that left because, as far as I am concerned, that was a document that should never have been released because it was not scientifically sound. I was on a platform with Pat Mooney and debated that thing at length. I would be more than happy to debate him again at this time because that was not a document that anyone who was scientifically well versed in the subject could stand behind, and much of it was nonsense.

So I think we have to support the concept of plant breeders' rights. I am fully supportive of the concept of royalties being collected by the public sector. I think there is absolutely nothing wrong with Agriculture Canada getting royalties on the varieties that they release and having that money pumped back into the support for the program. I think the Minister knows, perhaps better than I do, what percentage of the acreage of wheat in western Canada has been of varieties that have been developed by the Agriculture Canada Research Station right here in Winnipeg. Some years, it has been in excess of 90 percent of the acreage. Had there been a royalty collected on that acreage, a small royalty at that, it could have been a very small one, just a matter of mills per tonne of seed, that would have more than covered the cost of varietal development.

For the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), if you just take a look at the losses that we would be sustaining today if we did not have rust resistance in wheat, the losses in any one year would be more than the total amount that has gone into research in wheat development for the whole time that we have been working on plant breeding here in western Canada. So there is no investment that I can think of that returns you a better return on your dollar than investment into plant breeding. Certainly, the example of canola is another one.

The point that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) made about the use of hybrids, the reason there is so much effort going into hybrids and the bulk of it going into it by the private sector, is that through the use of hybrids you can circumvent the requirement of plant breeders' rights. So they are doing extremely well on these hybrids but the private sector is not in all probability going to go into the research that is necessary on the small crops, because there is not the likelihood of good return on the investment. That is why I think you have to maintain the level of support to the public sector, so that those small niche crops are not ignored.

I doubt whether we would have adequate research going into field beans, perhaps even peas and some of the small acreage crops if we had to rely on the private sector to do it, because there just is not the return on the investment. It may well be that over time—you see a lot of the effort that is now being done by the public sector in the major crops being taken over by the private sector. That would allow the public sector to devote more time to the small crops which, in turn, then might develop into more significant crops, and actually end up in the areas where value added and all of the other things that we sort of say are good for western Canada could develop.

I would hope, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister will put some pressure on his colleague in Ottawa to make sure that this thing does not die on the Order Paper again. I am not sure how plant breeders' rights got into this particular section of our budgetary debate today but I am glad it did. I hope that in this one particular case the federal Conservatives have shown good judgment by bringing this forward early enough in their mandate, that they might have the courage of their conviction to make sure that it goes through second and third reading before they end up in another election, because that is what has happened in the past.

I also think that this thing has been discussed sufficiently that I think it would be inappropriate and unnecessary to delay this for another one of these rounds of public hearings where you get the vociferous minority who know very little about this subject. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicated that the United Church took a stand on it. I do not go out and preach theology, so I hope that the theologians are not going to go out and start preaching the pros and cons of plant breeders' rights, because I do not think they know what they are talking about.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, if I ever heard two speeches supporting the basis of what I have said of raising concerns about this issue, I just heard it from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans). Ostensibly, the Member for Fort Garry, on behalf of the Liberal Party, has said that I support the right of breeders to collect a royalty. That is essentially what plant breeders' rights are and not to mix up—just hold on here, the Minister says, back to research. That is the very issue that we are talking about on herbicides. The fact of the matter is private companies have been given a 16- to 17-year monopoly to say that no one can enter the market or produce a herbicide once I have patent protection.

Mr. Chairman, what is occurring and what the federal-provincial review is undertaking, will have to undertake as to where is the break-even point in which to cut off that monopoly. What plant breeders' rights are or the ability to charge a royalty on research will be the same kind of an issue. How long should you give patent protection a royalty in order to pay back that breeder for the development of that seed? Am I saying something wrong in my analysis? The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, what the Member is suggesting is that it is okay to allow a long period of plant patenting protection or profit on the basis of that invention.

We have been and all the Members have, those two Members who spoke, basically said we have done a great job in the last 50 years with the kind of system that we have had. We have made great advances in plant genetics and plant improvement without patent protection. If we want to fund the research and say, yes, there should be some incentive to breeders to produce, then why do we need to give them patent protection?

If we are saying that it is such a fundamental need in society to produce better seeds for our farmers and for society for food, why do we not do it even at the other end? Let us charge each farmer or charge each consumer on per bushel or whatever the consumers buy, or charge each farmer as we sell the grain and say, let us put it into a fund for research. Then at least we will know that whatever funds we require for research will be there up front, and there will not be the kind of rip-off, I say "rip-off" because we have found it very clearly on the chemical side.

* (1630)

Roundup is clearly one of those that when you give a company 16 years protection and you allow them to charge 15 times to 20 times the rate of what it would cost you to produce a generic, and the ingredients are relatively the same in terms of the same cost of ingredients, that nobody can show you that they have applied and used that money back into research. That is the kind of system we will produce.

So, Mr. Chairman, if we want to say that we require the funding, therefore, the improvement of plant and seed varieties in this country, let us do it up front. Let us say that we will produce and provide incentives to whoever, both public and private, and say those incentives will come in a form of direct grants based on the research that you will undertake. Then at least we will have something for our money.

What we are doing and what we are going to be doing is that we will give everyone a blank cheque. We will be providing a blank cheque to those who want to do the research because they will have that protection for X number of years, regardless of what they may earn or regardless of what their costs are. The end result of the patent right or the patent charge that they will be able to make will not be in direct proportion to the amount of investment they have made into the research. That is one of the fundamental arguments.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Herold Driedger, in the Chair.)

Mr. Acting Chairman, I believe that fundamentally that there is very—we are all working from a bank of resource material that is not very huge, that the resource material that researchers use is not very large. We do not have the kind of great variety that my colleagues here in the House when the Liberals and the Conservatives say there is just umpteen resources, that those resources are not there. We are working from a very limited amount of base of genes of plant material that are available.— (Interjection)—

Well, my friend, the Liberal colleague, shakes his hand and says, basically by the movement of his hands, I do not know what I am talking about. That is fine. The Member is certainly entitled to his opinion, but he just gave me the Liberal position. I want to be everything to everybody. I am for the right to charge royalties on plant breeding, but I am opposed to having the question of plant patenting and gene material. Mr. Acting Chairman, you cannot be everything to everyone. You are either going to take a position to say that the question of plant breeding patenting, they all are in fact on the same road, it is just a matter of degree. So if you are for one, you cannot say I am for one and I am opposed to the rest. Fundamentally, as you make that progression, there really ultimately is no difference. You have to go down that line, and as they proceed you have to take the position that you are for the whole process.

