

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 18 April, 1985.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. J. Walding: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Culture.

HON. E. KOSTYRA: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the Annual Report of the Department of Industry, Trade and Technology for the year ending March 1984.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have 15 visitors from the Catholic Women's Association under the direction of Mrs. Roscoe. They are from the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Health. On behalf of all of the members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

Oral Questions.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I wish to indicate to honourable members opposite that in deference to the passing of our friend and colleague, the Honourable Walter Weir, that we'll defer the question period for today.

MOTIONS OF CONDOLENCE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa, that this House convey to the family of the late Walter C. Weir, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement, its appreciation of his devotion to duty and a useful life of active community and public service, and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I regret today of having to rise in my place on behalf of the province and the people of the Province of Manitoba in having to extend sincere sympathy to the family of Walter Weir.

The death of Walter Weir took place last night and was certainly an unpleasant surprise for Manitobans. A former Premier, Walter Weir was born and raised at High Bluff, Manitoba, in 1929 and was throughout a committed public servant serving the Province of Manitoba and at the same time was a most dedicated family man.

Walter Weir was first elected to the Legislature in 1959 and was re-elected in 1962, 1966, and 1969. During the period of time that Walter Weir was MLA and Cabinet Minister he held a number of important portfolios: Municipal Affairs, Highways and others. During that period of time Walter Weir developed a great deal of respect and esteem throughout the Province of Manitoba, particularly in rural areas that he served in a very personal way in the capacities as Minister for both Highways and Municipal Affairs.

At the time of the resignation of former Premier Duff Roblin, it was Walter Weir that sought and obtained the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party in the Province of Manitoba. Walter Weir then served as Premier of the Province of Manitoba from 1967 to 1969, and left an important legacy as a result of his achievements during the period of time that he sat in government as both Cabinet Minister and as Premier of the Province of Manitoba.

I recall Walter Weir personally upon my election in 1969 and was at that time responsible for Municipal Affairs and the implementation of the public automobile insurance program, and Walter Weir was at the same time the Leader of the Opposition subsequent to the election of the Schreyer Government in '69. I recall Walter Weir as a most able debater during that period of time. He ably represented the point of view of his party in this House. He spoke in an articulate fashion, eloquent and clearly articulated the point of view of the opposition, the Conservative Party, during that period time that he served as Leader of the Opposition from 1969 through to 1971.

Later with the election of the administration from Premier Sterling Lyon, the Member for Charleswood, Walter Weir again served the Province of Manitoba. He served the Province of Manitoba as a Chairman of the Public Utilities Board, and also in another manner that was one of his most important legacies to the Province of Manitoba, the chairing of the Manitoba Assessment Reform Commission.

This was a most difficult task that Walter Weir accepted; he raised to the challenge and after a great deal of detailed analysis, the well-known recommendations were presented that were known indeed as the Weir Commission findings pertaining to the need for assessment reform in the Province of Manitoba. That series of recommendations in fact are now in the process of implementation and the imprint of Walter Weir and the commitment and the time spent by Walter Weir in developing those recommendations, recommendations that indeed I have found have been widely accepted by most of the municipal people in the Province of Manitoba, both urban and rural.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is an occasion of sadness because again this is, in fact, the second time within the last 10 days that we rise in our places to pay condolences to a member who has served in a very substantial way. In both occasions death came as a surprise because of their being relatively in the prime of life. Certainly, Walter Weir's death this morning, I know, did indeed take members by surprise.

Walter Weir has left a legacy to this province; a legacy of committed, dedicated public service, a time that was spent working closely with the people of the Province of Manitoba. I think that was demonstrated very clearly in his successful election as leader of the Conservative Party in '67 after the service that he undertook, demonstrating the popularity of Walter Weir as an individual and as a committed Cabinet Minister in the former Roblin administration; a legacy insofar as the work that he did in respect to assessment reform.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that all members share in this occasion in paying tribute to one that served this province exceedingly well over many years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour and privilege to second the Motion of Condolence by the Premier and to offer the sincerest sympathy not only of myself but of my family and all of us on this side to the Weir family; to Tommie, Leslie, Pat, John and Cam and also to Walter's father, Dick, who is living with them. I am sure I speak for all the constituents in the Minnedosa riding and, indeed, for all Manitobans when I say that Manitoba has lost a great Canadian and truly a great citizen.

It has been my privilege to represent the Minnedosa area since Walter retired from politics following a distinguished career. That career has been outlined amply by the First Minister. Walter rose to be not only MLA of his area but to become the Premier and the First Minister of this province, and I am sure that's an achievement that his family and all of us can be proud of.

I considered Walter as a close personal friend as well as a close political ally, and I was quite involved with him during my entry into politics, since 1975, when Walter returned from the east and moved back to establish a business practice in Minnedosa.

Walter was a man of great personal integrity and firm political belief. He was a distinguished citizen of the Town of Minnedosa when he came to operate a business there in 1953. He served the community well through the establishment of the first Kinsmen Club in Minnedosa. He was a member of Odd Fellows Lodge, served on City Council and various other bodies. Walter was a man of gentle nature who thought of others before he thought of himself and he complained little and offered advice and counsel to those only when they asked him for it.

I think, Mr. Speaker, his record of community and civic and political service are ample testimony to his fellow Manitobans and to the province. I think, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has lost a truly great native son and those of us who knew him, although deeply

saddened by his untimely passing, have had our purpose enriched by knowing him.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member for Charleswood.

HON. S. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to join in these expressions of condolence which have been offered by the First Minister and the Member for Minnedosa to the Weir family on the very sudden death of an old friend and colleague of many of us, Walter Weir.

My recollections of him, Sir, go back to the 1940s. He came to high school in Portage la Prairie and at once we all, of that teen generation, came to know that unique brand of fun-loving openness, of good friendship, of integrity and concern and interest for his fellow man which really characterized his whole life. We became friends then. We remained friends until last evening throughout our careers which diverge from time to time and then came together when we were both privileged to serve as Cabinet Ministers in the time of the Roblin Government and when, as the First Minister has said, in the course of political life, the rigours of that experience from time to time require friends sometimes to become temporarily contestants, we weathered that experience as well and the friendship remained.

His achievements have been recounted by the First Minister and the Member for Minnedosa and it only remains for us to acknowledge that a good man has been taken from us far too soon. I think of Walter Weir as a considerably younger man sitting on the government benches as the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Highways, a man who was universally liked by everyone in the House. I think of him as well as a person who with those qualities of character that I have mentioned before, his openness, his love of good fellowship and friendship, who established immediately throughout the municipalities of Manitoba and with the local government districts and with the cities, towns and the villages, a kind of rapport that had seldom been achieved, certainly in my experience, by Ministers before or even after. Although I must admit, there are some who would say that the present First Minister ably tried to emulate that kind of rapport that Walter Weir achieved in Municipal Affairs.

I remember him as well, Mr. Speaker, as one who had a deep-seated understanding of the principle of trusteeship. That is that each of the 57 of us who is elected to this House is here not as a sole agent acting on our own individual behalf, or on behalf of those ideas or principles that we think are best for other people, but that rather we have a responsibility that is perhaps even more fundamental and that is to acknowledge regularly that we are here in a trusteeship capacity to look after the public interest on behalf of the people who have put us here and Walter Weir knew that intuitively.

He was not a graduate in Political Science, who had to be taught anything like that at all. Indeed, I wonder if some of the graduates in Political Science, Mr. Speaker, are taught that, but he knew it intuitively, and he knew as a result that he could carry out those responsibilities given to him at the executive level if he kept that as a beacon before him. And of course

being a member as he was from the constituency of Minnedosa during his 11 or 12 years in this House, he had that advantage - which we from most of the urban seats do not have - he had that constant week-by-week recollection imprinted upon him as he went home to his constituency, that idea of accountability and trusteeship which I think is so much better understood perhaps by members who have the advantage, if I may put it that way, of coming from non-urban seats, because the people of Manitoba, rural or urban, are not ones who keep their opinions to themselves. And particularly I know that as Walter as a member walked the streets of Minnedosa and the other towns and communities in his constituency he would be told forthrightly and frankly by the people whether or not they liked what he was doing, what the government was doing, what the opposition was doing or whatever. That was a great joyous experience for him because he loved people and he loved to debate with them, to talk with them, to listen to them, and I'm sure that he benefited from the advice that they gave to him during his years in public life.

It was as the First Minister has mentioned, a stroke of good fortune for us during the time we were in government and I was privileged to be the First Minister of the province to have his kind of ability available to us to call upon for particular jobs that had to be undertaken. I know, because in opposition, opposition parties always talk about patronage appointments, and I know that in government, governments always appoint people or try to always appoint people first of all who are credible and who are good, but if they happen also to belong to the same political party, why that doesn't hurt as well.

But I want to relate an experience, Mr. Speaker, because it goes to the question of patronage appointments and why the present First Minister, those who have gone before him and those who follow, will from time to time know in their hearts and in their minds, that they are blessed to have people with that peculiar kind of experience available to do particular jobs of work of high calling and available and willing to do this in the public interest.

I approached Walter Weir in the 1970s to ask him, as a favour, if he would consider taking on the acting chairmanship of the Public Utilities Board because, as I explained to him, he would be doing the government and he would be doing the people of Manitoba a favour if he undertook that position.

I am sure that somebody, at some time or other, said, well, there was another patronage appointment that the Conservatives made, and I am sure that if my colleague, the First Minister, were to make an appointment of one of his former colleagues tomorrow somebody over here, maybe myself, might say, well, there is another patronage appointment. But I want to point out that from time to time political parties are blessed with people of ability who have served in previous capacities, in an elected capacity, and in this case in the Chamber, and that the people of Manitoba and I, as Premier, were fortunate that Walter Weir agreed to take that appointment.

I was equally fortunate when I sought his counsel and advice about the matter of municipal assessment, which is a very vexed problem and remains so, that he agreed to take on the chairmanship of that particular

commission because I knew, and I am sure that the First Minister and others would agree, that there were few people in Manitoba with the political skills and with the expertise to be able to head up a commission that would go and listen to the municipalities, hear the problems, at the same time keeping within themselves much of the knowledge that they had gathered on this topic. Yet Walter Weir was that peculiar kind of dedicated person who would take on this kind of responsibility and do it for the people of Manitoba and for the Government of the Day.

Mr. Speaker, it is no exaggeration to say that he was indeed one of nature's gentlemen. I think that in the remarks that have been made thus far today, when the Member for Minnedosa described him as a gentle person, it is not an exaggeration to say that he was a gentle man in the highest sense of that word.

During his term as Premier, the press always wanted to know what are the highlights, and one's perception is not always the same as that of others of his contemporaries, but I was engaged with him, Mr. Speaker, at a time when a new Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Trudeau, was embarking upon the first wave of the constitutional initiatives that he wished to see come about in Canada, the first wave of discussions about the Charter of Human Rights and others matters which later came into more prominence in the second and third phase of Mr. Trudeau's Prime Ministry.

From my standpoint, and with all of the prejudices that I have, say with without any hesitation, that Walter Weir took a formidable and a brave stand on behalf of the people of Manitoba, and was supported in that stand. Indeed, he was supported by most of the Premiers of Canada with the result that that original initiative of Mr. Trudeau's petered out in later 1968, early 1969, and wasn't heard of again until 1971, or thereabouts. That certainly is not the main achievement of this man's life, but certainly I remember it, having worked very closely with him during the formulation of that policy and during the delivery of those statements that he made on behalf of the Government of Manitoba at that time.

As the First Minister and the Member for Minnedosa have said, Mr. Speaker, we are all the poorer for his untimely death. We have all lost a great friend. Manitoba has lost a great public servant and I think that his legacy may well be what we have all been saying here today, that here was a man who demonstrated the kind of openness, the kind of fun-loving ability, the kind of ability to extend open friendship to all from whatever walk of life or for whatever political stripe, and at the same time maintained a high degree of personal integrity and the ability to be the kind of man that many of us would like to emulate.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of the motion of condolence put forward by the Premier and the Member for Minnedosa and to bid a fond farewell to our former Premier and friend, Walter Weir.

Although I did not serve with him in this Legislature, as many who are here today did, I certainly grew to

know him and enjoy his friendship, and as was indicated by the Premier we were all shocked and saddened at his sudden and untimely death. One can't help but feel that at 56 years of age he had a great deal more to contribute and share with the Province of Manitoba.

His loss will be felt by many throughout the province because indeed he was somebody who did have ties and friends all across this province of ours. As my colleague from Charleswood said, he certainly was an individual who had friends and no enemies.

He was a keen and astute observer of politics, the political process in the affairs of government and he participated with relish in all of his responsibilities. He took very seriously, I think, his commitment to the people of his constituency and the people of the province carrying out his responsibilities with a good deal of warmth and understanding.

I suppose as much as any Premier over the past couple of decades, he really had a rural base and a following in rural Manitoba; because although he had resided in the city for the better part of a decade during his service in Cabinet, he was born and lived most of his life in rural Manitoba and established himself in government, I suppose, mostly through his portfolios in Municipal Affairs and Highways, which saw him in constant contact with the needs and the aspirations and the concerns of the people of rural Manitoba.

I know that in his dedication to these responsibilities and in the time that he spent in these portfolios he certainly gained an even broader understanding of all of the concerns of rural Manitoba.

So as my colleague from Charleswood indicated, he was obviously ideally suited to serve in the capacity of Chairman of the Manitoba Assessment Review Commission, and in this capacity travelled again throughout the province listening to, hearing presentations from people at elected levels in municipal government in the province, and he was well able to understand and relate to the issues that they raised.

I am proud to say that I considered Walter to be a friend. We first met in Minnedosa back in 1967 when I was consulting engineer working on behalf of both the Town of Minnedosa and the company who were establishing the distillery in Minnedosa at that time. We attended a number of meetings, public functions, the sod turning, the eventual opening of the installation there, and he was remarkable in the sense that he was openly revered in his own community by people who had known him as the founding President of the Kinsmen Club, as a former Mayor, as a prominent business person and a contributing member of the community. And in that respect I was always impressed with his ability to relate to people of any walk of life.

Then, of course, later on I met him again in his capacity as Chairman of the Manitoba Assessment Review Commission and we would have times to chat on his visits and time spent in Winnipeg. I always enjoyed his sense of humour and the little anecdotes he would tell. He'd tell stories about his former colleagues and their relationships. I remember him one day with a twinkle in his eye telling us a story that illustrated what he considered the streak of independence in the former Member for Virden.

Then later a couple of visits in Minnedosa in his home or in his office and one of them about a year-and-a-half ago with my colleague from River Heights and my

colleague from Lakeside and they, of course, knew him well over the years and he used every opportunity, with good humour, to needle away at all of the foibles and weaknesses and frailties that all of us have. My wife Janice was with me at the time and she had not had the pleasure of knowing Walter before and talked about it for weeks after, about his dry wit and the sense of humour he showed, even in greeting somebody who came to the door to sell a lottery ticket, I think it was, and it was that sort of good humour that we always shared with him.