So, Mr. Acting Chairman, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) who said, look, all of these are now going around and producing hybrids and the like hybrid seed production, I for one want to argue, and I am sure most of my colleagues are saying, let us build public incentives into the breeding program. Let us do it, let us do it up front, but let us not provide the kind of, what I would call, excessive returns or the ability to make excessive returns that we are doing in drug patenting, that we are doing in herbicides, because essentially that is what we have done there.

We allowed the multinational drug to give them many years of protection now to cut out generic drugs for a number of years. We have just handed them a blank cheque. We have done the same thing with herbicides for the farm community. Why are we now in a tizzy in doing the review because of the same process? Mr. Acting Chairman, there is a different way of achieving the results that most of us—and I believe that most of us—want to. I do not even read into anything sinister on both the Liberals and the Conservatives saying we want to bring about more breeding of plant material onto the marketplace. Maybe I am naive in that, but the fact of the matter is there is a better way of doing it. We are not prepared to do it. If we are prepared to give a blank cheque to those who will become involved in this for the profit motive, then we are doing it for the wrong reasons.

Mr. Findlay: Just to put a few comments on the record, I think it goes without saying that we in Manitoba and western Canada in the agriculture industry have benefited tremendously from dollars spent on research, whether it is in plant breeding or whether it is in animal species. Whatever the kind of research dollars are spent on, we have had tremendous benefit.

Various attempts have been made to calculate a net return to research. It is difficult because, as the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) said, think where we would be without rust resistance in wheat. The economic payback there was tremendous. Look at the canola industry and look at the economic payback from the plant breeding we have done. We have produced a crop that has just risen in acceptance in North America and around the world at an incredibly rapid rate. We have done this with public dollars. I think it is fair to say that we can probably stimulate even more research, even more innovative ideas and research if we put the incentives in place.

I think what the Member is talking about, he is saying that there is going to be profit taking and people skulking off into the night with dollars that they should not have. It is a competitive world out there and there is always more than one product that will do the same job. There are going to be competitive varieties put on the marketplace and they must pass, they must be licensed. The Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) said—and then he is right—that it has to be an improved variety before it should be licensed.

I think we have made some mistakes in the past in licensing certain varieties of barley and wheat and whatnot that did not really pass the test of time. I think we can sharpen that process of registration to a very clearly—I can speak with a little bit of knowledge on this because one of the flops, the varietal test plots, was on my farm. I will tell you the number of varieties this year has expanded tremendously.

There seems to be a great desire to get some products on the market. I am glad that the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) sort of set the record straight in the difference between plant breeders' rights, plant patenting and gene patenting, because they are not all interchangeable and we have to be careful in our use of words.

I think that the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) is maybe overplaying the issue with regard to his fears. I believe that the overall industry will be very responsive to the opportunity to produce products that the farm community can use. The marketability of their products will be determined by the farm communities' desire to purchase them. If they are overpriced, they will not be bought. If they do not serve a need, they will not be bought. I think the competitive world has worked well in terms of developing our agriculture industry.

I reflect back to my meeting today with the six people from the Soviet Union. We talked about the differences that we have in our agricultural sector and the comparisons that exist. I could not help but be very proud of how we have been able to develop our ability to produce in excess of our ability to consume and they have not been able to achieve that.

All being equal, I think that we have developed a good ability in the research area, and I think that plant breeders' rights will further develop that ability.

I can tell the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Uruski) that I had an interesting phone call here about a month ago of a private company who was looking into

producing a particular kind of product that is going to—well, it is really in the flax area in terms of producing an edible oil flax. They could see there are great opportunities there and there may well be, but if it is something that they want to put some dollars into for research, go to it. If you are successful, I hope you get some financial reward out of it. If you do not, that is the way the ball game is played.

Mr. Uruski: It is nice to see the world through rose-coloured glasses of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). I can understand where he is coming from, but the fact of the matter is he should be prepared to say to farmers that he stands with those who have the rights today, as they do in the herbicide industry, to have the protection for whatever length of time it is and he is prepared to extend that protection which can mean, Mr. Acting Chairman—I admit that not all research will be successful both public and private, but what it does mean is that we are prepared to sign a blank cheque to those involved in breeding for profit, because of the protection that we will give them in terms of this federal legislation.

* (1640)

I regret very much that we will basically sit silently by. The Liberals and the Conservatives on this issue are basically together on this one and ultimately the losers will be Canadian taxpayers and consumers, in general, and farmers.

Mr. Findlay: I think the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) has everything completely flip-flopped in terms of our ability to meet the challenges at future to research. The benefactors will be the taxpayers of Canada and the farmers of Canada, absolute benefactors, have been in the past, will continue to be in the future. There is no question about that. For him to say that we are giving anybody a blank cheque is absolutely ridiculous.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

The competitive world has existed. We have met the challenges of producing products that are well accepted around the world and we do not have to take a back seat to anybody, nor will I back down from the fact that we have been very successful and will continue on that track.

Our producers, in conjunction with our researchers both in university and agribusiness, have been a good partnership, and they will continue to be. Those who want to meet the challenge, the challenges are laid out there. There are lots of farmers who will stand up, a lot of researchers will stand up and they will get up and they will meet the challenge.

Our research people are going to be the benefactors of any revenues coming in under plant breeders' rights, whether they are in Ag Canada or whether they are in the universities. There will be more research dollars available and they will be able to do a better job of serving the needs of the agricultural industry through their research.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, just one further point, just to show the Minister what I had said earlier. Quite clearly,

had the protection of patenting, for example for Monsanto, not been 16 years, chances are, and I say chances are—not only chances are, it is quite clear that the cost of producing that herbicide should be virtually half of what it is today and it still would produce a darn good profit for that corporation.

Quite frankly, in terms of the protection that was there, the company for the vast majority of those years really had a captive market on what can be considered a very good chemical. No one is denying the work and the research work that is there. What ultimately will come down is where is that break-even point, and how long do you provide that protection if that is the route you are going to take? That in essence has to be the fundamental question of the review that has been taking place on the herbicide study and as well will ultimately have to be, if this legislation passes on the question of plant patenting. We have provided, for example on the drug patenting, I think it is 10 years where we have allowed, and quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, that will be viewed very clearly as providing a blank cheque. I say a blank cheque because that is really what it is to the companies involved because it effectively keeps every one.

The Members on the Government and the Official Opposition talk about competition. Really, when you close the door for a 10-year period in this whole area, there may be some work in other areas but clearly what you have done is written a blank cheque and allowed those involved a very free hand in that area.

Mr. Findlay: I guess what the Member is really saying is that the word "profit" is a dirty word. Profit has motivated the development of this country, has motivated development of the agriculture industry, and if he says that the company is making a profit and then are not properly utilizing, either the income tax department is going to look after that or their competition is going to look after it, because if they do not put enough of those so-called profit dollars out of a chemical they are selling under patent into research and development, they as a company will not be around very long because the competition is going to take care of them. In most chemicals and in most plant species in the future, there are going to be competitive products available for choice of the purchaser, in this case the farmer, and he will choose whichever one is most adapted to his needs.

The company producing the product that does not measure up, he is in trouble, so he had better do his research and development to continue to produce a better produce at lower cost to the purchaser of that product. That is the way our system operates. If there is not a motivation in there in terms of profit, that system will not work. I say again, it is working exceedingly well. We are at the forefront of research in terms of agriculture worldwide and in the forefront in terms of quality of product we produce.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that the Minister says the system has worked exceedingly well. It has worked well without the need and the requirement of royalty on production, but I want to say to the Minister this is where he and I disagree fundamentally. I do not

believe that for something as sacred as the basic production, not of food generally but of living material, and that is in the production of food as fundamental as seed production to the health and security of our nation, there should be a profit motive on the basis of that production.

If you are talking about a profit, as a further processing, and going on beyond the basic production of foodstuffs, I have no difficulty with saying that, yes, there should be a profit return.

When it comes to the fundamental question of the basic seed and genetic material of seed production, I do not believe there should be a profit for anyone to go into that production, that we as a society should be prepared to say that food is sacred and the protection of that material for production for all with no profit, for the production of all society, that should be the fundamental basis of governmental policy in not only in this country, not only in this province, but around the world.

It is solely on the basis that we have moved in that direction that, fundamentally, I disagree with the present Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and others who may take his position on the basic production of seed. When we talk about processing and going further, I have no difficulty of companies setting up and processing and going beyond that. We are talking about the fundamental issue of survival, and he who controls the food source, the basic food material, has the control of society.

Mr. Findlay: I guess we will have to agree to disagree. There is no question about it. I do not see any threat to our gene pool or the availability of basic plant materials. The Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) may be able to enlarge on this, but it is my understanding we have a basic gene pool where specific plant genes are stored for future use. That exists and I do not see any threat to that.

It is done on an international basis to the best of my knowledge, and we are protected for use of those genes for breeding in the future. To the best of my knowledge, over the course of time, we have a good interchange of gene types from all around the world. I think they cross all country barriers. I do not think that the Iron Curtain prevents genes from moving back and forth, or plant varieties for experimental purposes or for breeding. It has worked exceedingly well, and I do not see that plant breeders' rights are going to change this one iota. It just puts more research dollars into the system to do a better job with what we already have.

Mr. Chairman: 1.(b)(1) Salaries—pass; 1.(b)(2) Other Expenditures—pass; 1.(b)(3) Policy Studies—pass.

1.(c)(1) Communications Branch and Salaries—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

* (1650)

Mr. Laurie Evans: Just a couple of questions on this, Mr. Chairman, can the Minister give any indication of

the cost associated with the Home Study Programs in terms of the overall total cost and the participation in some of the recent programs. I see the one for 1990 is identified as ag engineering, '90 is the home study. I have to admit that I do not recall the one that has just been completed in 1989, but I do remember that there have been quite a number of these. I would assume that they must have some handle on the number of participants and the sort of global cost of this Home Study Program.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, the home study course this year was Farm Planning, and Engineering for next year. The number of participants this past year in the Farm Planning was 1,570, and the revenue that came in is about \$25,000.00. The actual expenditure figure we do not have at the moment. We will get it for you.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I am interested in seeing the level of participation.

My question is to the Minister. Has any cross-referencing been done in the department to see just how many people over, say, a five-year period who participate in these home study programs are the same? I get the impression, as I go from one extension meeting to another, that you can almost recognize the faces in the front row. I am wondering whether some of these are virtually the same people who always come back.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the track record of running the home study courses for about seven years is that evaluations do show that there are a fair number of new people each year and their estimation is around 50 percent of the participants are most likely new from the previous year, but they may have taken a course two, three or four years ago. So you do have a recurring group of committed people wanting to have an opportunity to learn something new who do take the courses. We are always sometimes preaching to the converted. The number of other people out there that we should particularly have had in the Farm Planning one—I mean, we should have a lot more people than we did. It is difficult sometimes to get people to take advantage of the opportunities that are given to them, but the committed ones are always there.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Just one final question in this area of Communications, I thought it was a bit ironic that the only area with the major cutback under the Other Expenditures is Communication, where you have gone from \$74,000 last year to \$55,000 this year. There must be some major component that was responsible for this 25 percent cutback in that particular area.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, it is really a reallocation down to the capital line, going from zero to 16,000.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister tell me how many positions are vacant in this branch? Are there any?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, as of May 31, two vacancies.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, in what areas are the vacancies? Are they the writers, technical, secretarial, what are they?

Mr. Findlay: One is a clerk typist and the other is a media specialist.

Mr. Uruski: I want to ask the Minister, was it his department that prepared the ad in the Morris Stampede supplement in the Co-Operator?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, we placed the ad and we helped develop the ad and put it forward, I guess, almost in a fashion of supporting the Ag Expo, in terms of paying for an ad in their publication.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, did the Minister provide instructions as to how the ad was to be prepared?

Mr. Findlay: We participated in the process of finalizing what was written and various suggesting were made back and forth and we ended up with what you saw published.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, when was the decision made to deviate from what would have been normal practice within the department for ministerial messages or messages on behalf of the Government for such publications that would normally have been in the way of congratulatory messages to the volunteers, the hundreds of volunteers and the type of exhibition or activity that was taking place, to put in what I would say was clearly a political ad?

Mr. Findlay: I would think it is safe to say that both the Premier and myself are proud of the things we have tried to do for the agricultural industry, and I do not think it is wrong for us to, once in a while, stand up and say, we have done these things for your benefit and take recognition for it.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, when the Government wants to publicize its activities and its programs in terms of messages to Manitobans, the Conservative Party can pay for those ads. Clearly, this ad is one of those that really should have been paid by the Conservative Party. The Government will get its due, and did get its due, when it advertised the various programs that it wanted to take credit for, whether it be the drought program, whether it be all the other measures that they talked about in the ad. They put out ads in the paper at that time, they put out applications. Farmers, whoever benefited from those programs, that credit was there.

Mr. Chairman, when the Government made the decision to take the Communications Branch and, because I was accused of politicizing the Communications Branch, directed the Communications Branch to in fact produce what can be called nothing more than political propoganda on behalf of the Government in a booklet that would normally be used only for congratulatory messages, on the type of fair or exhibition from the Premier and the Minister, which I can understand and have no difficulty with because we did it, and all departments have done it in various areas.