Later on, this past September, I happened to be on my way through Minnedosa to a meeting in Dauphin and had some time to spare and intended only to stay for a few minutes and ended up staying almost four hours, I think, with my colleague from Minnedosa and Walter and the editor of the newspaper there. We not only solved all of the problems of Manitoba and Canada but we certainly had a very great analysis of the federal election that had just taken place about a week earlier; and Walter's keen sense of politics allowed an analysis that I don't think anybody else could have given.

I must say that I appreciated seeing him then later within a matter of weeks at the Queen's visit and the courtesy of the Premier and including Walter and Tommie at that event, and I know how much they appreciated it at that time. Later on he introduced me at the last annual meeting of our party in November and was in Winnipeg that weekend. We all enjoyed his company, his speech; he still had the old magic of a former Premier who could get up on any occasion and entertain a crowd and do so well.

So I say that we have all lost a good friend; we've all lost someone who has contributed a great deal to our province, a great Manitoban as has been said, and I am pleased to not only recognize his contributions but honour his memory here today.

On behalf of so many friends that he has within the Progressive Conservative Party I want to extend to his wife Tommie, to his children, to his father, our sincere condolences, our heartfelt sympathies at this time of loss.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to associate myself and those of my constituents, the constituency of Lakeside, with the condolence motions before us.

Walter Weir was truly a friend to me, a colleague. I recall so well first meeting him upon my entering politics in 1966 when it was my privilege to join that group of truly remarkable men and women that the then Premier Duff Roblin had gathered around him in the Manitoba Cabinet and caucus.

I am saddened, Mr. Speaker, that Walter's passing marks the second person of that group who was taken away from us so suddenly. I refer of course to my predecessor, the Honourable George Hutton, who served this province in that same Cabinet for many years as Minister of Agriculture and then served the greater community, the international community, through the United Nations and died in Rome. George Hutton passed away at the age of 54, and Walter Weir approaching the age of 56.

In recalling the contributions of one Walter Weir, I think perhaps the greatest one and one that is still being felt throughout Manitoba is the bridge of trust and confidence that he built with local officials throughout the province at the municipal level.

Whenever it's my occasion, even now, and I'm sure the current Minister of Municipal Affairs, as indeed the Premier, will still run into it from time to time, the work that Walter Weir did in building that bridge of trust and co-operation by the senior government, Provincial Government, and the local governments. It was building that kind of trust that enabled Mr. Weir to accomplish so much in the transportation field with respect to the development of roads, developing of an entire new provincial road system in the province.

But then Mr. Weir did other things for the people of Manitoba for which he is not always acknowledged. The cultural and arts community of this province should acknowledge and should be reminded that it was Walter Weir who, to a large extent, directed and saw to it that cultural enterprises, such as, our Centennial Hall and the Planetarium were developed in co-operation with the City of Winnipeg. Those were the days that these kinds of public buildings were built on schedule, on budget, and are functioning today to the benefit of all Manitobans. I can recall that Walter Weir seconded his Deputy Minister, Mr. Clare Smith, to be the direct project manager of these projects. These were some of the capabilities of the man that we are remembering and honouring.

I recall that in the assumption of the leadership of the party that my former Premier, the Member for Charleswood, alluded to brought very early in my young political career the hard decisions that some of us sometimes have to make between our friends. It was my privilege to support Mr. Weir and indeed place his name in nomination before our party at that leadership convention. I can report, Sir, that leadership convention was, in the grand tradition of all Conservative leadership conventions, a well-contested leadership convention, and was honourably won by Mr. Weir who then went on to serve as Premier.

I would like to put on the record, just to support what the Honourable Member for Charleswood has indicated, it is also sometimes forgotten that Mr. Weir very much was in the vanguard of recognizing the challenge to, particularly Western Canada and indeed to all provinces, that a very new Prime Minister was presenting to the nation. Although Mr. Weir is often remembered as one who lost the 1969 election to the New Democrats who were led by one, Mr. Ed Schreyer, it should be remembered that a few months previous to that when four by-elections were being held in the province and there was a great deal of speculation as to the popularity of the Premier, Premier Weir, Mr. Weir won three out of four of those by-elections very handily.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has lost truly a quiet Manitoban of great integrity; I have lost a friend and a colleague.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to add my name to the motion of condolence to the family of

Walter Weir. I happen to have very vivid recollections of a very good parliamentarian, a person that I got to like very quickly, although I was on the other side and he was on this side in the first instance of our acquaintance.

Walter was the kind of a person that one could take out to lunch and enjoy an evening with, one could party with and one could have a very good debate with. I enjoyed all of those opportunities, I'm happy to say; I am sad to say that he has passed so early in life, that he could have contributed much more to the citizens of Manitoba and to people of Manitoba, generally speaking.

I happened to visit Walter's place of business on one or two occasions after he had retired from politics, and had a very enjoyable visit with him on one or two occasions, but I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that here was a man that was Premier of Manitoba, that gave his best years to the people of Manitoba, and who provided so little for himself as a result of those public sacrifices that he made. I mentioned that to him, I don't mind saying it here today, and his response to me then was well, he said, we're all big people and we make our way. I have no reflections, I think I've had a good political life, and I now have to roll up my sleeves and start a new one. That was the way in which he looked at things, very realistically and very responsibly.

I remember an occasion on a trip to the North, I can't recall whether he was Premier then or not or whether he was still one of the Cabinet Ministers, but he was a great entertainer. If you ever wanted to go on a trip to visit some of Manitoba's public assets and you had Walter Weir with you, the event would be indeed pleasant, lively, entertaining, and you were all pals together regardless of party; it was truly a friendly event.

I recall a visit to The Pas. I think we were, I can't recall, having to do with Hydro installations or whatever it was. We stayed at The Pas for one or two days, and indeed enjoyed a great time.

Walter Weir, when he was Minister of Highways, I guess is probably the period of time where I best got to know him, as rural MLAs would and they should want to get to know the Minister of Highways, it's very important to rural Manitoba. I had many occasions to talk to him about highway needs in the area that I represented. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that Walter Weir was a very fair person in the administration of that department. Considerations were given, regardless of where the needs were politically speaking. I have to say that I was very pleased with some of the responses that I had received from the Minister of Highways at that time.

I would hope that Ministers of Highways today, and in the future, would take a chapter out of his book in that regard because sometimes we do get carried away due to other pressures and take very narrow perspectives of priorities, rather than the provincial one. But I think it's fair to say that Walter Weir looked at the province as a whole and the needs that had to be met.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to have been one person who had known Walter Weir. I am sad that he has passed on so early in life, and I wish to convey my condolences to his family as well.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to add my own personal condolences and, indeed, those of the Virden constituency to the words that have been said here today.

I was one of the privileged members that the Honourable Member for Lakeside referred to in the by-elections in 1969. That was the time when I came into this Chamber, when Walter Weir was the Premier. I can never forget the words of advice that Walter gave me at the nomination meeting that night when, in my nomination speech, I considered assessment reform in the Province of Manitoba to be a top priority. Walter sort of cautioned me afterwards; he said, I think it's a very noble idea but, he said, I wish you well, it's not easily achieved.

Mr. Speaker, it was some 10 years later that we finally did have assessment reform in this province and it may be fate, but that review was carried out by the very same person that offered me the advice 10 years earlier, that it would be very difficult to achieve. I think his words are still very valid because even though that review was carried out four years ago, we still have not seen any material progress in assessment reform in the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, my association with Walter was not just one on that one particular issue. When I had the benefit of his company in campaigning in that by-election, I think it was the measure of the man that not only did he want to meet people at meetings and in coffee shops and on the main streets, but he insisted that we hit the seldom travelled roads in the middle of winter when you didn't know whether the roads would be open or not, and he said those people who are living on the farms and close to the park are just as important as the person who is living on the corner of Main Street. I think it was the measure of the man that he treated all Manitobans equally and fairly and that is what I like to remember today.

Because of the nature of my constituency and the boundary changes that have occurred from time to time, part of the area that I presently represent was at one time represented in this Chamber by Walter Weir and I know in that particular community Walter is loved and fondly remembered by all of the people. I'm sure that applies to practically any constituency in the Province of Manitoba, and I'm sure that all Manitobans are saddened today to hear of his untimely passing.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. A. MACKLING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, wish to join in the condolence motion to Walter Weir.

Wally, as he was happy to be called, was, as honourable members have indicated, a man of great warmth and personality. I first met Wally when he was Minister of Highways - and I think the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek may recall - I don't know whether he was on the St. James Council at the time when we visited with the Minister of Highways - it was the first time that I had ever visited a Minister's office in the Legislative Building, and I was taken aback, not by the coldness or the austerity of the office or the building, I was overwhelmed by the warmth and the

personality, someone who was really anxious to hear what other people had to say and reacted in a reasonable understanding manner to their concerns.

I was very impressed by Wally Weir on that occasion, and when we came into government in 1969, it wasn't a happy situation for the Leader of the Opposition, but he was not a bad loser; he wasn't a hateful person. He was prepared to sit down with you and discuss, as I know I did on several occasions, some of the difficult legislation that we were advancing. I say difficult from the point of view that there were challenges in that for the opposition, but Wally was prepared to sit down and talk. He was a fierce partisan, but he was a friendly person; and I underline what the Member for Charleswood said, he was a gentle man, in the truest and finest definition of that word.

He was someone, I'm sure, that was well loved, not only by his family who will miss him, but all of those who came to know him because high office did not change him, did not make him austere and aloof or inconsiderate. He remained a gentle man, someone who set an example of civility and decency that we should long remember in this House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add the condolences of Roblin-Russell constituency and my own personal condolences to the support of the motion which is presented to the House today and seconded by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa, to the life of Walter, Walter Weir. I hope the history books will write him as one of the great Manitobans of our time, one of the outstanding Canadians, a friend to all, highly respected, a perfect gentleman, and I guess one of the High Bluff crowd that's brought so many outstanding people to this Legislature.

It's an interesting sequence, Mr. Speaker. The first job that I got a paycheck for in Saskatchewan back in 1936-37 - I was employed by the Reliance Grain Company - I worked for them until I joined the Armed Services. Then after I arrived in the Legislature here, Mr. Speaker, at that time a guy by the name of Dick Weir was my boss, who hired me for my first job in Saskatchewan. Some of the members who are here today will recall an incident when Tomohiko Hayashi was the Japanese Consul across the way and two or three times a year he used to invite the members of the Legislature to go over and enjoy his hospitality and talk about Japan and all the great things that are going on. Walter and I went along and it's the first time I see these two Weirs together. I think I was in the House maybe three or four years and I finally learned that Dick Weir was Walter's father - a strange world in how these things happen. Of course, as most of us know here, Dick Weir, who was living with his son at the time of his death, crated all those animals and birds and all those treasures that Tom had over there and dispatched them to Japan when Tom went back.

Walter was, Mr. Speaker, likely better known in my constituency than I am. I daresay he knew more people on a first-name basis in Roblin-Russell constituency than I did. He's a legend of knowing people. I think

the history books will show the government of that time, the Roblin government, the most progressive, they built the foundation for the education system that we have in this province today. They built the foundation for the health delivery systems, the hospitals. Weir built the roads, and he built them well. That whole artery and network of highways that we have been enjoying in this province today, he deserves a lot of the credit for it, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that the public road system which we were debating in the Minister's Estimates the other day, Weir was the founder of those negotiations that brought the municipal road system into the province.

I can recall an incident as I stand here today. There was an argument in my constituency over the direction of which roads they were going to take over because that was a heated subject matter. Weir argued with the municipality all afternoon and didn't win on the location of the road. So he gave the reeve, I think, two bucks - it was the cost of a mickey in those days and he called it the meeting in the gravel pit - and they settled it in the gravel pit over the mickey, and then Walter turned around to show them his good graces and with Cabinet's blessing said he would buy X number of yards of gravel from that municipality to upgrade those roads, Mr. Speaker. That was typical Walter Weir, Mr. Speaker.

There are many incidents I could raise and the one that my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources raised at the time that we went to The Pas on the train to the Trappers' Festival and other incidences. Well, Mr. Speaker, a man of great diplomacy, tact, understanding, knew every reeve, councillor in this province, I dare say on a first-name basis. It was a delight to travel with him. It was a delight to be in his company. He served his province well, served the people well, he leaves a legend. All I can say is, may God bless his soul, may he rest in peace.

I convey my condolences and best wishes to his family and to his father.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I regarded Walter Weir as a great guy. I remember him very well. He carried himself very well. He had a good strong voice. He had a friendly manner and he was a handsome individual.

History will record that he lost the 1969 general election but in fact it was not his fault or responsibility alone, but rather the accumulated problems that mount in several consecutive administrations and a term of office of some 11 years.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected to the Legislature in 1966, 30 years old, and I too, very vividly recall the Trappers' Festival of February 1967, and on more than one occasion tried to make that point with Premier Schreyer and perhaps Premier Pawley, that it was a great idea to duplicate or replicate that event in which a train was taken from Winnipeg and all the MLAs from the various parties spent a couple of days together travelling up North and participating in a great Manitoba festival.

Mr. Speaker, it was on that train and on that trip that I realized for the first time, that Conservatives were people too. Mr. Speaker, I say that because as a young man in politics I had spent a great deal of time hating and debating Conservatives; and all of a sudden, after

only a few months in office being thrown together in a social occasion, came face to face with the hated opponents and immensely enjoyed the company of some of the members opposite.

One of the people that I most remember on that particular trip was Walter Weir and I recall very clearly how he would sit in a club car that was on a siding, where we slept and then perhaps even ate some of our meals I don't recall, but it was our headquarters or our hotel while we were there. I remember him talking to people and talking to me and observing him as a man who was literally unbeatable in small groups. I said on more than one occasion that if he could have campaigned around the province in groups of two and three and four around the table, he could have been Premier forever because he had the knack of talking eyeball to eyeball, and man to man direct and from the shoulder.

Mr. Speaker, as Premier, he had a lot of dignity and he had a quiet competence. I remember coming into this building shortly after he was Premier when he bought his first car as Premier - it was a big black Buick - and I told him that I thought that he had made mistake, that he should have purchased a Cadillac and he sort of explained to me either in a few words or in a look, that he felt the Premier of Manitoba shouldn't drive a car of that style and price, and he was probably right.

Mr. Speaker, it was a pleasure to know him. It was a pleasure to work with him. He was a political opponent, but he was a worthy opponent.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to add my condolences to the family of Walter Weir and bring my regards from my wife and my three children to his family, because Walter and his family were known to them very well, and from the constituents of Sturgeon Creek.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I was elected in 1969 and as the Minister of Labour has mentioned, I had met Walter Weir when I was a councillor in the City of St. James. But in 1969 when the Schreyer Government was elected, Sir, I believe there were 11 new members on the Conservative side of the House - the opposition side of the House - and Walter was our leader.

I'd like to say that at that time we needed somebody who would give us strength and stability and leadership to some seasoned members and very many new members and he was there at all times when we needed him for consultation to help us with our internship into politics. He did have a sense of humour, Sir. We'd had many visits with him on our way through Minnedosa to our cabin at Clear Lake and he's visited with us many times.

My colleagues will remember, or know of times when Walter used to say, when I had made the statement, I'd better call home and let everybody know where I am, and Walter would say, are you calling JJ again? JJ was a pup that we had in the house and during the Autopac debate one late evening, I phoned home and our young daughter answered the phone, and I said,

oh, what are you doing up, and she said, I'm just watching the television and mom let me stay up and JJ's here sitting beside me. I said, put the phone to JJ's ear and she did, and I said, hi JJ and Walter walked into the room and said, Johnston's now talking to his dog. He never let me forget it or he'd often mention to Hazel how she felt about the fact that I'd phoned home and talked to JJ and not her.

He wasn't a person who looked for limelight and I give you an example. When he had that brief couple of years in Toronto I had the opportunity to visit him down there, and we were coming out of the building where the offices were and he introduced me to a gentleman - I don't remember his name - and Walter explained that I was a member in the Manitoba Legislature and a colleague. The fellow turned to me he said, you know I rode up and down in the elevator with this fellow several times, but he said, we didn't speak. But one day he said, I was riding up in the elevator and before I introduced myself I said, you sure look like Walter Weir who was the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, and he said it just as Walter was getting off the elevator. Later when the gentleman was talking to me, he said, he never did say I am, he just let me hang and wonder whether he was or whether he wasn't. That was the type he was and he never did go for limelight.

The other thing that I remember so clearly about him was that he was a debater and a person who could make decisions and come to conclusions. And if you wanted to debate those decisions or conclusions with him, you better know your facts because I don't think he ever made a decision or a conclusion that he could not explain in intricate detail why he had done it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I too have lost a good friend as many Manitobans have. I have travelled with him through the country, people walked up to him and regarded him as a friend and I'm sure he'll be missed by all of us.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, on behalf of my family and the people of the Arthur constituency, extend my sympathy and add our names to the Motion of Condolence to Walter Weir's family. As was indicated by my colleague from Charleswood, it is our responsibility, and one of Walter Weir's objectives, to keep the beacon of being trustees and reflect our constituents.

I do want to say, particularly from a man who I have a lot of respect for, and I know that he was a good friend of Walter Weir, and that is the family of Doug and Grace Watt. Doug had told me many times of a story of his time as Cabinet Minister when the marketing boards of the province were having some difficulty in finding their way in the public arena and there was a confrontation came between those two individuals, and Walter Weir, I believe, showed the flexibility and listened to his Minister of Agriculture.

I have had certain opportunities to discuss with Walter that very same fact, that it was a major issue, and one which I think demonstrated to me and to some of my colleagues the fact that the Premier Walter Weir was

was one that was fair and very flexible and capable of understanding the message that came from that community. As well, Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that, as a new Agriculture Minister in the Sterling Lyon Government, I found Walter Weir was a very good help on certain occasions, very good counsel, and I looked to him as a person from which I could get good sound advice.

He spent a few minutes during the assessment review trying to talk to me about getting my impression as to how the farm community would feel if certain things were to happen. I felt it was an opportunity to make some comments, however, Walter did not get quite as much information as, on certain occasions, I felt it was somewhat a little bit more the responsibility of the farm community to speak directly, rather than I as Minister. He, I guess, maybe was a little frustrated at times that I didn't open up quite as much as I should have.

I, as well, as my leader had indicated, found it very easy when going through the Constituency of Minnedosa to drop in and visit with Walter, not only as a young politician, but as a friend. I am sure that many constituents in Arthur and all around will miss him very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. W. STEEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join in the expression of condolence to the Weir family and pay tribute to a very close friend.

I, unlike most of the members, or all of the members here, didn't have the privilege of sitting and serving in this Legislature with Walter Weir, but I have known him for some 25 years and served as an executive assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, the late George Hutton, who was referred to by my colleague, the Member for Lakeside. George Hutton and Walter Weir were very close friends, as friends become as members of the Legislature will well know.

When Walter Weir became the First Minister of this province, it was again my privilege to serve as a special assistant to him for a period of time. My days with Walter Weir took me from the Ontario-Manitoba border, the North Dakota-Manitoba border right through to Saskatchewan to the northern parts of Manitoba, and as an executive assistant, not only did I travel thousands of miles with him in a car, but when there are two persons in a car you spend a lot of time talking back and forth to one another and you really get to know the other person that is travelling with you. It was indeed a privilege for me to get to know Manitoba in that fashion.

My colleague, the Member for Roblin-Russell, mentioned how Walter Weir had that persuasive ability to deal with municipal officials. Well, as an executive assistant, it was often my job to go and get the persuasive powers in order that we could carry on those meetings and bring them to the rightful conclusion so that Manitobans would be better served. So I have had that privilege of working with Walter in that capacity.

My wife, Peggy, and I for years have been guests in the Weir household, as Mrs. Weir and Walter have been in our household on many many occasions, and my leader, the Member for Tuxedo, mentioned earlier about

us travelling through Minnedosa two years ago and visiting with the Weirs, and I have been the guest of the Member for Minnedosa on many occasions in Minnedosa and we never go to Minnedosa without calling on Walter Weir. So, Mr. Speaker, my wife and I will miss Walter.

As I have said, I have been associated with him for some 25 years, and I would like to join the rest of the members of this Assembly in extending my deepest sympathy to the Weir family on this occasion.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not have the honour that many members in this House today have of knowing Mr. Weir, either as a Cabinet Minister or as Premier of the province. I came to know him after 1973, after he had left the House. In fact, as I recall, I think the first introduction I had was in the company of the present Member for Minnedosa in the Office of the Clerk of the Legislature; after that, at least on one occasion, in the Town of Minnedosa in the company of the current member.

Mr. Speaker, a picture of Walter Weir hangs very proudly in my office as a past Minister of Municipal Affairs, and many of the staff in my department remember his service fondly and the special relationship that many members have referred to that he had with municipal officials. It is on their behalf, in my role as Minister of Municipal Affairs, and on behalf of the many thousands of elected municipal people across Manitoba, that I would like to extend on their behalf condolences to the family on this resolution.

I would like to concur in the sentiments of the Member for Sturgeon Creek as well on the other item I would like to mention, and that is the very well-reasoned conclusions to which he, and other members of the Manitoba Assessment Review Committee, came in the work that they did. It may well be the finest testament to action which a retired member can leave to engage in that kind of public service after retirement. I think the Member for Charleswood spoke well of that kind of service after leaving this House, and I think in Walter Weir's case it is a very significant contribution.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend, not only the condolences of staff who remember Mr. Weir well, and municipal officials, but also those of my constituents, the electorate of Springfield, and join with all other members in conveying condolences to the family.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Would members please rise for a moment of silence to show their support for the motion.

(A moment of silence was observed)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it would be my intention to move the Supply Motion. I would first ask the House if there is a disposition to dispense with Private Members' Hour today.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the Honourable Minister have leave? Leave has not been granted.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move, seconded by the Member for Employment Services, 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.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for River East in the Chair for the Department of Health; and the Honourable Member for Burrows in the Chair for the Department of Natural Resources.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY - NATURAL RESOURCES

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: Committee, come to order. We are now on Item No. 4.(a)(1) Water Resources, Administration: Salaries; 4.(a)(2) Other Expenditures - the Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to thank the Minister and his staff for providing us with the construction program possibly prior than they need have done, because I believe that comes under the Capital at the end.

Mr. Chairman, I think we will try and be careful so that we don't maybe rehash all these things. This sort of ties in with the Capital program because this is, I believe, where the planning and strategy takes place to some degree. So I have indicated to my colleagues that any issues they wanted to bring up regarding Water Resources or projects, maybe we can do it here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, that's fine.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: It doesn't really make a difference whether we do it here or at the tail end. We have Mr. Weber here with us, so I guess we can maybe just get at it and see what develops out of it.

For opening in this area here under the Capital Projects, 21 projects I believe have been designated under Capital as some are starting and some are finishing. What I'd like to establish a little bit, there are so many projects in the province with municipalities, things that probably qualify under third-order drains, and I'd like to ask the Minister, how are the priorities established in terms of which projects go and which do not go? Because I'm sure that if he looks across the province that each constituency, each municipality pretty well has projects that they feel are of an important nature. Just how does the Minister and his staff sort out which projects are going to be designated for consideration?

HON. S. USKIW: I am advised by my Water Resources Director - is that your title, Tom - that last year there

was a study done of all the water drainage system in Manitoba, and the purpose of the study was to establish the areas of critical need based on the theory that there was a limited amount of capital to undertake public works with. So the question was, what are the crises spots that we might be able to undertake and still live within our capital allocation? And this is the list that came out of that process.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, I believe last year when we looked at the Capital programs that had been undertaken - and there weren't very many of them - it appeared that the only ones the government was moving on were the ones that were related to the federal-provincial agreement under the Canada-Manitoba Value-Added Crops Production, I believe. As a result, I couldn't even be that critical because a portion of them were in my area, whereas a lot of my colleagues really did not get any projects approved last year and don't have any approved this year, and I'll let them speak for themselves in that regard.

What bothers me to some degree in this whole section, Mr. Chairman, is the fact, as I indicated before, there are many many projects in all areas. Water Resources is one of the key areas I suppose in the rural areas, in the farming communities, that have major concerns, and we seem to have shifted away to some degree from the building programs of the '60s and maybe early '70s where major projects were almost a standard thing. I'm talking of major dams that were built, things like the Floodway, things of this nature, and we seemed to have condensed this down to the point where it might look like we are accomplishing a lot in dollar figures, but really the kind of projects, in view of the many that are required, and as we go across the province almost everywhere you talk with municipal people, they have concerns about major things that have been on the drawing card or on the docket for so long, seemingly there is no movement on that.

I would suggest to the Minister that if they have done a review of all the drainage requirements or water projects in the province is there the possibility to give consideration to something like a five-year program so that municipalities don't operate in a vacuum all the time because they sit with bated breath hoping, you know, is this project going to go? I can indicate one that this is an example again, the Ridgeville Drain, which I think the survey design work has all been done. It's been sitting there for two years and the councils have been hoping and waiting that maybe this year it'll be approved for undertaking the project.

I don't agree with the system the way it is at the present time. I think if there was maybe a five-year program, almost like we have in the construction of hospitals and nursing homes, that you have a five-year program that you project. I'm not saying that there couldn't be changes within that, but at least then municipalities and people know that within the time frame some of this work will be undertaken. Because right now I know just from when we received the program that has been submitted here that there is a lot of frustration on behalf of my colleagues that some of the very needed and desirous programs again have not been given consideration this year.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to mislead my honourable friend from Emerson. I said to him a

moment ago that the list here reflects the crisis situations, and if that is true the list is not exhaustive in the sense that there are many more projects that were identified as important projects to be proceeded with but for which funding has not been approved. So to put it in an honest perspective, I think I have to give you that statement.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I'm glad the Minister added that because one could get the impression that the ones who have been designated were the only ones. I think if the people in Manitoba generally looked at that and got that impression that a lot of heat would come down on the Minister because, certainly in terms of importance, I suppose it's in the eyes of the beholder or the one who makes the decision, and they don't want to make accusations that decisions are made based on politics in this regard. I certainly would not want to leave that impression, but when one looks at where the projects are designated in certain parts of the province that are totally void of any projects, I let my colleagues speak for themselves in that matter for now.

HON. S. USKIW: I just want to mention to the Member for Emerson that in the maintenance section we have an equal amount of dollars for this year as we did last year - \$3.888 million. So there is a fairly significant amount of work under Item (c)(3). What the member has been addressing, of course, was the capital projects that we have listed, but those are over and above the maintenance projects.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Could maybe the Minister just establish the difference between maintenance and capital project because I know there is some gray area and flexibility where maybe our engineers can say, well, we can do this under the maintenance aspect of it rather than call it a capital project? I'll use as an example the Ridgeville Drain which is actually in place, which basically is a drain there. Would that qualify under the maintenance aspect of it, or would that possibly be considered a capital project? You know, that flexibility in there, I'm just wondering is it up to the discretion of our Director of Water Resources or is it up to the engineers that sort of play games in that area because, it is being done, Mr. Minister, I can assure you, and how does one get consideration in that respect then?

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, I think we should correct that premise, Mr. Chairman. The Maintenance Program is defined as one that doesn't change the volume of water that flows through the channel, but it's rather strictly maintenance of the channel itself. Where you're going to alter the capacity, that then falls into the construction program and is identified as such in the Estimates.

The Ridgeville question, I'm advised that particular drain has not yet been declared as a third order drain. In other words, an Order-in-Council would have to be passed to declare it. It is defined as a third order, but it has to be declared, which it has not been to date, and if it were so declared and a project proceeded with it would come under the construction component, rather than the maintenance component.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Now, I don't know whether the Minister necessarily cleared that up in my mind, because

I was under the impression that a good portion of the Ridgeville Drain was already a declared third order drain. We're talking of, I believe, an extension to that, and what I'm getting at is whether possibly in a case like that, whether that portion which is declared, whether that could qualify under the maintenance aspect of it because, if the total project as it was planned was undertaken, I could see where that would be a capital project; but the portion that is already designated, if I'm correct, and I believe it is, that a portion of that Ridgeville Drain is a third order declared drain. Would that portion of maintenance qualify under the maintenance aspect of it, and then for the future we can look at finishing off the project, because it would not be bringing in additional waters? This is why I indicated before, Mr. Chairman, that there is that area where there is some flexibility in terms of dollars being expended, whether it's under the maintenance aspect of it or under the capital end of it.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes, the lower end of the Ridgeville Drain is a declared portion. If there were to be works done on it, it would be under the maintenance program unless we were to enlarge the channel. If we move into the declaration of the balance of that drain, it would be under the construction program because it would be a rebuilding, in essence, or an upgrade. So that has not been established and it has not been declared for that purpose to date.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: First of all, I would like the Minister to look into that aspect of it because the council has been very concerned about the lack of procedure on that, whatever can be done in that regard.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, we have no problem in reviewing that. I am not sure whether that one has been identified within the list of priorities based on crisis criteria, but we can check that out.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Then coming back to establishing this list of what you call critical or high priority, would such a list be available to members of the Legislature in terms of looking at that, because I think that might allay some of the concerns that colleagues will be raising if they realize that it is on the high priority aspect of it, at least they'd know what to look forward to in the future.

Because right now, as I indicated before, we're sort of operating almost in a vacuum until we see the projects, then we say, oh my, it's not in there again. If the Minister can indicate which are priority items, even if they aren't on the program this year, at least then the people that are involved can say, well, listen, it's there somewhere, we're getting close.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the document that I am referring to is a staff working document. It is not something that is subject to being tabled for the information of the elected people. I guess the only way my honourable friend could receive one would be, I suppose, to be on the right side of the House.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: I want to assure the Minister that within a short period of time that will happen. In the

meantime, maybe there could be a leaked document. We will await and see what happens.