But, Mr. Chairman, this went far beyond that. I would have had no difficulty of a message from the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier saying congratulations

to all the volunteers and those involved in the exhibition and the new thrust of the Morris Stampede and the volunteers, the hundreds of volunteers who would have had to take part in making this event the success it was, no difficulty at all. That would have been done by Communications.

* (1700)

But that was not the message, Mr. Chairman. The message clearly was, see what kind of good political guys we are, and here is what we have done for you, drought relief, this and this. Mr. Chairman, that ad should not have been paid by the Department of Agriculture. That should have been paid, quite frankly, from the Conservative Party. It would not have even met the terms of the access allowance of the Management Committee of the Legislature. We would not have been allowed to put such an ad in and have been reimbursed for that.

So, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) here really has moved away by the type of advertising he has done. He admitted to us, and I give him credit for at least standing up and saying, I am responsible for it, and saying that this is the type of ad that I have wanted. Clearly, his First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and he and his department should be sending that bill to the Conservative Party on this matter and not having the Department of Agriculture pay for this ad.

The advertising of those programs was paid for by the Department of Agriculture when they advertised the drought program and the various achievements that they have made. Yet they went ahead and put a political ad of this nature into a supplement of the Manitoba Co-Operator and basically said, see what the Conservative Party has done for you. If you want to do that, do that in your regular legislative report in the regular publications that each of your Members make to the papers and everything like that, or use it through your report mechanism through the Party. That, you do, but you do not call on your own department to say, here is the type of political ad that the Department of Agriculture should pay, advertising the great deeds of the Conservative Party.

Mr. Findlay: I take offence to the Member's statement that it was a political act. It clearly was an ad from the Government of Manitoba saying what the Government of Manitoba did. It said nothing about Conservatives, had no Conservative logo. It was strictly a Government ad saying exactly what we have done for the farm community of Manitoba, and we are proud of what we have done and will continue to be proud of what we have done.

We have put congratulatory messages in many places, and clearly the Ag Expo in Morris was a high success, and it did a good job. I will congratulate Frank Couture, one of our department people, who was the chairman of that. He did a very good job in conjunction with his organizing committee, and I wish them success on into the future.

Mr. Chairman: The hour being 5 p.m., and time for Private Members' Hour, committee rise and call in the Speaker.

**IN SESSION
COMMITTEE REPORT**

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

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

MOTION presented and carried.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
DEBATE ON SECOND READING**

**BILL NO. 13—THE MANITOBA
INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL
AMENDMENT ACT**

Mr. Speaker: Debate on second reading, public Bills, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles), Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson).

The Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema). We will leave this standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for having this opportunity to speak on Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act. For me, it is a special privilege and honour to be representing my colleagues in the Liberal Party. As an immigrant myself, I truly appreciate the important role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I understand the culture shock and the vast range of difficulties which face the newcomers every day.

Mr. Speaker, I was lucky. I came in the summer of 1979, and with luck and with hard work I am able to be taking part in the public life right now in Manitoba. That was because of the good will on the part of the Liberal Party and my colleagues who have helped me for the last one year to participate and play an active role in the mainstream society of Canada, which is the political process. Mr. Speaker, many people are not that lucky. For them to progress in this country, a strong community support network during those first days and first few months in this country is very important. For them, there is the need for an intercultural body such as MIC to provide a forum of joint problem solving and action.

All too often, we hear nice phrases about the importance of Canada's multiculturalism, but for all of us in this House it is far more than an ideal. Many communities have chosen to make Canada and Manitoba their home. They are working very hard to establish their families and their future here without

losing their precious heritage and cultural identity. The challenges and the struggles are different for each generation. Our parents, our children, and someday our children's children must deal with a reality which is different than ours.

We know that the true multicultural society is not achieved by legislation alone. Governments cannot pass laws that will eliminate subtle forms of discrimination based on inaccurate stereotypes. They cannot prevent misunderstandings from arising.

We in the Liberal Party know that the role of Government is to create an environment in which all individuals have equal access to opportunities, services and supports. They require to live full and productive lives. Laws provide the framework for a truly multicultural society, but it is up to us, the people who make up that society, to turn that vision into a reality. It will come only if we work all together, share our experiences and our aspirations not only with those in our own communities but with communities at large, and in other terms staying the main part in the mainstream society.

This is the essence of the Liberal Party's vision of multiculturalism in Canada and that is the vision I suppose with other Parties—I believe so—enabling people to finally relate to each other as people, recognizing and respecting not only their differences but also the common goal of each individual. We know that this is achieved by active participation of ethnocultural communities in all aspects of our society, from first settlement to long-term integration and not assimilation.

* (1710)

The Liberal Party in Manitoba is firmly committed to strengthening the role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. During the election campaign last year, we made a commitment that a Liberal Government would enable MIC to function as separately as possible from Government. To fulfill its role as advocate, adviser and promoter of multiculturalism and community development, MIC must function at arm's length from the Government of the Day.

Mr. Speaker, consequently, we share MIC's distress and frustration at the changes which the Government has forced on this organization. The rules and the framework for MIC have been in a constant state of flux for the past year. Audits were conducted, new standards set in place and then MIC was stripped of the role of funder. Staffing and board changes have been imposed unilaterally.

Members of MIC have had to deal with the ongoing uncertainty, the publicity and everyday impact of these changes. MIC is being asked to meet their commitment to the ethnocultural community and society at large, without having access to the legislative and financial support they require. MIC has strong support in the communities, but it must be allowed to function in a stable and supportive environment, free of Government's interference.

The Liberal caucus has reintroduced Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act. This

Bill is designed to give MIC more independence from Government through three areas:

1. To ensure that the presiding member of MIC be elected from the membership of the council;
2. To ensure that the senior staff and the executive secretary is hired and employed by MIC; and
3. To authorize MIC to disburse funds provided through the Lotteries grant system.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has been developed in consultation with the members of MIC. If passed, it would make MIC less political. It would remove the ability of the Government to manipulate their affairs and, through MIC, those of the ethnocultural communities.

We in the Liberal Party believe that the representatives chosen by the various communities are in the best position to determine the priorities and direction of MIC. MIC must have the autonomy to choose their own president and senior staff. These positions must be accountable to MIC, the members, not to the Government of the Day.

Mr. Speaker, similarly, MIC has the knowledge and the unique expertise needed to establish funding priorities within the various communities. MIC knows the groups, MIC understands the needs and circumstances. MIC must be able to allocate the funding. This Government appears to have no faith in the ability of the true representatives of the ethnocultural communities to manage their resources and affairs in an efficient and honest manner. We, in the Liberal Party, strongly disagree with this contention.

Unlike the present Government, we in the Liberal Party, do not believe that centralizing control in the Government is the most effective way to operate. As I have said, the expertise lies within the communities. It is through community action and involvement at the grass-roots level that the needs of those communities are met. The members of MIC have the knowledge and the skills to manage their own affairs. MIC must now have the authority and the independence to do so.