Just a further question on this before I turn it over to my colleagues, if a municipality has what they consider a priority project, if they would contact the Minister's office, would they be able to get the information as to whether that is among the high priority projects, or are we operating strictly by what is here?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Water Resources people on a continuing basis discuss these issues with local governments. So they're apprised of where we are with respect to that drainage area. Whether that satisfies them, of course, is an open question, but I'm sure that they're aware as to what the disposition of the Water Resources people are on the issue.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Mr. Chairman, I was going to leave this, but now I'm interested. This intrigues me, because now what the Minister is telling us is that the municipal people can phone in, or can come and talk with them, and then get an indication as to whether their project is a high priority or not; members of the Legislature are not allowed to have that privilege. I find that very interesting, Mr. Chairman.

HON. S. USKIW: Well, all right, I don't need to raise the point. No, I didn't say that, Mr. Chairman. I said that we are in constant consultation with municipal people with respect to development of local drains. That is a process that has to be undertaken because we are trying to deal with municipal problems in the drainage area. How we prioritize them, of course, is not their business, it's ours.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: That is where the election is going to have a say in the matter.

HON. S. USKIW: That's right.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I'll yield to the Member for Swan River and he can stand up first, I'm just doing a little bit more work on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to concur in the remarks made by my colleague, the Member for Emerson, in that I would like to say that I'm extremely disappointed in the capital program, a copy of which I have received. I don't see any capital project undertakings in the Swan River constituency for this year, at least new capital projects.

In view of the fact that we do have to contend with the Duck Mountains, and the Porcupine Mountains, and the various watershed that is created by those mountain ranges, we do have a lot of problems in the agricultural area in the Swan River valley, and this can be supported by the fact that disaster relief has had to have been applied to parts of the area, and it was hoped that, perhaps, some undertaking could be achieved this year by the Water Resources in expanding on the drains in the Swan River area. I like the idea

that my colleague, the Member for Emerson, suggested, a development plan that would cover a 5- or 10-year period so that the various proposals could be brought into a long-range plan and some development take place on a yearly basis. Albeit maybe some years there wouldn't be much development, but at least we could see some progress being made.

Since this government has come in I don't believe that we have received a fair allocation of funding in the constituency. As I indicated, we do have major problems as a result of the mountain ranges in the Swan Valley area. We do have serious problems in parts of the constituency, and I know that there are a number of provincial drains that are the responsibility of the Water Resources Branch and, using the Craigsford Drain - I believe it's called the Craigsford Drain - as one example where some major erosion is happening on a yearly basis and there is something like two or three miles of upgrading on that particular drain that has to be taken care of as soon as possible, and yet nothing has happened in the last two or three years. We do get a tremendous amount of water to contend with, the erosion problem is continuing and getting worse year by year, and we have experienced a tremendous amount of snowfall in the Swan Valley area this year. There's still a lot of snow to melt and the runoff resulting from that is still to occur this year.

We had a lot of rainfall last year and the previous year and so we do have a major problem throughout the Swan Valley area with respect to drainage problems. I am not sure, in the Minister's answer he said that perhaps some of the problems that I am concerned about might be accommodated through the maintenance program but as I understand it, it's new capital works that we require. Perhaps the Minister may want to comment on some of the remarks that I have made.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Member for Swan River is correct with respect to the need for that kind of approach, but we are already under way with respect to that. We are preparing for a 10-year program. We hope to have one developed some time in the course of this fiscal year so that after this year, assuming we have approval for a 10-year program, we will have a planning capacity to do a lot of technical work in advance so that we can program projects sort of on a regular basis, based on the overall plan.

With respect to the particular problem that the member alludes to in his area, we have \$140,000 in this year's program. That's the second item on your list for agriculture flood and erosion control. It's a beginning, but that's what it is. That's for flows off the escarpment.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Does this include some work on the Craigsford Drain? Or what drains will be worked on, I'll put it that way?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think what we would be able to say to that is that the upper part of that drain could come under this particular program, yes.

MR. D. GOURLAY: I am not quite clear what the Minister is saying.

HON. S. USKIW: I said for the upper reaches of that particular drain, this particular program could apply, yes.

MR. D. GOURLAY: This is on the Craigsford Drain? As I recall, the Craigsford Drain, the immediate problem that has never been tackled is near the mouth of the drain. It's been worked sort of in reverse. Rather than working from the river back, it has come the other way. But you say that there will be work done on the upper reaches of the drain?

HON. S. USKIW: This particular appropriation could be used for work in the upper reaches of that drain. I don't think that's a commitment that it will be, but it's the kind of a program that would apply there.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Mr. Chairman, is this where you can ask questions on the various drains, or is there another section of the Estimates that this would be dealt with?

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think we've been rather loose with respect to the rules and I really have no particular objection to whatever . . .

MR. D. GOURLAY: Well, I really don't have much more, other than to ask if the Minister can indicate any specific undertakings that will occur on the various drains in the Swan River constituency this summer?

HON. S. USKIW: Apart from the regular maintenance program, I couldn't comment on that other than whatever is tabled before you. It's very difficult for us to quantify on a very small regional basis. We'd have to pull out the numbers on maintenance for that region and give it to you later on, but we wouldn't have that. We can have that information within two or three weeks or a month.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a few questions; it may take a few minutes. I guess I'll start out, Mr. Chairman, by asking some questions dealing with policy. I guess it's a matter of somewhat frustration as far as the members coming to the committee each year, and I know that we've had some difficulties during our time in office as well and I know that these problems continue to carry on. I'm dealing pretty much on the basis of policy, and I'll get into some specifics as it relates to the constituency which I represent.

I guess when we look over the past few years and I was pleased the other night to be at the PFRA 50th Anniversary which was held at the University of Manitoba where there were discussions, and I understand from one of my colleagues who was there, an excellent program, dealing with some of the activities over the past 50 years that were carried out by PFRA and the water conservation.

I think, Mr. Chairman, it's time that the Department of Natural Resources and the Water Resources Division

took somewhat of a different attitude towards the waters, and the conservation of, and the management of, within the Province of Manitoba. I know, through you, Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, in some private discussions I've had some longer, probably, understanding of some of the - I'll call it, and I don't like the term, but I'll use it - bureaucratic difficulties that arise from time to time. I guess the frustration comes when I, as an elected politician, meeting with constituents who have gone through years and years of frustration end up not being able to see the kinds of what would appear to be common sense carried out and obstructed by engineering findings and backings that it's hard for the average citizen to challenge, and both because of the resources and the lack of being able to get to the proper people.

I say this, and I say this on behalf of my constituents, because they get somewhat frustrated as I do when you take something traumatic or some major event to cause governments or bureaucracies to move. We look at the Red River Valley where, in fact, we saw the Red River Diversion; we see the flood of 1979, in which I was a Cabinet Minister; and we saw a lot of things had to be done to conserve and to protect life and limb along the Red River. We've had the same difficulties in the Souris River and some of the other valleys.

Following that, we've seen tremendous amounts of money spent diking and protecting individual farmsteads and homesteads, and I fully support that kind of activity and that kind of public expenditure of funds. However, I go back to my own constituency and I look at some of the people who have lived along the Souris River who sit there in frustration, sit there without any real compassion by anybody within government to the point of some real hatreds, some real hatreds - and I put that on the record - developing because they feel, Mr. Chairman, that nobody within the government structures or within the system really care about them. That's wrong. That's wrong that the public should use funds - it's not wrong that we should use them in one area of the province, but it's a question of equality.

I put that plea forward to you, Mr. Minister. I know that you've got possibly one more year in office, but it is a portfolio which I think is a real challenge. I have to say, and I put this on the record, that when I meet with many rural people, municipal councillors, that there is a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with the Water Resources Branch of your department, and it would be unfair for me not to put that on the record. I'm not talking personalities in particular, but possibly that could be the case in certain areas, and there is a real sour feeling that there are some discriminations between the different regions of the province and between different individuals.

I think in some cases some of the examples I could lay out that you'd almost feel as if there is a get-even approach type of thing because of past happenings. I don't like it, Mr. Chairman. I don't like it one bit and I think there is time, that it is time, that we don't need another internal review, we don't need the department looking at itself. I think it's time for an opportunity to have a legislative committee spend some time with the legislative members of this Assembly and let people come forward and see how they feel the government structure should relate to them and their different constituencies.

I'll make some specific references, and I'm dealing with the Souris River Study which was put forward here recently under the last Minister. I have had some concerns brought to me from a constituent who lives in the Souris River Valley and who is now to the point of - he indicated to me recently - that he has suffered extreme financial shortfalls because of continued high river waters and now salinity developing in the soils without any support of government. It relates to the Hartney Dam, and I make reference to this study again, that there were a number of reeves - I note the Reeve for Arthur made representation. It was the Reeve of Cameron Municipality that made representation. The Mayor of the Town of Hartney made representation. The Councillor from the Town of Melita made representation. Again, another Councillor from the RM of Cameron had made representation and several private citizens. Really the theme and the thrust of the request, Mr. Chairman, and to get to the bottom line and that is their dear desire to have the Hartney Dam either removed in total or a major restructuring.

Some of the figures that have been given to me and some of the personal observations, because I've spent a few minutes in the last few days looking at some of the water levels as it relates to the different dams, and as I understand it and as it's pointed out to me, the Hartney Dam, when it was constructed, is some three feet higher than the record shows that it is; that there is plug of cement across that river and the visual observation will point out that it blocks half the normal river channel to proceed to a bridge north of there on the Souris River. There is a true indication that there is a very low volume of water following. To go back to Hartney, for example, there is a tremendous backup of water and has quite an impact.

I go to Page 5 of the report and it's been pointed out to me, and I would challenge your department - I'm not an engineer - but I'm looking at some of the information that is provided. They indicated certain flows that there can be up to 8,100 cfs of water flow through the Hartney Dam. I would challenge any engineer, Mr. Chairman, in any way, shape or form to ever force that kind of water through it. I can provide for you individuals who can challenge this documentation, who can lay out before you the fact that this is not correct, that in no way, shape or form can the volumes of water be put through there as has been indicated in this report.

I think, Mr. Chairman, in dealing with the Hartney Dam, and I am getting frustrated and I won't be frustrated if I - and I'm sure we will get back into government after the next election - there will be some major changes, and it's a commitment that I have made to my constituents that there will be changes made within the system that will allow politicians to have a little more influence and say, without being overly influenced by the engineers of the bureaucracy.

The No. 1 concern that I have, Mr. Chairman, is that we are seeing the building up of water during the spring of the year causing flood damage. Then we have people coming forward saying, look, we need more drainage and we need more removal of water. Mr. Chairman, we do not need more removal of water; we need more water conservation projects and the ponding of water for the times of the year when we run into shortfall. But because of the difficulties, because of the flooding

and the longevity of the flooding in some of our riverbeds and channels, people are coming forward saying, we need to get rid of this water. Well, Mr. Chairman, that is not the case. We have to turn the whole thing around from saying getting rid of the water to putting the proper flood protection and the proper water conservation projects in place.

As I said, I'm getting extremely frustrated when I have to come before this committee each year with this kind of a plea. I'm not saying it's a political or it's a partisan argument that I am putting forward, I think it's more of a concern that I have that the wishes of the people are not being listened to by those people who have got jobs and are employees of governments.

I make another reference to a possible alternative that I have looked at and I've had looked at when I was in government and I think it could be proceeded with in some kind of a meaningful way. That, of course, is the development of a major water structure on the Souris River. There have been several looked at; there is one which I feel is a possibility, it would have implications as far as the State of North Dakota is concerned and, of course, that doesn't bother me. We don't mind arguing with the State of North Dakota. I think we could put a positive objective forward that would satisfy some of the needs of the people in North Dakota without even talking about or including the Garrison Diversion discussions. I think we could talk Hudsons Bay River water, nothing else but that, and I think there's a possibility of looking at an alternative.

I refer to it as the Colter Dam. It would be a project that would be built right at the mouth of where the Antler River joins the Souris River. It would have the capacity to hold some 400,000 acre feet of water. Mr. Chairman, that is a lot of water, 400,000 acre feet of water which could be used for industrial; it could be used for the flood protection of some of the communities downstream; it could be used for the community water uses of the Towns of Souris, Melita and many of those places.

Mr. Chairman, it wouldn't interrupt one farm home; it wouldn't affect one farm home. There is not one set of farm buildings in that valley and, in fact, there are a lot of acres of valueless land, basically because of the rocks and the salinity that is already there.

It is those kinds of projects, those kinds of ideas that come from the average citizens, those kinds of ideas that come from the politicians that are elected to represent those communities that should be listened to. They shouldn't be cast aside because of some form of cost-benefit ratio coming forward from people who think that it doesn't appeal to them and, therefore, shouldn't be considered. Mr. Chairman, I think we have got to come to that time, when we're spending the public's money and we're hiring people with public's money, they have to reflect the wishes of the elected politicians.

I have another concern that could lead to resolving some of the difficulties that we have seen on the Souris River and in North Dakota and in Saskatchewan. I'll ask you to respond, because I know specifically that we have had the invitation to participate in an interprovincial with Saskatchewan, and an interstate with North Dakota, the opportunity to sit on a water, not necessarily a water, but a provincial-state advisory committee which would deal with water and other

concerns. I would ask the Minister for his feelings as to whether or not he should be a part of that overall committee.

Now I will proceed on to another one in the constituency which I represent, because I feel it's extremely important that we conserve and manage the water in that area. After all, we aren't in Northern Manitoba; we are not in the Red River Valley where there was an abundance of rain, or generally there is an abundance of rain; we're generally on the side of a shortage of water, both in the summer months and in the winter months when people need it for either the towns or villages or for freshening up of the lakes for fish or for drawing of the water for livestock or farmyards along those streams.

I refer specifically to Oak Lake. Mr. Chairman, my colleague, the representative for Emerson, I was pleased this past winter was able to spend a few minutes with me in my constituency to talk to some of my constituents. Again, we're back to the same old question, what is best for the community in which I represent. Again and again and again this comes from the farm community, it comes from the R.M.'s of Pipestone and Sifton; it comes from those people who live and make their livings right in those communities.

We have the problem in Oak Lake where there is, basically, a shortage or a renewable supply of water to bring into Oak Lake. Why is there a shortage? Well, Mr. Chairman, there are several reasons. One of them is that we depend on the Moosomin Dam which is in Saskatchewan, which the outlet is supposed to be controlled by the Interprovincial Water Committee, which I'm sure your director is a member of, but far too many times I am being requested by constituents, and the municipalities have to go forward to plead for water from the Province of Saskatchewan.

Under the agreement they say, well you're supposed to get 50 percent of the water out of that watershed. Well thank you very much, Saskatchewan, we've had 50 percent of our water but it came in April and it came in March. This is now September and our creek is dry.

I get more than enough calls, I get plenty of calls, Mr. Chairman, as well from a constituent who operates a resort and is an excellent conservationist and looks after the fish in the Oak Lake area who says, we're out of, not only water in Oak Lake, but we're out of oxygen for the fish. If we could have a constant supply of water coming in in the wintertime from the Pipestone Creek then we would, in fact, help the fish stocks.

So I'm talking about a whole new look at this, Mr. Chairman. I have to say, and I again have debated this and brought it forward, there is the possibility of building a dam at Cromer. It's called the Cromer Dam. It would be built in Manitoba; it would be controlled by Manitoba; it would provide water for the 20-some farms and people living along the Pipestone Creek; it would supply fresh water for the Oak Lake, whether it be in the winter or summer when the people need it; it would provide recharge water in the groundwater table in the Deleau area, Mr. Chairman. It would have a multitude of cost benefits.

But the engineers come forward and say, because there are only 20 farmers that live along the Pipestone Creek, when you calculate the water that they're going to get and how they're going to use it, it doesn't wash and we can't afford to build it.

We have to open up our blinkers, Mr. Chairman. The people that work for the politicians have to open up their blinkers and pay attention to what we are saying because if they don't, I will be going on the hustings - I will be going on the hustings anyway - but I will be going on with the commitment to make some changes that will reflect the wishes of those constituents when it deals with the water and with the conservation of and the proper management of water. I would hope the Minister would have some positive comments to make in this regard.

There are some more specific questions that I would like to deal with dealing with the Souris River Basin Study, but I would ask him now to reflect on what I have said as far as policy matters are concerned. I am extremely serious about this, Mr. Chairman.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, that's quite a dissertation of concerns, problems and observations. I can't help but sympathize with the perception that it's based on, but I think you have to agree that part of it is perception and not reality, and some of it is reality.

The member alluded to a number of things, and one of the responses that I want to make has to do with the fact that we have a Canada-Manitoba Water Development Study just completed and that is for the whole Province of Manitoba and we are awaiting an engineering report. I don't know how long that is going to take, but it will be some months down the road, I would imagine. It will take probably the balance of this fiscal year to get that put together.

The member raises the question of our relationship with the Province of Saskatchewan and the State of North Dakota, both valid. We have entered into an agreement with North Dakota with respect to liaison mechanisms on all matters of mutual concern, whether it's drainage or tourism or a whole host of items. That was arrived at, at the time that my colleague, the Minister of Labour, and I went to Minneapolis about six weeks ago and there is a mechanism that has been agreed to, to accomplish that end.

With respect to dealing with Saskatchewan and the apportionment of water between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, I suppose the member perhaps has overlooked the fact or has minimized the importance of the Prairie Provinces Water Board Authority and the agreements that are already in place, one can't unilaterally tamper with that unless one wants to run the risk of the Saskatchewan River Agreement, the Churchill River Agreement — (Interjection) — it's all under one agreement which then impacts on the whole hydro system in Manitoba.

We have to appreciate the fact that Manitoba essentially is a recipient of water from everywhere and only a small portion of our water is domestic, if you like. It's U.S. water, it's Ontario water, it's Saskatchewan water, it's British Columbia and Alberta water that flows into the catch basin here in Manitoba. Therefore, we have to respect interprovincial agreements with respect to its use and control. So if there is a problem it can only be resolved through joint action and complementary action, if you like, but not unilateral action, unless one wants to run the risk that I just alluded to.

So it's not that simple, Mr. Chairman. Water resources of a country run into the same kind of relationship problems as do water resources within a community and so often you hear of neighbours fighting over whether one is dumping water on the other excessively or restraining it excessively, and that relationship applies in spades to interprovincial situations and international situations. So it is a problem and we have to deal with it in a way that is satisfactory to everyone's interest, if you like.

I am advised that we are dealing with the Moosomin situation, Mr. Chairman.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I fully appreciate the Minister's response on the Prairie Water Board Program, but I dealt specifically with the Pipestone Creek and the Moosomin one because if he had listened to me, I said I understand that by agreement we are to get 50 percent of the water from that water basin. We get the 50 percent of the water in March and April, but by the time the fall of the year comes, we don't get any water. So the agreement has to be looked at, Mr. Chairman.

That's why I again stress the need for building the Cromer Dam on the Manitoba side, which in fact would store as much water as the Moosomin Dam, would provide water for 20-some farmers, would provide a recharge for the Oak Lake Reservoir, would provide an underground aqua for supply for the Deleau and the Sandhill areas of that region, and give tremendous economic spinoffs. It wouldn't have anything to do, Mr. Chairman, with the overall Provincial Water Board Agreement.

It would give us the ability in Manitoba to store that water that comes from Saskatchewan, that comes in March and April if we would catch it, and provide the kind of longer-term use that we would need in the province. So it has nothing to do with the hydro, this particular project that I am talking about.

I, as well, would like to say that I am pleased that the Minister has some form of working relationship or some structured program with North Dakota and with Saskatchewan. I would be prepared to ask him to table whatever formal document or whatever type of information he may be able to provide on this basis because I am extremely interested. I have written letters to both the Premier of Manitoba and as well, Saskatchewan, supporting that kind of liaison and I would hope that the Minister would feel free to give us, or I would request of him to provide that information. The Canada-Manitoba Water Study, again, I am equally anxious to see when it is provided.

I would like to ask the Minister, though, and it's dealing back again with the Souris River. Does he not feel some compassion or some need to take action on behalf of people who are living in that area of the province that haven't had any provincial money spent to protect them against floods? Do they not deserve the same kind of protection and the same kind of concern as those people living in the Red River Valley that have had thousands of dollars spent in building ring dikes around their farms? Should they not expect the same kind of consideration, Mr. Chairman? I mean, we are in a world of equality, we all want equality. We saw it yesterday. I mean how can we allow a farmer to sit in the Souris

River Valley and lose his farm because of continued flooding and salinity and lack of available arable land which he owns, Mr. Chairman, and not do anything for him? I plead with the Minister to give me an answer because I can't for the life of me see why one farmer in that area is treated differently than the ones in the other regions of the province.

HON. S. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, just to reconfirm, I did indicate, but perhaps the member didn't pick it up, that there is a committee working on the Moosomin question between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, or a joint committee, and the whole question there is whether we can sort out the apportionment agreement. I guess that's on a monthly basis rather than on an annual basis. But there is work under way at that committee level to try and sort that one out.

With respect to flooding along the Souris, the member must be talking about agricultural flooding.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Yes.

HON. S. USKIW: Yes. I don't know the whole story on it other than that it appears that there is no cost benefit on it; that the cost of the land taken out for diking would offset the gain by the land you'd use up for the diking and so on and I don't know what the cost figures are.

But in a general way, I guess even if we wanted to do some of these projects, it comes down to money and we don't have the kind of capital allocation for projects of some magnitude at this time, other than what's under the federal-provincial agreements and so on.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the fact there is some work being done on the apportionment, or the release of water out of the Moosomin Dam, hopefully, that would work. My long-term objective, and one which I'll continue to be pressing for, is the construction of the Cromer Dam which will, in fact, provide a pond of water on the Manitoba side and it will be hard not to sell me on that idea; I'll be striving to do it.

I didn't ask for any diking, Mr. Chairman, on the Souris River. That, again, is an engineer's idea of part of the solution. I don't know how we're going to get this message across, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that there seems to be some obstructions in the minds of some people. I go to Page 20 of the Souris River Water Commission and there are some 10 witnesses that went before that committee, and if they haven't said it in their submission, Mr. Chairman, that if you phoned and talked to the 10 of those people - with Harry Thompson, he's a Melita businessman; Everett Barker, he's a farmer-businessman; Ron Renwick is a farmer, and the Reeve of the Arthur Municipality; Charlie Gall, Councillor of the Town of Melita, businessman; Wayne Drummond, farmer and Councillor of the Town of Hartney; Ray Duffy, representative of the Souris River Valley Association; Reg Atkinson, Mayor of the Town of Hartney and businessman; Walter Pennell, farmer; Zacharias Waldner of the Maple Grove Colony at Hartney; and Art Cowan, Reeve of the Municipality of Cameron - they would want the Hartney Dam, either

remodelled or removed, Mr. Chairman, that's the point I want to make to the engineers and I'll make it over again and, when we get back, it will be removed, there won't be an engineer that stops us, Mr. Chairman. That's how I feel about it and there's been too much blockade inside the department, Mr. Chairman, and I think it's down to where we cannot tolerate these people having these kinds of injustices placed upon them.

I say it in the context of the work that has been done in the Red River Valley where you see the diking work done around individual farms. They deserve that protection, Mr. Chairman; the people in the southwest corner of the province deserve the same kind of treatment by government, by the province, and expenditures to protect their investments and their livelihoods. I'm not going to give up easy on it and I would request, Mr. Chairman, that, through you to the Minister, that the Minister take a very serious look. I know that there have been individuals who would like to meet with him and discuss it with him, I've had the assurance that that would happen and I press for that. It's not the diking, we don't need a lot of diking, we don't need a lot of expenditure; we need a few thousand dollars spent to remodel the Hartney Dam, that's what we need. We don't need millions of dollars; we don't need hundreds of thousands of dollars; we need a few thousand dollars which would, in fact, help a lot of people.

And, Mr. Chairman, you know, would it be such a sin in society, today, if we spent a few thousand dollars and gave those people some relief, you know, we talk about prioritizing money. I'm not even going to talk about the advertising money that the government is using, I'm just going to talk about a little compassion, do what a few people want. And they aren't people that are hollering for unreasonable things - they're Reeves, they're councillors, they're elected people. So I plead with the Minister to give every consideration to that. I'm not talking about the removal of other dams; I'm not talking about anything more than remodelling of one particular structure, which I again challenge any engineer to put the volume of water through there that they say they can put through on Page 5 of this Souris River Study. They can't do it, Mr. Chairman; they can't do it.

Now I think, Mr. Chairman, I've covered about all I need to, other than at some point there's a recommendation where the No. 3 Highway west of the Souris River, at Melita, should be raised because of flooding. I know that in the '79 flood it had to be closed because of high water. Has there been any action taken on the Souris River Water Commission Study, or the study done by the department - that's the Souris River Study, I'll call it - has there been any action or any recommendations accepted, or will there be anything taken from that?

HON. S. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would want to draw attention to the fact that study was tabled about two months ago so, logically, nothing would have happened since. The other thing that I would like to refer the member back to is the fact that the Water Commission didn't seem to find in favour of the argument that the member's advancing, and I wouldn't mind if he would elaborate on that because I know that

he's exercised over the problem and probably for good reason. I'm not sure that his solutions are the right ones, but maybe there is a solution. We're certainly prepared to look at that, but the Water Commission has tabled a report that sort of knocked that idea out as an answer, that is the blowing up of the Hartney Dam for example.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm on record in the Legislature of suggesting that several years ago that that should have happened and nothing has happened yet, the water still seems to be causing people problems and I would be prepared to arrange with the Minister, with some individuals that would like to present the case that has been presented to me. They can do it, I'm sure, in a very effective way and I welcome him to set that meeting up in the near future because, Mr. Chairman, if the question were asked, either to leave it or to blow it up, I think the majority of people would like to see it blown up in that community.

The book he refers to, as far as the Souris River Commission is concerned, they wouldn't give a darn what they said, as far as the study is concerned, because again they aren't satisfied. The background work that went into this particular study was as straightforward as it should have been, and again they feel that somebody within the operations of the Department of Water Resources are continuing to play games with them.

I'm anxious, Mr. Chairman, to get as much detail as possible on the Canada-Manitoba Water Study because there is an urgency to come forward with some long-term meaningful policies when it comes to the conservation of water.

I think we will see continued problems of soil erosion and shortages of moisture if we don't come to grips with it. I don't know many communities in the constituency which I represent that hasn't got a depleting ground water supply. There's certain areas that are draining dry. One, of course, that the members of the department are very familiar with is the Maple Lake Drain which there was a court case several years ago over, but it is, in fact, draining valuable ground water. We don't want to drain western Manitoba dry, we want to, I think, start putting some money into projects that are going to help conserve our country, and I would hope the Minister would respond to what his longer-term policy would be as far as water conservation and the damming and ponding of water is, because I think it's extremely critical, Mr. Chairman. We can't keep meeting at committees and putting the case forward and nothing happening in the field. We all see drainage maps being proposed. I'm not so anxious about drainage maps, I'm more interested in water conservation project maps, and that's the kind of strategy I would like to see.

So we have to reverse, turn around the thinking of the — (Interjection) — well, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Inkster says I'm an environmentalist. You bet I'm an environmentalist. I want an environment that all Manitobans can live in and can enjoy and make a living in and as it's being handled now, it's pretty tough to do so.

So maybe I will have a few more comments to make a little later. I know some of my colleagues have some

comments. I have maybe taken a little more time than I should have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour is almost now 4:30 p.m. We are interrupting the proceedings of the committee for the Private Members' Hour. This committee shall return at 8:00 p.m. tonight.

SUPPLY - HEALTH

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. EYLER: Order please. Committee, come to order. We are considering the Estimates of Health. Does the Minister have a statement to make?
The Honourable Minister.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I'll put on the record the questions that I was asked for, and that my honourable friend then could . . .

We were dealing with the vacancy rate with the department yesterday. I want to say that the vacancy rate in the department was 5.9 percent on April 30, 1984. That was just for a note. It wasn't a question of guidelines or keeping people off at all, it was just this turnover that we had so that when the year started, on March 31, 1985, at the end of this fiscal year, it was 3.7.

During that same period, the actual number of vacancies in the regions were in April 1984, was 46; in May, 42; June, 43; July, 39; August, 34; September, 38; October, 27; November, 18; December, 20; January, 21; February, 24; and March, 23. So it's quite obvious from these figures that the application of the requirement for a 7 percent vacancy rate has not had to be a negative impact. In fact, it had very little impact on the region, and certainly no negative impact on the ability to deliver services.

Since the announcement of the requirement for a 7 percent vacancy rate, we have received Treasury Board approval to fill, have filled, or are in the process of filling two mental health workers, six public health nurses, four continuing care social workers, four continuing care nurses, four diabetes education workers and one continuing care resource worker, for a total of 21 positions. I'm talking about just the region now. My understanding is that either it was a day or so ago or it will be announced to members of the Cabinet that we are not to be concerned with the guidelines at this time.

Further to Regional Services, my honourable friend had also asked what was the vote? Well, the vote, he has it, but what was the actual for last year? Regional Services, the Salaries, the vote was \$16,332,900, and the actual was \$15,702,200.00. The Other Expenditures were \$2,245,300, went down to \$1,962,400.00. Therefore, the total was \$18,578,200 to \$17,664,600.00.