The amendments which the Liberal Party has brought forward will enable the MIC to truly act as the advocate for multicultural issues and issues affecting ethnocultural communities. We believe that the Ministers should be approaching MIC for input and advice on an ongoing basis. We believe that MIC must be free to advocate on behalf of their members without interference from the Government of the Day.

MIC must be allowed to criticize the Government, but how can they do that when the Government appoints the MIC chairperson and the senior staffperson? Mr. Speaker, how can MIC ensure that the communities have access to the funding and the support they require to develop and to flourish if MIC cannot allocate the grants? How can MIC be expected to serve as a vital forum for the various ethnocultural communities, to identify issues and take joint action if they have no power? We do not need more discussion groups. We

can only achieve our goals of a truly vibrant multicultural community through concerted action.

This commitment to multiculturalism and to Manitoba Intercultural Council is deeply felt at all levels of our Party. Our Leader, Sharon Carstairs, has a deep commitment and abiding commitment to multiculturalism, which she has demonstrated consistently throughout her public and private life.

In addition to our Leader, Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues have already spoken to this Bill, and I strongly recommend that all Members of this House support the amendment of this Bill. MIC can count on our support and our commitment to working with them. That is why I chose the Liberal Party as the most effective and responsible method for becoming involved in the mainstream society of Manitoba politics. It was a choice I made carefully, and it is a choice of which I am proud.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleagues, I would like to express my thanks to MIC for their commitment and dedication, even in the face of so many obstacles and frustrations beyond their control. We, in the Liberal Party, look forward to continue to work with MIC, to supporting their efforts to make our shared dream of a truly multicultural society a reality, and I believe that all Members will support our amendment. Thank you.

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this Bill. I must say I am glad the Minister has joined us and that we can make some of our concerns known directly to her as I have done in a recent letter to her, sent in the last couple of days spelling out our Party's concern and position on the actions that have been taken by this Government.

I think we have a number of areas that we have to look at. One is the decisions that have been made and what kind of decisions they are. The other area that is important is the process that they took in making those decisions and what kind of a process that is and then, because of the first two elements, the perception and the attitude that people believe is the attitude of this Government towards multiculturalism and towards the multicultural community.

I must say I think we all regret, as the Minister herself has said directly to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, when she attended some of their sessions that it has not been easy, that it has been difficult and that there have been a number of problems between the Government and the Manitoba Intercultural Council, and that means the ethnocultural community and the large number, probably in the range of about 52 communities that they represent. That is where the process of making decisions, the decisions that they have made and the apparent attitude of this Government is having a major impact, Mr. Speaker. I think this is a growing alienation that I think needs to concern us all. It needs to concern everybody in this Chamber, not just the Members on this side but should be concerning the Government.

The first area of concern was the process. I think people are often upset with the decision that is made, but when the process for making the decision seems

to contradict the principles that the Government says they are following, then it becomes even worse. Then they become even more upset over the decision because they feel the handling of it was so bad. In this case that is what we have. We have a situation where the decisions were bad, but the process for making the decisions were even worse.

In the first area is the area of consultation. Now, the Minister has said that she is interested in consulting. Even the Premier has said that they see this body as the main advisory body to the Government on all multicultural issues, but they have not asked them to advise on any issues yet. When they were dealing with such important matters as The Multicultural Act and changes to the Manitoba Intercultural Council role and mandate and appointments, I think that they heard the decisions that were being made about one-half hour before they were announced to the press.

Now, this is not the first time we have heard complaints of that nature. I think the Manitoba Heritage Foundation made the same point, where they were very concerned because, after having received the draft report for a reaction, they were called in one hour before the press conference, which turned out to be one of the most sophisticated press conferences that they have ever seen in terms of layout, in terms of brochures, printed material that had to have been worked on some numbers of weeks prior to that presentation.

So when that happens and people are called in for consultation, they get pretty mad because they realize it is a sham, that there is not really any consultation, that they are being brought in to be told what decision the Government has made. There is a lot of concern about that.

In terms of the advisory role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, I think the attitude of the Government seems to be that they cannot advise and advocate at the same time, that if you are giving advice that you really are muddying up the waters if you are advocating. You can only do one. When they give advice to this Government or to all of us on multicultural issues, they are advocating for actually over half of the people in the Province of Manitoba. They are advocating for all the minorities. They are advocating for all members of the ethnocultural community. That is their job. They cannot provide advice without advocating.

So the Government should recognize that they cannot really get the job done properly of the Manitoba Intercultural advising, unless they are prepared to have them advocate for the people who have elected them to do the job and for whom they represent.

The decision to remove the funding I think has to be one of the worst, poorest decisions that I have seen this Government make. That is not to say -(Interjection)- there is more coming? Oh, it is in good company.

It really is up there in the top 10. It has got to be up there in the top 10 of the hit parade. I think that the reason is, not that people did not recognize that there needed to be some changes made, not that the Auditor's Report and indeed the whole needs assessment and the lottery system did not point out

problems, relay some problems that needed improvement, related to all the groups and organizations that are participating, all the umbrella groups, not just the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

* (1720)

So there was recognition there. The Auditor's Report did show that there could be some improved procedures, some better accountabilities, some better monitoring, and some better evaluation. We knew all that. It is one of the reasons why the studies were undertaken, and we expected those to come out as a result of it and to give us and the Manitoba Intercultural Council help and advice on how to go about it.

However, the Auditor's Report, to our mind, did not identify any problems that justify the removal of the funding authority from the Manitoba Intercultural Council. In fact, when the Manitoba Intercultural Council met with them, they pressed them quite hard to find out why they had made some of those statements, and a lot of the answers to those were judgment calls.

When you are talking about how much money they had spent under the expense account for a dinner or when they were away at a convention, the point that they might have spent a little more than they should have or some more was a judgment call. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I would like to see other expense accounts that are undertaken by all Governments and all organizations and put to a comparison to see if there are not any others that are up there, or even way beyond there, that should be criticized and that are not even being touched.

So why this route, why this serious extreme action of taking their funding authority away? Why a lack of tolerance and recognition that of all the groups participating that this group is the one that needs community development time? This is not a group that has been around for 20 or 30 or 40 or 50 years that knows the system, that has participated, that has had access and involvement before. They have not, so they are learning the system, they are participating in it, many of them for the first time.

I do not know why, when this Government suggests to agree with Community Development, why do they not give time for that to happen? Why do they not say, you need to improve this. This accountability is not good enough. You need more evaluation. We are concerned about some of these things, and then give them some support and some help and some time to make the changes. But there was not any time, there was not any support, there was not any help, it was just off with their head. They have made some mistakes, and they are going to be selected out of all others to have their umbrella status removed.