Then the Honourable Member for Roblin - excuse me, no, no, you're right. It was the Member for Rhineland who asked me the question about salmonellosis, okay? That's as close as I can make it. The cases in 1983 were 227; 1984, 234. The variance was seven or 3.1 percent. I am told that the increase in the number of reported cases represents a normal statistical variation.

While other meat products may be involved, 60 percent of all poultry carry the bacteria which means

there is an ever-present risk of salmonella poisoning. The reported cases are usually the result of not following proper procedures for preparing, for cooking a meal involving the food product.

The shigemosis, 440 in 1983; 688 in '84, I think that was the one that he's concerned here. The variance was 248 or 66.4. I am told that it's a disease which spreads through communities on a cyclical basis. The outbreaks usually last about two years, the cycle ending with a sudden drop in incidence. The disease is prevalent in Northern or remote communities where water and sewage services may be less than satisfactory. Health education in the area of personal hygiene is provided in an attempt to reduce the risk of contracting this disease. So if this information is correct, it should be the end of a cycle and start going down.

Hepatitis A, there were 426 cases in 1983; 821 in 1984, for a variance of 395. The Hepatitis A is a disease which occurs in a seven to 10-year cycle. Because of its longer incubation period, it takes a longer time to spread in the community. The number of reported cases indicate the disease is on the upslope of its cycle with the incidence of the disease common among younger 16-age population which was not present or did not contract the disease during the last major outbreak. It's also prevalent in Northern and remote communities where water and sewage services are a major contributing factor. When the disease has run its course through an area, a significant drop in the number of shingella cases is to be expected.

Hepatitis B, 73 cases in '83; 160 in '84, for a variance of 87 or 119.2 percent. The increase in the number of reported cases of Hepatitis B is the result of a stricter surveillance and a greater number of individuals from identified virus groups coming forward for a diagnosis, so that is not just necessarily more cases. It is that they're reporting. The disease remains prevalent among intravenous drug abusers, homosexuals and immigrants from tropical climates. Immediate protection is available through injection of Hepatitis B immune globulin to prevent secondary cases from occurring. A variance of hepatitis in general is expected as a result of reporting of a higher number of cases of Hepatitis B.

Mr. Chairman, I guess we're starting, I answered the questions. I think these are all the questions that I promised an answer to. Now with Brandon - I'm trying to be helpful in anticipating the question of my honourable friend - well, I mentioned that yesterday, there are 16.5 vacancies out of that total. The total was 625 employees; and Selkirk was 474. There are 20.5 between the two; 16.5 in Brandon, and four at the Selkirk Mental Hospital. Out of that, there are 12 being filled out of that 20 right now, and I think they're all permanent people. All the staff is permanent.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has announced a new user fee charge for patients at the chronic care institutions, the mental institutions. Presumably the majority of these people will be resident at both Brandon and Selkirk.

Now, if I recall correctly, the conditions under which a person would be subject to the \$15.25 per diem as

a resident of either Brandon or Selkirk: No. 1, they would have to be there for the past year; and No. 2, would have to pass a means test if that's a proper term. In other words, they have to have the personal finances in order to be charged that.

My question for the Minister takes several parts, and first of all I believe it's to start May 1st, so does that mean that a person resident as of May 1, 1985, who was also in the same institution May 1, 1984, will commence paying the charge this May 1st?

Secondly, can the Minister indicate the number of patients that are anticipated to be subject to this charge in each institution and the best estimation of the revenues that will be derived from the per diem charges to the residents in both Brandon and Selkirk that'll be subject to the new user fees?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, yes, it starts in May. No, it's not a question of saying you're getting a free year. The year that I mentioned is to make sure that these people are long-stay patients. It is not that we're saying you get a free year.

Now I want to repeat again what I have said on previous occasions. For instance, the new buildings that we're building - and they are going to be built to the specification of a personal care home, for instance - if you have a home for gerontology, well all right, you're charging and that has been charged from Day One. We were the first province that brought it in, and it was under the Schreyer Government, followed through the Lyon Government, and now that the personal care home has been covered, it's been insured on a universal program, we're still the one who is doing the most of all the provinces and that's not a change of policy.

From Day One it was felt that because, first of all, there were no funds coming from Ottawa on this at all, and it wasn't the same, it wasn't looked at in the same way as a hospital, as I mentioned, because this was their home. These people for all intents and purposes would remain in that home for the rest of their lives.

Now, therefore, as we look at the system here in Canada - and let me talk only about the people over 65 at this time - these people receive from the taxpayers, through the pension, receive a pension, and then for those who have no other revenue at all, they would receive the supplement also. And what is that for? This is for people especially, I would imagine, that pension might be eventually discontinued when there is a proper pension, in the private sector and so on, covering all the people of Canada. The situation is to keep body and soul together, to keep a roof over your head and to feed these people and also the drugs that are needed.

Now in a personal care home from the start, it was understood that they would pay the board and room; there is no necessity of worrying about that. Certainly you can't talk about too much transportation there. It wasn't just the pharmacare that we had, but it was a program that everything was covered. So it was understood that they were at the per diem rate, and that was always understood, and there was never any doubt that this would be done.

Now I must be fair. It is true that there was some criticism and that was covered, criticism of the increase in the personal care home from the same setup that

my friend was talking about when we were in opposition. That is true and I've recognized that. But the principle was never changed. In fact, it was started by us. Now with these changes coming in, and we're going in a different direction now in mental health to start with. We're trying to get away from the institutions as much as possible.

I did say, and I repeat, that I think we'll always need the institutions. It will be more costly. We're looking at the care, and that was covered, there won't be any debate on that. My honourable friend made the point himself that it's going to take an awful lot of money, that he wonders if we'll ever be able to deliver, and he's right, and there is the question of the community residences also. Now technically, the people then that are getting day care and so on would not get any help at all. But all of a sudden you'd zero in on the people that would stay and it would be an incentive, for instance, to stay in those institutions because they would be getting everything free and everybody else would have to pay, and it is wrong.

So all we're saying is you have a geriatric institution, a psychogeriatric, you're just adding psychiatry. You're getting the same kind of building, the same kind of care plus additional care and we say from this day when we're sure that it's not a temporary thing - we're not doing that with the people in acute hospitals - so we'll say well then you're considered the same as a personal care home. So, to try to pretend that is a change of policy, fine. Who ever wants to do that, be my guest. But that is not the case. That is not the case. It is exactly the same thing.

Now we say that for some reason or so, these people would stay a year and then be discharged later on. Well fine, when they come back we'll have to start all over again, and as I say, it's the same thing.

As I say, that's the intent to say to these people. They are to treat them like normal people. In other words, put them in a personal care home, and we're saying, okay, there is a psychogeriatric institution which is a personal care home. It's the same standard, it's the same thing, except you will specialize because of the people who should have the experience. We should have psychiatric nurses as was recommended by the report of my honourable friend and the principle accepted by me. So that is what the situation is.

Now, it is exactly the same also that these people will get to keep the same thing as the patients of the personal care home are doing now - approximately \$150.00. If you have somebody less than - and you're talking about a means test - it's not a means test more than in the personal care home. With the means test I think you might debate that it might come in when you're dealing with people less than 65. Remember we're not looking at the revenue from the family but from that individual. We don't want to saddle a family with problems of somebody who is in an institution like that, no revenue, and they have to pay, while the family might have to take care of a family, other kids and so on.

So the situation is that it is the revenue from that person, and the only way that I can think of revenue is if he was left a legacy or something, a lot of money, then I don't think anybody, even the members on this side of the House, would say, well, fine, they should help pay for their keep and where's that money. If they're

not going to spend it, where is it going to go? It's going to be left just standing while the other taxpayers in Manitoba will have to pay.

Also the situation, that there could be a third party, it could be Autopac or it could be that somebody has sued the court and the court is deciding that there might be a rule in their favour, or something - \$1 million or \$2 million - that's all.

So the situation is exactly the way it was, and I think it's fair. As I said, don't apologize, and I do not accept that it's a change in policy at all because it isn't. We will be applying the charges to - we're talking about Brandon now I take it - to approximately 350 patients out of approximately 800. However, this is an estimate and when we have done the final assessment, it could vary and we would inform my friend if he would like to get the information later on.

To give you an idea about the people that are 65: the inpatients aged 65 and over in Brandon Mental Health Centre, there are 235; in Selkirk there are 104, for the 339. Of those age 65 years and over, the following have their estates administered by the public trustees: Brandon Mental Health Centre, 180; Selkirk Mental Health Centre, 93. So there would be very very few that are not over 65 and there again, they would have the same guarantee of retaining. If they've got it, they have approximately the same thing and their family would not have to pay one penny. It is their own revenue. So that's why it makes it so clear that it will be very few.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure those last figures that the Minister gave me, if I understand them completely, the 350 of 800 is the combination of Brandon and Selkirk approximately?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Right.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Those are patients over 65?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Right.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. Now does the Minister have an estimate of the revenue which is projected to come out of this per diem? I want to develop a scenario for the Minister.

He is indicating that this new user fee in forms of the per diem, he has given me figures of approximately 350 patients which it will affect in the two mental institutions of Brandon and Selkirk - those numbers are only the over-65 patients - but there will be patients under 65 who have been there for more than a year, hence fall under his policy. I mean there will be; there are.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Yes, the 339 is both Brandon and Selkirk; that's those over 65. Now we've got that straight. Now definitely, there are people that are less than 65. What I am saying is that they would have to have revenue of their own, not from the family. So they will be a handful if that; it would be very few. The only one it could be, as I said, it could be if they receive a judgment, if they were in an accident and the court has allowed them. They have money of their own; they have a trust fund or something or were left a trust fund

by parents, the situation would be very very few. Then again, if there is anything that we haven't thought of, this . . . for instance, the people that have had polio and so on from that one epidemic, it is not our intention to charge them. So there would be very very few of them.

MR. D. ORCHARD: The Minister's policy, however, does set up a framework whereby anybody who is there for more than a year, a decision is going to have to be made. If they are there for more than the year, then they are subject to the assessment, given financial resources.

The question and the scenario I want to develop and seek the Minister's answer on is let's take the circumstance of a farm family where the wife is 50 years old, is chronically mentally ill and is a resident of one of the institutions for more than one year. Now under the law of the land, her assets, indeed her dower rights, etc., do give her assets. Under that circumstance, would the individual be assessed the per diem?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I am glad this question was asked because it gives me a chance to be a little more specific. It is not assets; it is income as reported on the income tax. In other words, if there are assets, it would be just the income from the interest or the investment of these assets, not the assets.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay, I accept what the Minister is saying but I just want to make sure of how that would be applied because obviously the farm or this particular spouse, her husband could be in a successful business and she could be a shareholder in the business. What I am getting at to the Minister . . .

HON. L. DESJARDINS: We are not using family income; just her own personal income.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay, I realize that then. What is the Minister's policy going to be that if she has not got an income tax filed and she is not filing with Revenue Canada, then that individual will not be subject regardless of the asset base she may personally have or the family has?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: That's right.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. Now let's reverse the situation and consider the situation where in that farm family it's the husband that's committed and the wife is at home maintaining the farm, etc., etc. Even if the land is in his name, will he be subject to that per diem under circumstances like that?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Who would be getting the income this time? If the man is hospitalized and it was in his name, it would be the same thing, but the wife then would be getting the income. It's not the assets. That's what we mean by family assets.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Then the Minister in explaining the policy is saying that if a spouse does not file basically an income tax form and is under 65 with no pension income, that basically regardless of the asset base that

the well spouse, the other partner in the marriage, regardless of their income capacity or asset base, that it's the individual, whether the individual who is the patient has got an income statement, that's the only criteria the department is using?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Right, just the income of the individual.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now, can the Minister indicate the department's best guesstimate, and I presume that's all it would be at this time, of what the 339 people would be contributing in terms of per diems for the next . . .

HON. L. DESJARDINS: For the two institutions?

MR. D. ORCHARD: No, just global is fine, for both Selkirk and Brandon.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Yes, that's all I have. It would be \$1.9 million. Maybe I should inform the committee that the reason we expect to have very little . . . I'll leave it at that; it might be more confusing. I will talk to my friend privately.

MR. D. ORCHARD: These figures of course could vary, I presume, because - well no, these figures couldn't vary on the one point. The only thing that might . . .

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Those over 65 won't vary except that, as I said, they have to be there for one year. That could change, yes, they could vary, but it's pretty close.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Okay. These figures though, the \$1.9 million, basically, would be a relatively firm figure because you've got people who you know are on pension, possibly with GIS, so you know what your per diem is going to apply, basically. The question mark that you have and, of course, maybe you haven't had a chance to do the patient assessment, but you may have people under 65 that would be in the income bracket that would be subject, that's a possibility, but I presume you haven't got a handle on that yet.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: And we're not worried about it to be honest with you. We won't have the police force to enforce that.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now, the Minister earlier on indicated that this is basically nothing new, that this is the policy that has existed in personal care homes for some time.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: In the personal care homes, right.

MR. D. ORCHARD: But the Minister can't quite get by this that easily because, if the policy always existed, then the revenue should have always been there, and it's only going to be revenue this year. So the policy has a wider application and presumably that took Cabinet consideration and Order-in-Council to bring in chronic care patients in our mental institutions to

pay this per diem that has been an established policy under the personal care home system.

So the Minister may say it's simply mimicking other provinces, or carrying through with the policy of the personal care homes, but I maintain that this is a new policy direction in that it applies to a new group of Manitobans; it's the same policy that applies to personal care homes, but it is newly applied to the chronic care patients, and as justified as the Minister feels in doing it and the reasons he may have for enforcing the policy, it is a new direction and it is somewhat - if I can be fair to the Minister - against the kind of policy enunciations that the New Democratic Party has made in the past.

Now there was no specific mention of this in the election, as far as I know in the election campaign material. Campaign promises of the New Democratic Party in 1981 I don't think made any reference to this. But one, I suppose, viewing the election and some of the election promises, as a voter in Manitoba, could easily have made the assumption, given that the New Democratic Party opposed very strenuously the - I believe it was 25 cents per quarter increase in the per diems charged to personal care home residents - given the background that the New Democratic Party, in opposition, was vehemently opposed to that and thought it was bad policy and the wrong policy and, indeed, I believe when the Minister first assumed his duties in 1981 - I believe it was 1982 - he came out with a per diem schedule and reversed that per diem schedule in the personal care homes because it was considered by many to be a pretty blatant reversal of policy - and I won't say a broken promise because I don't think they talked, not to my knowledge did they talk, about not raising per diems in the personal care homes, not to my knowledge.

But certainly I think it's fair to say - and I'm trying to be as fair as I can to my honourable friend because it wasn't him, it was some of his colleagues that caused him the problem in this department with some of the outlandish accusations and political manoeuvring they did while in opposition that is causing him some of his problems right now, but certainly the people of Manitoba expected no less from this newly elected New Democratic Government - that they would certainly not be embarking on what they considered to be unconscionable raises in the per diems.