They feel that very strongly that they were wondering why they have been selected to be given this harsh treatment, why there was such an extreme reaction to an Auditor's Report that showed normal problems related to a developing community and to an organization like that, and one for which there should have been tolerance and support, but there was not.

In terms of the community appointees, I think when I talked about process, we have a clear example here

of the worst case scenario of what not to do when you have decided to make appointments for a body to do a job for which there is already a body in existence, and which you are duplicating. Nevertheless, you have decided to set up another body to do the job that the Manitoba Intercultural Council was doing, and doing with elected representatives sitting and making those decisions that were elected by their communities and had the support and the credibility of those communities.

In making the appointments, I think there were a number of concerns that were raised. One was the fact that there was not really—although the people were identified as representing particular communities, there did not seem to have been any consultation with those communities to see how those names stood in terms of support from the community. They were made, I think, after the fact, in which case the Minister lost her opportunity to provide the balancing act that needs to be there in the legislation between all the ethnocultural communities and between the regions—the North, the rural and the southern.

We had 17 appointments from inside the city, three appointments left to cover the North and the rural area. By election, they did a better job. They at least had one from the rural area, one from the North. There are some communities that are overrepresented with six or seven representatives from one community, and others which do not have representation at all. I think it is unfortunate that, since she has decided to do the appointments, although we do not agree with that, that the Minister did not give herself the freedom to do a better balancing act to meet the legislative requirements.

I think she would have to be concerned at the fact that in the elections there was a total review of all of the Minister's appointments, and that none of them made it on, except one, who realigned themselves with the community position. None of them made it on the executive positions. So to have appointed 17 people and not have any of them accepted on the executive, I think is really a statement to the Minister that they have really misjudged and handled this in a very poor way.

There are other examples, Mr. Speaker, where I think the Government should do a better job of taking action to indicate that the statements that they make which they agree with multiculturalism, they support multiculturalism, and they want to promote multiculturalism, is reflected in their activities.

One of the other examples is the High School Education Review Advisory Committee. We all know that in education there is not any more important field to the multicultural community to deal with issues of racism and access and fairness than the education system. We believe that there should be a mandatory representative of the Manitoba Intercultural Council who is a body elected to advise the Minister and the Government on all multicultural issues. Why would they not have any multicultural representative on that advisory board so that they get the viewpoints of all the ethnocultural communities on multiculturalism in the schools, which is one of the major issues that the

schools are dealing with, whether it is in curriculum, whether it is training of teachers, whether it is dealing with racism in the schools, whether it is dealing with hiring? All of those things deal with multicultural policies.

Mr. Speaker, in my letter of a couple of days ago, which the Minister will have received, I did spell out our concern and indicated and suggested to the Minister that they take a number of steps to make immediate improvements between the multicultural community and this Government.

Now, the other day in Question Period, the Minister said when questioned, let us get on with it. Let us put it aside and get on with it. We want to do that, but the Minister must take some action first to show more than good faith, but to show intention.

We have to tell you, Madam Minister, that we feel the reinstatement of the funding authority is absolutely key. We are asking you to reinstate that authority and indicating to you here that if you are not able to do that and take some of the other very important steps, but particularly reinstate the funding, we will be supporting this Bill.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly with a necessity that I speak to this particular Bill No. 13, The Manitoba Intercultural Amendment Act.

I must indicate that this particular Act, which we are proposing to amend, certainly reflects an election promise of the Liberal Party in Manitoba during the last election. I would also indicate that there has been consultation with the Manitoba Intercultural Council on the part of the Liberal Party in regard to the proposed amendments to this Act, and there is certainly support from that council in regard to these amendments.

As the speakers before me have again spoken about the importance of this particular Act, I think it is very, very important to know that the multicultural community in the Province of Manitoba and in the City of Winnipeg is a very, very important component of our community in Manitoba. I certainly see that reflected as I look around my own constituency of Ellice.

I think back and look forward to the upcoming graduation of a high school in my area. That particular high school displays the very fabric of our country as you look at the variety of ethnic groups represented, and you hear the names of the students who are graduating: the Sinclairs, the Ponopolous's, the Munoz's, the Banilbos, the Nams and the Neves's. You can see, and it is exemplified in that particular situation the very importance of a multicultural community, the importance of having individuals from various ethnic groups who are made to feel that they are in fact participating as an important component of our community.

I think it is very important to note that this particular Government—and we have a Premier (Mr. Filmon) who stands from his seat and says that we on this side of the House are being divisive in terms of our straightforward questions of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. It is in fact the Government who is being divisive and who have again, as another example, not followed

along with what one would consider as good Government practice in terms of consulting with the multicultural groups, listening to their ideas, actually taking into consideration what their concerns and their needs are, but rather we have a Government who chooses to make decisions without any consultation, with no co-operation from the multicultural community, and what we have is this Government actually creating more divisiveness within the ethnocultural community of Manitoba.

* (1730)

I think it is important to note that the ethnocultural communities deserve the respect and the trust of any Government that is in power. The arbitrary decisions that have been made in the past number of months by this Government exemplify the lack of trust and the lack of respect that this Government has for the ethnocultural community in Manitoba.

What this Government has done is basically said, we are slapping you on your hands for some of the possible concerns that we have had as a result of a particular audit that was done. We do not feel that you have the ability to manage and disburse funds in your own communities. We are now taking back that power, and we are centralizing that particular power to another advisor group, and they will make all the decisions.

What this Government in essence is saying is you no longer represent your communities, or if you do, it really does not matter to us because we are taking back that power. In fact, we now alone will make those decisions. In a coined phrase, which I certainly would not be happy to be noted for, but we have a Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) who talks about us playing political politics and that phrase is well-coined, political politics. What she was describing in that quote which, by the way, is redundant is exactly what her Government chose to do, playing politics with the ethnocultural community of Manitoba.

I think it is very, very important to note that the ethnocultural community, when you look over the past 10 years and 20 years in Manitoba, that certainly as a group of individual cultures of individual ethnic groups, have come a long way in learning to work with one another in a spirit of co-operation, in a spirit of willingness. I think the Manitoba Intercultural Council should be given a lot of credit for the work they have done in the communities. A lot of these communities are long standing and have been in Manitoba for many, many years, 50 years, 60 years, 100 years. Some of the communities are very new to Manitoba.

Again, when you meet with these community groups, when you speak to individuals in the community, you will recognize there is one underlying principle and one underlying theme, and that is that these individuals, these people want more than ever to be seen as a part of the culture, the economy, the social life of Manitoba. They see that a part of their role can be played through, as they belong to the Intercultural Council. They belong to these community groups and organizations. They feel that they can participate and make contributions to their individual communities, and they see these

contributions to individual communities as also contributing to the overall society here in Manitoba. I think that is very, very important to note.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker, William Chornopyski, in the Chair.)

Having had the opportunity to attend the meetings of the Manitoba Intercultural Council a couple of weeks ago, it was very, very evident the degree of commitment and the degree of willingness on the part of these individuals to participate, and to want to make appropriate and correct decisions on behalf of their communities and for the good of all Manitobans.

What was also very evident, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the sense of frustration, the sense of anger and the sense of betrayal at this Government's unilateral decisions in regard to taking away their spending powers and their ability to disburse funds to their communities, much a sense of anger and betrayal. We have a situation of a Minister who, again because of an audit, feels that this particular Intercultural Council should no longer disburse the funds to their community groups.

Then we look at this amendment Act, but I would ask the Minister to reconsider her position and to talk to the Intercultural Council and to work with them so that there can be some agreement reached. Why are we creating another level? Why does this Government feel that an advisory group cannot advocate and advise and cannot disburse funds? Those three examples of functions are not necessarily separated. You can have groups and organizations who can disburse funds, who can advise the Government and make recommendations, and can advocate on behalf of communities. That certainly occurred in a number of situations.

In this particular Bill, what we are looking at as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we are not only saying, let the Manitoba Intercultural Council disburse the funds. What we are also saying is let us have this particular Intercultural Council actually operate in such a manner where they elect their own presiding members. That is very important. Let us not have the Government do that election and appointment so that you have a person who is placed on a pedestal and is not seen as part of the Intercultural Council.

Let us have an Intercultural Council where their paid employee, who is called an executive secretary, is actually hired by the Intercultural Council, not as a Government appointee. Let us have a situation where we give some teeth to this Intercultural Council, so they are seen as an organization, as a body of people who hire an executive secretary to carry out their work, not that they have an executive secretary appointed for them by the Government, because then the question becomes, who is that executive secretary really working for, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Are they working on behalf of the Intercultural Council or are they working on behalf of the Government?

Anyone who would look at organization structures, whether it be Governments or corporations, would realize that you have to give some authority and

accountability to that Intercultural Council in regard to the staff that they hire and in regard to looking at their presiding members as well.

I think what we have seen with this unfortunate set of circumstances, in regard to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, is again another example of how this particular Government makes decisions and then consults or attempts to consult with organizations and groups afterwards. We have seen this in a number of other departments, in Family Services and in the Department of Health, and we see it again with this particular group of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I certainly have had phone calls from constituents and from members of the various ethnocultural groups who express concern, many of them new Canadians who say the Government does not trust us anymore. What does this mean? Why are they taking away the powers of a group of people who are elected from their communities? Why are they taking away that power? Do they feel that we are not worthy, we do not have the ability, we are not able to carry out that responsibility?

* (1740)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Well, Well.

Ms. Gray: The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says well, well. Unfortunately if that is what this Government thinks, that there is that question mark and there is that hesitation, then we must go back to the people and tell them that, but we have faith in the ethnocultural community. We have faith that they are the best people. They represent the grass roots, they represent the community groups, they are the ones who have the ability and are able to best determine where the dollar should go to, and it is then to be seen as a non-political disbursement of funds.

That is not to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that any group or organization, we do not need to look at refinements of process. We had an audit which indicated a few minor problems that should be dealt with. Why does this particular Government, whenever it comes up with audits where there are a few problems that are identified, decide to totally, as the expression goes, throw the baby out with the bath water? Rather than look at the existing situation and making those necessary refinements and working with the group, they decide to totally change a structure or the way that things are handled. I do not see that as an appropriate way to go.

What is important here is that this Government has failed to realize the ethnocultural community makes up a large part of the constituencies of Manitoba. I think it is really a slap on their hands to tell them that they no longer have the ability to deal with this particular issue. Yes, we want accountability. Yes, it is important to have accountability in handing out funds. Many organizations and groups across the Province of Manitoba hand out and give out dollars, and there are accountability systems that can certainly be built into that. This is what the ethnocultural community are

saying as well, yes, we want to be responsible, yes, we want to be accountable, but give us the opportunity to do that.

I would say, in summary, that I believe the essence of this particular amendment Act certainly indicates what the Liberal Party in Manitoba believes in regard to the importance of looking at the multicultural fabric and the role in regard to cultural and ethnic activities in Manitoba, and I certainly give my full endorsement to this particular act. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to add my words to the debate. The debate, I think, is a very fundamental debate within this Chamber in terms of the philosophy in which political Parties approach grass roots and community-based organizations, and the philosophy to which that is going to be extended to our ethnocultural communities.

We believe the funding formula that was put in place in 1985 under the mandate of the previous Act, fully within the Act because if it was not it would have been commented on by previous auditors, is a funding formula that allows the community-based elected representatives of the various organizations to collectively determine the priorities, and therefore the resources based on those priorities for the various organizations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we believe that is a better system and a much finer and fairer system than any system that could substitute the community-based elected representatives having Government bureaucrats totally determine, or Government appointments totally determine, the priorities for a multicultural community or another community. We believe that ultimately the Government should be accountable for dollars spent and they are in this legislative Chamber, but we believe the specific decisions—

An Honourable Member: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am having a very difficult time listening to the remarks of the Leader of the Second Opposition Party.

An Honourable Member: Can the Tories have their caucus meeting in their caucus room?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May we have some order, please?

Mr. Doer: Perhaps as a person who sometimes speaks out when other people are speaking, I can say that on this occasion this is a very important Bill and it affects a lot of people and it is a very important topic. It is fairly serious and I say that as a person who is not known for being silent at every time when people speak. So I really believe this is an important issue, and I believe the debate we are having in this House on this Bill is a very important debate for a lot of Manitobans and a lot of Manitobans who we are responsible for representing in this Chamber.

In fact, I would believe that all 57 of our seats have representatives from the multicultural community. I think, therefore, it is important for all of us to pay very special attention to the various philosophical issues

and Government decisions and Opposition decisions that arise out of those philosophical differences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the opportunity to attend the Friday night panel discussion dealing with this issue and, you know, you can read letters and you can take telephone calls and you can listen to people through various means of communication, but I believe that people in the multicultural community and people who support all political Parties, or do not support any political Party at all, were very, very universally concerned about the change in their funding arrangements from the provincial Government and I believe universally insulted by the changes that were made by reconstituting the funding arrangements and resources directly through the Government—

Mr. Downey: That is one person's opinion.

Mr. Doer: —through direct Government appointments rather than the other system. I grant the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) that is one person's opinion, but I did listen for about three hours that evening and I was astounded, as I say, because I know the people in the community and certainly I was very impressed by the logic of their arguments and the cogency of the positions they put forward in terms of the change.