I believe, certainly, Manitobans would not have expected this government to bring in a new group of Manitobans into the per diem net, such as this Minister has done in the last month by bringing in the chronically mentally ill who are resident in our institutions and as well - and we'll discuss that at a later period of time when we get into the Health Services Commission - chronically ill in our hospitals on the advice of their physician, who are not panelled, which is another new category of people subject to the per diems.

So, Mr. Chairman, I can't make the accusation of this Minister and this government of breaking yet another election promise because I am not aware they promised not to do this. But certainly the people of Manitoba are now beginning to ask themselves and I have to say it's not necessarily the, if you will, the conservative-type voters who are questioning this Minister's policy, probably they see the rationale behind it, but it's his own party activists, it's his own left-of-

centre people that believe that everything great and glorious can be delivered by a New Democratic Party in this province, who are the ones that are on his back the most; they're the same people that caused him to back down from his 1982 announcement of an increase in the per diems in the personal care home rate.

I suggest the Minister might have had a few rough nights after he announced that party from the activists on the left side of the New Democratic Party because this policy, this brand new role in of a user fee to chronically mentally ill, and chronically hospitalized people in the Province of Manitoba who aren't panelled, surely must fly in the face of everything that these social activists in the New Democratic Party believe in and have stumbled on the campaign trail for to promote New Democratic Party policy.

I think the Minister probably has had to maybe use that letter we've often referred to that he has to make this policy stick, because I fully believe that the activists in the New Democratic Party must be totally discouraged that this Minister of Health now has to bring in this kind of a per diem user fee on the chronically mentally ill, and those chronically ill patients in our acute care hospitals, in order to garner some \$3.5 million of additional revenues to help finance the health system. It must fly in the face of what they believed this government could do and, indeed, promised to do back in 1981.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: One thing at least should be very clear, that there is nothing to what was said yesterday because there is an election, we're making all kinds of commitments and that we're trying to buy the voters. Now it comes out that I'm doing some pretty tough and dirty things and I've got a lot of people mad at me.

You can't use it both ways. Now let me say this, the principle is the same. Of course it's a new policy, there's new money, it's something that wasn't done. I'm not that crazy that I think you're going to believe that, even if I tried for a year, it's obvious that it's something new. But what we did is re-establish fairness in the system, and I defy anybody, the activists that you're talking about, your friends, anybody. Now I'll be candid, there is something. Well, the activists - well who are the activists? - they're activists in certain things and I'm an activist in certain things, we all are I hope, or we have no business here. If we're not activists in certain things, we have no business in this House at all. — (Interjection) — All right, at least once I've got the right word and you've got the wrong word. Once in my life. Anyway, the situation is this, that it's there and as my honourable friend said and I recognize that, there was criticism when they raised the rate, not by everybody, and you might say that position of the official opposition was that. But, as I said, it is not going to be easy and things change and the people after that through the experience will realize. You know, you're pretty stubborn if you feel you're never wrong. And I admit that and I told you the way it goes. I told you that many times that when I was a young fellow, who was elected the same year as Walter Weir and I came here as Health critic for the Liberal Party, there's a lot of things I said in those days and I thought I was the most honest and sincere guy in the world, but I learned.

Bud Sherman did the same thing. He was most unfair in opposition when I was the Minister of Health during the Schreyer years. You keep saying yourself that it wasn't me, that it was somebody else. I wasn't tough enough that I lost my job as Health critic in the Lyon years, if you remember. All right, and now Sherman became the Health critic and again he changed. And I dare say that if any one of you on that side ever become the Minister of Health you'll have a different outlook on that. And more and more it is a choice and I certainly don't apologize. I don't think it's a reversal of position. My honourable friend is saying it's not a commitment. It is doing something that was difficult to do before, and what are we doing? We're setting up, very easy, all I can say is that new place is a personal care home, period, and everybody would think the same. You'd move these people, they're well enough to go into a personal care home. That's what we're asked to do.

Now, let's be reasonable. It was said last night, the night before we were told how much money would be spent on Mental Health. I'd like to remember the figure that my honourable friend himself stated and he was right. It would cost millions of dollars. And we are saying, we are taking people who are getting this help. Now, there are all kinds. We're accused and it's true to a certain point that we haven't got the facilities for the people who we're letting out of these institutions. We haven't done that much on the Mental Health side; we will need the funds. Are we going to take a very few, 300 of them in the province or 339, and we'll say, here, you don't need the money, but because you happen to be here, you don't pay your share? So I don't apologize at all. It is not a change.

Certainly, as a Minister of Health I've had to do a lot of talking to convince, and I'll accept that responsibility. I'll accept the responsibility because I feel it was right. I said, not too long ago, and I repeat it, that it doesn't matter who has this job, that the Minister of Health is not going to be very popular if we're going to keep the good programs that we have because they'll be a lot tougher. Those are the easy ones. Those are so obvious, that I'm not afraid to go into any one of these groups, be it the most left-wing NDP if you want, and I feel very comfortable. And it's so obvious, because what are we going to do with that money? We're going to bring in more services for these people. You can't give it all to one or two. So I've recognized some truth in what my honourable friend said, recognized that as a fact, I give him reason why I think it is so.

I recognize that this is something new, of course — (Interjection) — there's more revenue. I recognize that if my colleague on the other side doesn't keep quiet, or keep it down to a shout, I won't be able to keep on. He hasn't heard me, I'm talking to my buddy out there. So the situation, Mr. Chairman, is that we are I think bringing things a little more fairer. We're not saving that money; that is not money that is going to be put in the kitty to pay for a deficit. It isn't that at all, it is not taking anything away from Health, it is bringing new programs for people who otherwise couldn't pay for it. So, you know, I feel very comfortable and the more often I can tell that story the better I like it, because I think we're on the right track. It's good practice to see when the decisions become very very tough.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Now, Mr. Chairman, I enjoy listening to the Minister and times like this justify what he's doing. It's sort of one of those classic things where you're watching a man justify the unjustifiable. — (Interjection) — Now, Mr. Chairman, what I'm saying for a New Democratic Minister of Health to justify being what they have fondly criticized in the caucus over there when they point gleefully to some of the things that are done in these other provinces that are Tory, that are run by Tory Governments, it is great to see this Minister of Health up to justify the reasons why this party which cares for people is doing the same things that from time to time they want to criticize going on in other provinces.

The Minister has indicated that this policy that he's brought in is more fair and it will allow him to increase the services that are available. You know, Mr. Chairman, I just want to point out in doing a quick little calculation on both Brandon and Selkirk, there is between the two institutions an increase in budget this year of \$24,000.00. Now, I would suspect that their hydro bills will go by that amount of the increase this year, with the hydro rate freeze off, and these people pushing the hydro rates up. So, Mr. Chairman, if in fact, as the Minister was saying, that this money is going to go to provide better services, then theoretically there maybe should have been more money in Salaries, in Other Expenditures, at the two institutions to the tune of \$1.9 million. But I think what has happened - and the Minister can correct me if I err in my assessment in my judgment here - the Minister two nights ago, announced with a great deal of fanfare that he was following the recommendation of the Pascoe Report. I don't believe I have the press release here - yes, I have - the \$1.45 million Mental Health Initiatives Announced, and the Minister indicated that where it really came from, but maybe not, was from Dental Services because he might have to replace Dental Services if he gets the program approved. So that cast out the other day on whether it was brand new money, and today with \$1.9 million coming from the Brandon and Selkirk mental institutions, this new initiative isn't even equivalent to the new user charge you put on the very people who this is supposed to help.

So, you know, Mr. Chairman, the Minister cannot be telling people that in the mental health field that he is desirous of moving ahead with the recommendations of the Pascoe Report. And the Pascoe Report targeted a figure of \$5 million per year, and I'll agree with the Minister. I'll have no hesitation in agreeing with the Minister that it may well be a near impossible goal for a government today, whether it was the Progressive Conservatives in his shoes or the way it is now, to dedicate an additional \$5 million to the provision of mental health as recommended by the Pascoe Report.

But, Mr. Chairman, already this government is indicating \$1.5 million out of Dental Services was brought into the provision of the new line of services, \$1.45 million, as announced the other night, that may or may not have to be replaced, depending on whether the Minister resolves his problem with the Student Dental Health Program. But certainly, Mr. Chairman, if the Minister was indicating that this new user fee in the chronically mentally ill was to be used to improve services, then the \$1.9 million one would assume when it hasn't been going back into the institutions themselves

is only, as I say if my calculations are correct, some \$24,000 increase in budget between the two facilities for this coming fiscal year. Then if the Minister was going to be indeed expanding services in mental health, then surely the \$1.9 million could have been dedicated to community residences, etc., etc., as announced.

So the Minister now has got his new initiative paid for in two ways: the Children's Dental Health Program, and now more than paid for in his new per diem in the chronically mentally ill in our institutions. I guess, Mr. Chairman, this is why there is a growing frustration out there amongst the proponents of community-based delivery of mental health, in that they are saying - it's not me who is saying it, but if I could pull out that news article — (Interjection) — No doubt, you've got lots of letters you receive. — (Interjection) — It works that way sometimes when a Minister errs that people like to know when he errs. Well, I haven't got the news release.

But at any rate, it was Bill Martin with the Canadian Association for the Mentally Handicapped who was indicating that he was concerned and he was disappointed that this Minister and this government weren't moving as quickly on implementation of the Pascoe Report as the community expected they would, given the pronouncements and given the expectations they had built up.

I think people like Mr. Martin will be even more disappointed when they see that the Minister's new initiatives are not even spending the additional money in per diems that he is getting from the chronically mentally ill to improve the lot of mental health delivery in the Province of Manitoba. I think that disappointment will indeed translate into more pressure on the government from those groups to indeed act upon the recommendations that they have adopted in the Pascoe Report.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I've got two very bad faults: one quality that I . . .

A MEMBER: You've got more than two.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, amongst others, but those are very bad.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I think you've got at least four lawsuits against you. What are you talking about, two?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: That? That I'm proud of.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Oh, you're proud of it.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I'm proud of it, yes.

The situation is this, that I'm very poor at communicating, at making myself understood. I pull the same mistake as I do in Cabinet. It seems that I give people too much information and it seems to confuse them.

Now the situation - because my friend is absolutely confused - at no time did I say that we were charging more to the people of Selkirk, because we wanted to spend more money in Selkirk. At no time did I say that,

no time and no time at all. I said in the field of mental health that we were way behind and we had to move.

Now, my friend tells me that somebody is very disappointed in the Minister, because he couldn't get \$5 million a year for three years to apply that. Well, I'm glad he is disappointed. It would be very irresponsible on my part and my colleagues to, in this day and year, just forget everything else and put in another \$15 million in there so fast.

Now, that is only a part and probably a small part of it, and my friend knows that. I want to make a correction. He's not confused; he's misleading because if I had Hansard here, he wouldn't tell me. He said you're spending this kind of money and then he elaborated, the adolescent. Do you remember that when you talked about the adolescent centre? When you talked about the freestanding psychiatric centre at the Health Sciences Centre? When you talked about the 100 beds in Brandon, the 100 beds in Portage? But you're not counting that today. You know, make up your mind. What is it? — (Interjection) — Well, that's Brandon and that's Portage and that's mental health, and that money is being spent.

Then if we had Hansard in front of us, it would record that you said, yes, but then the operating costs of that would be so-and-so. How are you going to keep up? My friend is absolutely right.

Now I'll try to confuse you a little more, because I'll even give you more information, I will tell you exactly the steps that where that money is. The situation is that when it was time to get the money, I wanted it in my budget. The Minister of Finance and the experts in Finance said, well, we're not going to keep that pot of money here until you need it or you need some other money right away.

So you take that money, that surplus, that will be transferred, and when you've got this sorted out - and by the way we had another good meeting with a representative of Saskatchewan today - I would hope that we could make an announcement in the not too distant future about the children's program. The situation is when that is needed, you'll go and get it. That had nothing to do with me; that's a book entry; that's the Department of Finance. I don't care, as long as I've got the money. How they do it, I don't care - I am not the Minister of Finance.

I'll tell you now why I got the money, and how I managed to get the money. It is exactly the way my friend is saying. It is this kind of money, because it was a year with a deficit, with what is going on, the high cost of all the programs that we have to maintain these programs, my chances weren't very good. I don't think there are too many that had money, so therefore, normally this money could be, I don't know if that money would go in Finance in the Consolidated Fund. That money would go in the Consolidated Fund anyway.

But the commitment that if we did that — (Interjection) — My friend is guessing; at times he's pretty close. It wasn't that easy a battle, and it was probably the reason why this government which still feels the same about that could be talked into the importance of getting some money to have some programs, in order words, to be fair, to spread it a bit. You're saying that because people are sick, does that mean that you owe them board and room forever and a day, where other people next to them are probably

dying of loneliness in an attic room somewhere without care?

So that's how that money comes actually. My honourable friend is right. Forget the dental program and that, it was this new revenue that I could say, okay, but don't put it in to reduce the deficit, give it back to me, and they did. That is just the start of something. I dare say that without that I wouldn't have had that money. I would have had to manage with what I had or take it away from a program and so on, but I was successful in convincing my colleagues that it was important that we should spread it and that it was fair.

As I say, I'll argue that with my honourable friend if he wants. He'll be in a hell of a spot. I'll go and argue in Carman if he wants that I'm doing the right thing. I'll argue in - where's the worst place that you say on this side that they won't — (Interjection) — with Myrna? I'll go on the platform with her, and Myrna and I will justify it. She's never criticized this program. We'll justify that, because we are doing so much good with this one.

MR. D. ORCHARD: She was marching . . .

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Of course, you expect the executive director of the association to say you're not going fast enough. I get that every day from anybody. These people start looking at No. 1 first, and that is why I say it is difficult and people should work together to try to do that. If you listen to every group and just the group that they want more and more, you won't be able to keep your program.

Now, my friend also has said that I point out with glee sometimes or some of my colleagues point out with glee what's happening in Conservative provinces and all of a sudden I'm doing the same thing. I am doing the same thing, but this is not the concern. Of course, they are charging. In fact, we had to lead the way on so many programs such as the personal care home. It was a brand-new idea; nobody paid that. We were the first province in Canada to ensure it.

They came in and, from Day One, you don't. It's not something that we backed away. Then you tell me that we are not consistent, and that's the point you should make. You should say you don't want utilization fees or deterrent fees in the hospital, but you want them in a personal care home, not deterrent because they're there to stay, but utilized, in fact, you are using the term "utilization." And then you could say the same thing about Pharmacare. There are certain programs that you're saying, such as - and that's the one that is covered by the federal act - you're talking about Medicare and you're talking about hospitalization, and that, hopefully, is a temporary condition. It's not long stay, and we are saying, okay, there we don't want to discourage the people, or deter them from getting care when they need it, right away. We don't want that so, therefore, there is not going to be any deterrent; and that is the doctrine of the ND Party.