I think we have a very fundamental problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I say this in all sincerity to the Minister. I believe that the communities affected do not believe there is just and sufficient reason to change the funding decisions and the decision-making body. They do believe that there were some issues raised in the audit and they accept that. They do believe that we should work collectively together to solve those problems in an audit, as we did with the arts community when the Rainbow Stage fiasco developed, as we do in the Sports Federation when something is inappropriate in terms of the use of Lotteries money, as we do in the Heritage Group under Lotteries, and as we have done in a number of other places, whether it is school boards, or child welfare agencies or universities or other agencies of Government, health care institutions, for example. Almost two-thirds of the money in terms of spending of Government is one step removed in terms of the priorities from this Legislature. We account for the money in this Chamber. We are accountable for the money and spending in this Chamber, but it is delegated to elected- and community-based groups one step removed from this Legislature in terms of the decision making.

I happen to believe that philosophical model that has been used in Manitoba for years with school boards, as I say, and hospital boards and other agencies of Government is a good one. It means that Government bureaucrats on their own are not making decisions totally on their own.

Yes, we still have accountability general in this Legislature. Yes, we still have Auditor's Reports on that money on a yearly basis or on a special basis, but that we do trust the community-based elected representatives to make the intelligent decisions on behalf of their community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, for the life of me, cannot figure out why we have made this change for the MIC body

and have tried to justify it to one group when I see that there is probably even greater justification for other groups in the province, which I would not want to see changed either.

I believe that when we have an audit that identifies problems we should deal with those problems but, to use an old phrase, I do not believe we should throw the baby out with the bath water. I believe that the changes are radical in terms of the organization. They are both radical in terms of what it means to the community-based volunteers, and it is radical in terms of the philosophy of trusting citizens rather than Government appointments, either through the direct bureaucracy or a direct advisory body.

That is the nub of this issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do we trust the multicultural community to make those decisions, or do we not? That is what it boils down to and I respect the difficulty the Minister has to deal with all these problems. It is not a very simple issue when you are dealing with accountability of money, whether it is lotteries or taxpayers' money. It is not always very simple to come out with a simplistic solution to it, and I know that the Minister is accountable to this Chamber and to the Legislature.

But I say, through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Minister, that we do trust the community-based organizations and in saying that we pledge to the Minister that if she is able to reverse the decision—and there is nothing wrong with reversing a decision—and return the funding to the organization with the checks and balances that are appropriate, we would support the Minister in that accountability in this Chamber. In other words, we are not going to ask the Minister to reverse the position on the funding and then expect something that is unreasonable in terms of using community-based elected representatives. I give you our word as a New Democratic Party on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through to the Minister.

I believe we should deal with this issue. There has been a very lively debate last week, the Grant Russell appointment and the Gilles Roch implications for the other caucus on this matter. We still have some interesting newspaper articles, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am willing to share with anybody in this Chamber, but that is not the real issue.

* (1750)

The real issue here is the relationship with the Government with a community-based elected body and the empowerment of that body in terms of the decision making with the financial resources to do it. We believe that it is appropriate to add advocacy and funding together, it is not an impossible task. The Ministers receive advice from a number of groups that also make funding decisions; universities advocate on behalf of universities and also spend millions of dollars; hospitals advocate on behalf of health care and also spend millions of dollars; sports federations advocate on behalf of sports federations; and all schools spend millions of dollars that they receive from the Government. So we do not believe that it is incompatible.

I have mentioned before the Arts Council, I have mentioned before the Sports Federation, the Heritage

Foundation, so I really think that the tradition in this province, quite frankly, is to use the community and that is why we moved on Child and Family Services. That is why, in our community, Madam Minister, I believe new faces, with some of its embryonic initial difficulties in a new agency is better than the old system of being a downtown child welfare agency. We have community-based decision making, we have volunteers, we have schools and parents and working in the community, and the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) knows that as well. That is a better organization than was there years ago, and I am glad the Government is sustaining the organizations in Child and Family Services. That, too, is empowerment. That is moving some of the money, some of the decision making into the community-based groups into the elected representatives, into the elected community volunteers and allowing them to make appropriate decisions, and, yes, still answering in this Chamber to Auditor's Reports or anything that we are accountable for, if ultimately, as Members of the Legislature.

I believe that through this Bill and through this debate we should take a sober second thought at what the Government is doing. I believe that it is considered to be by the community philosophically incorrect in terms of their activity as a community-based group, and also it is something that they believe they have the maturity and competence to deal with in terms of the financial decisions. I think they are right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would strongly urge the Minister and this Government to look at this Bill, but look beyond the Bill to the real essence of the issue. That is the trust we have with our multicultural community and the balance the Minister must feel that is necessary in her responsibilities to this Chamber and ultimately to the taxpayers of Manitoba through the Lottery funds. I believe the Minister can get that balance and return the funding to the multicultural community. I would strongly urge that we put the confrontation of this issue behind us because I think it can be counterproductive after a certain point in time, and that we allow ourselves a sober second thought on the decision the Government has made. We have been involved in Government before, and we have reversed many things that we made that were wrong, and decisions that were wrong. There is absolutely nothing wrong with admitting that - (Interjection) - and sometimes not quick enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma) is quite correct. Sometimes you make the wrong decision. Sometimes you do it with the best motivation in place, and you have to then change your mind.

We had an incident last week where the Government is going to change its mind, I would think, on the Workplace Health and Safety regulations on cancer-causing goods. You know, once you say, I am going to change our mind because we may have made some errors, or we are going to review something, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. I think there is nothing wrong with the Government taking a sober second thought.

I believe that they would prefer to have community-based elected representatives running their hospitals, running their schools, running our Arts Council, running our sports federations, running many of the institutions in this province. You know what, it is really not incompatible with returning the money to the multicultural community as is recommended in the Bill, but what the Government has the ability to do right now in an administrative way.

So I would urge the Government to deal with their responsibilities, but to look again at empowerment and the philosophy of volunteers and community-based elected representatives dealing with the decisions that have to be made, rather than a more centralized approach. I think that is the tradition of this province. I would urge the Minister to change that decision and if not, as our Member and our critic indicated, we will be supporting the Bill because it is consistent with our philosophy on allowing community-based volunteers to make those decisions rather than Big Brother, the Government.

Thank you very, very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to say six o'clock? (Agreed)

The hour being six o'clock, I interrupt the proceedings according to rules, and this House stands adjourned and remains adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. (Wednesday).

ERRATUM

On Monday, June 19, 1989, Hansard No. 22A, Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert) was incorrectly transcribed in the non-political statement on page 681, right-hand column, as naming one of the organizers for the annual Fathers' Day celebration of families in the Marathon as Sam Favreau. The organizer's name is, in fact, Sam Fabro.