I wasn't always of that opinion and, if you did your homework, you would find out statements that I made when I was the health critic for the Liberal party and so on. I think I understand now the difficulties, if you do that you are deterring - not you and I, not the members of this committee, it doesn't mean a bit of

difference to me, or very little difference if they're going to charge me \$5 per day the days I'm going to be in the hospital, if I'm going to pay more to go and see the doctor - but the people that can't afford it, the people who probably need the care immediately, they will be deterred, and that's the part that we don't like.

Now, at no time was it a policy that we said, here, there's no deterrent, we're paying the thing. It is co-insurance, or whatever you call it, the same as when we brought Pharmacare in. We said all right, we can't afford the whole thing. Sure, I guess maybe we'd love to, but we can't afford to pay the whole thing, but at least we'll give you a program that you're not going to lose your shirt. There's not going to be a catastrophe that you're going to lose everything to try to save a child or something like that. You pay the first \$50 or \$75, whatever, and then we will pay 80 percent. Well, you know, they're paying part of it, so I guess it's utilization fee, and nobody can say that we've changed our minds on that, and it was the same thing in the personal care homes.

And, as I say, but things have changed. It wasn't fair, and in those days there was the division from the Federal Government, there was some contribution on 50/50; it was cost-shared. And now you have a situation where even all your friends who you like to quote, but you don't quote them all the time, just when it suits you, tell me what they are saying about mental health and they want people out of institutions. Well, I'm giving them a boost. I'm saying, if you stay here you're going to pay, you're going to pay your share. So, therefore, that money we are using to help the people in the community to build more facilities, to build community residences and so on.

So that's what I say. It is perfectly consistent, and my honourable friend admits himself that it is not any broken policy, but he's saying that some of our supporters might not be happy. Well, that I recognize. If you want to go line by line you can put a caveat that you want to start your speech on every one: "Some people are not happy." On every one of the lines that we've gone so far, that's obvious.

So, Mr. Chairman, I don't think my friend is trying to get people to say that we're backing down, we're doing what the Conservatives are doing. I don't think it's the same thing at all. At least he's honest enough to admit it's not a new policy, but maybe some people will have the impression that we're backing down, some people are unfair. I would welcome an opportunity to go anywhere in Manitoba and defend this policy, and I think we'd probably win many more votes than we'd lose.

See how nice I am, I'm giving you the last five minutes to hit me.

MADAM CHAIRMAN, M. Phillips: The Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: I wouldn't dream of doing anything like that. Mr. Chairman, the Minister when he introduced this did refer to other provinces that already have this chart. It just so happens — (Interjection) — no, no. In your announcement of this you said you were just simply doing what other provinces do. That's why I tell you that now it's okay to mimic a Conservative province policy.

Madam Chairman, just before we finish this afternoon, I just want to reiterate to the Minister how good it is for him to be able to make these policy initiatives to bring in a new group of people, subject to per diems that weren't subject before, because in the good old days when the New Democrats were in opposition those initiatives, those moves were the subjects of marchers on the Legislature, and demonstrations on the front steps, and a number of the current crop of New Democratic MLAs were in the front ranks of the demonstrations from time to time. If this policy was brought in by a Conservative Government, the New Democratic Party would be organizing a demonstration on the front steps of the Legislature to protest it coming in. That we all know, and that's why I make the point that this Minister has to have been under a great deal of pressure from the activists in the party because they must surely view this as being a renunciation of every principle they stand for because, in the four years we were government, these sorts of policy directions were the subjects of demonstrations and marches on the Legislature.

How comfortable it must be for the Minister of Health to have these little slug fests with the activists in his party behind closed doors so that it's not in front of the media, so that there isn't a great growing public alarm about it, comfortable position for a New Democrat to be in. However, it doesn't lessen the fact that he's bringing in a new group of people subject to per diems, and the revenues derived from that, Madam Chairman, are not being redirected into the community delivery of mental health; 75 percent of it is, but the Minister has chosen to use the rest of the money. I don't know where in the department because Mental Health Directorate portion of it is there, but it's all within the \$1.45 million that he announced two nights ago, and it doesn't equate with the new revenue that he's getting out of the chronic care patients in Brandon and Selkirk.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister makes the point that he is certainly proud that he was able to convince his Minister of Finance to allow him to bring in a new fee schedule, a new series of charges to chronic care mental health patients, and retain the money. I wish the Minister of Highways had that same kind of strength in Cabinet because in the Highways Department it's user fee for the money to go elsewhere. At least the user fees the Minister of Health is collecting he's able to keep in the department.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The hour is now 4:30, I'm interrupting the proceedings for Private Members' Hour. The committee will return at 8:00 p.m. this evening.

IN SESSION

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time being 4:30, Private Members' Hour. The first item on the agenda for today is Second Readings of Public Bills.

The Government House Leader.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe if we could just wait momentarily, I believe the Member for River East, and perhaps the Member for Morris,

will be returning from the other committee, and they may be ready to proceed shortly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, regrettably the Member for Morris will not be returning, however, that may not curtail that discussion on that resolution.

SECOND READING - PUBLIC BILLS

BILL NO. 20 - AN ACT TO AMEND THE ENGINEERING PROFESSION ACT

MR. P. EYLER presented Bill No. 20, An Act to amend The Engineering Profession Act; Loi modifiant la loi sur les ingénieurs, for Second Reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River East.

MR. P. EYLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members will probably remember that this bill was first passed about two Sessions ago and, in the light of experience, the engineers would like a few minor modifications made to the bill which was first passed.

The basic provisions of this amendment will allow for an extra term for the people on the council who are elected and appointed to council, and this is to provide more continuity on the council through the years as new people come and others go.

As well, there is also a provision to add the past president to the council. The original bill did not have a past president and I guess now, after a couple of years, they have got their first past president. A past president added to the council will add to the continuity and provide a certain amount of counsel for the new president from the past president.

So the provisions are quite minor and not particularly complicated. It's, I think, something that most members will see fit to pass fairly readily onto committee stage.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Member for Swan River, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 30 - THE REGISTERED RESPIRATORY TECHNOLOGISTS ACT

MR. P. EYLER presented Bill No. 30, An Act to Amend the Registered Respiratory Technologists Act, for Second Reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River East.

MR. P. EYLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This, too, is a very minor bill. The sole intent of the bill is to change the name of the organization. At the Canadian level the respiratory technologists are referred to as respiratory therapists and, in order to bring provincial legislation into line with the federal body, it is simply proposed that wherever in the original act there are the words "respiratory technologist," that this be stricken out and "respiratory therapist" substituted.

There are also a few minor editorial amendments in this bill which are not of any substantive importance, minor word changes and references within the bill which correct the language and don't change the meaning of the bill at all.

But, as far as this particular bill goes, it's merely a name change amendment and does not have any legal implications for the professional status of the group concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for La Verendrye, that debate on this bill be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 3 - TELECOMMUNICATIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Proposed resolutions, Resolution No. 3, the Honourable Member for Morris has 15 minutes remaining.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, can we have this matter stand? I appreciate it will drop to the bottom of the list.

MR. SPEAKER: Resolutions cannot stand. If the honourable member is not present to speak to it, it then becomes available for debate by any other member.

The Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. S. ASHTON: Mr. Speaker, the resolution we are debating today, I think, it is very timely and is very appropriate. When we are debating it, I think, we should consider it, not just some academic exercise of debate, some political issue that one member has decided to put forward to us, I think we should consider it in the light of what it really relates to, Mr. Speaker; and that is, having a universal telephone system that is accessible to all Canadians, and particularly, all Manitobans. Because that is what the Member for River East, in his resolution today, is seeking to preserve, and that is what the application by CNCP to the CRTC threatens, a universal system of telephone service in Canada. How universal is that system, Mr. Speaker? Well present statistics show that here in Manitoba approximately 97 percent of households have telephones. That's a figure that you will find in every single province across this country.

Why do we have such a large percentage of households having telephones, Mr. Speaker? Well, it's

obvious why. A telephone is vital, not just as a form of communication on the social side, but it's vital in terms of emergency services for many people; it's vital in terms of having a life link to the world. We have that high percentage of telephone households because the rates are affordable. The basic rates, particularly in Manitoba, are affordable for everyone, Mr. Speaker, for the ordinary Manitoban. Whether they be low, middle or upper income, they can all afford telephones. That is being threatened, however, as I said, Mr. Speaker, by the CNCP application that we are debating indirectly today.

That CNCP application to the CRTC would establish CNCP in competition with Telecom Canada for long distance telephone calls. What it would do effectively, Mr. Speaker, is it would cream off much of the revenue the telephone companies, such as, MTS in Manitoba has at the present time and would, therefore, increase rates for ordinary Canadians.

How would that occur, Mr. Speaker? Well, it's very obvious to anybody who is aware of how any telephone system operates, how serious an impact that would have. Most telephone systems, Mr. Speaker, in Canada have followed the public policy of trying to keep basic telephone rates as low as possible, and they have been assisted in doing that by revenues from other sources, the prime source being long distance revenue. When that long distance revenue, Mr. Speaker, is threatened the cost to basic service increases.

We have in the United States an excellent case study of what can happen when you open the telephone system to the type of thing we are seeing being requested by CNCP today. That case study is in regard to what has happened to the telephone system since AT and T has been deregulated in the United States; what has happened since competition for long distance revenue has been allowed in that country. The impact has been this. There has been some decrease in long distance costs, Mr. Speaker, but the basic impact has been a dramatic increase in the cost to basic service.

There are many examples that you could quote, but it's clear in every single case that there has been a major increase in the cost of basic service. In Washington in the United States, it's increased by 56 percent; in Philadelphia and many other cities, by 45 percent, Mr. Speaker; in Nebraska, by 47 percent. In fact, across the United States, there has been a major jump in the cost of basic telephone service.

Now the question is, of course, would the approval by the CRTC of the CNCP application result in the same situation here, Mr. Speaker? I would submit that it would. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that it would have a greater impact on the Province of Manitoba than has taken place in many of the American jurisdictions and I'll explain my reasoning a bit later. It would definitely have a major impact on those costs.

Now the CNCP has, in a roundabout way, attempted to address some of the concerns that have been expressed in regard to the impact on basic service. But if you look through the applications, Mr. Speaker, and I do have several copies here of various documents related to the CNCP application, I think you'll find that while they talk in some sense of some compensation for local phone companies, that in actual fact there is very little compensation that would be available to those phone companies, and that they would suffer tremendously in terms of lost revenue.

They have talked about compensation based on, and I quote: "... forthcoming evidence." They have said, Mr. Speaker, that they would look at the cost of interconnections and look at some compensation in that regard for local telephone companies. But basically, nowhere in their application do they satisfy the concerns of local telephone companies about the potential for lost revenue.

The real question then, Mr. Speaker, perhaps that should be asked is, who will benefit from this? Well the fact is there will be some who will benefit, but the number who will benefit, Mr. Speaker, is small. The number who will lose, Mr. Speaker, is great. If you look at the balance between those that gain and those that lose, you will see just how wrong it would be for the CRTC to approve this application.

The basic benefit would be to individuals making a large number of interprovincial long-distance telephone calls, Mr. Speaker. But how many Manitobans make that many phone calls, Mr. Speaker, that they would benefit? Well according to MTS statistics, in any given month, the majority of Manitobans, 53.2 percent, make no interprovincial long-distance calls. And of the remaining amount, Mr. Speaker, 38.2 percent make less than \$25 a month in interprovincial calls. Only 10.6 percent make more than \$25 in interprovincial calls per month.

So out of the number of consumers that are in the province for telephones at the present time, a total of 404,973, I would submit that perhaps no more than 10 percent would benefit in any way, shape or form, that number being 42,990. On the converse side, close to 360,000 would pay the price in the form of increased basic costs of service.

Who would suffer the most, Mr. Speaker? Well for many people, perhaps paying more for basic telephone service would not be a major blow. They could absorb it within their budget. But for some, I would submit it would make the difference between having telephone service and not having telephone service. Who are we talking about, Mr. Speaker? We're talking about low income people; we're talking about pensioners; we're talking about people on all sorts of fixed incomes, all sorts of low incomes in our society.

I would quote, Mr. Speaker, some of the concerns expressed by the Manitoba Society of Seniors in regard to this matter, because they are clearly on record as being opposed to the CNCP application. They state, Mr. Speaker, that: "Experience has shown that where deregulation has occurred, costs have increased dramatically. Those who are now senior citizens remember too well the days when incomes were so small that extreme care had to be exercised in spending. Many still feel a little guilty about spending for other than necessities. We are deeply concerned that many seniors would be deprived of the contacts with their families and their peers which enable them to reside in their own homes, rather than in some expensive form of group home.

"In the small town where I live . . . "and this is John Rankin, Mr. Speaker, the President of the MSOS, "... over 34 percent of the town's citizens are 65 years or over. Eighty percent of these seniors live in their own homes. To many of them, adequate reasonable telephone service is a lifeline."

Those are the concerns of seniors, Mr. Speaker, and I think you can all see just what impact the loss of that

telephone service would potentially have on many seniors. In fact, it would not involve strictly a loss of service, either in terms of the social contact or in terms of the use of a telephone for emergency purposes, but as suggested by the President of the MSOS, in many cases it might lead some to consider not living on their own but moving into senior citizens' homes, not because they desire to do so, but because of the loss of contact they would face through the increase in telephone costs and their loss of telephone service.

There would be other impacts too, Mr. Speaker. Deregulation in the United States has been proven to greatly affect jobs in the industry. I know telephone operators are very concerned about the impact it could have on jobs in that particular sector, and I would consider that very unfortunate at a time when we're fighting desperately to decrease unemployment, that we would be faced with another potential source of lost jobs.

So that's what's at stake, Mr. Speaker. I think if you look at how serious the situation is, I would think this would be one resolution where all members of this House could come to agreement, Mr. Speaker, because it's not just the Member for River East or members on this side, members of the New Democratic Party that are saying they are concerned about this issue, Mr. Speaker, it's seniors; it's workers in the industry involved; it's a broad cross-section of Manitobans who are concerned about it.

As the Member for River East points out, there are many Conservatives in Saskatchewan now who have raised this particular issue. The Conservative Government of Saskatchewan is on record as being clearly opposed to this matter before the CRTC.

So in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, here is one golden opportunity in Private Members' Hour without partisan concerns to approve this resolution. I say that opportunity is there, and I reiterate it, because from what I heard from members opposite when they spoke on this issue last time, I am disappointed. I saw them have the opportunity to take the same approach taken by the Member for River East and by many other people in this province and in Saskatchewan and in other provinces across this country, but they didn't, Mr. Speaker.

Quite frankly, I'm not sure what approach they did take. The Member for Pembina when he spoke seemed to want to use this resolution as a vehicle for expressing some other concerns, for attacking the government, Mr. Speaker, and for confusing the matter rather than addressing it directly. I wouldn't necessarily say he was opposed to the resolution, but then again I wouldn't say he was in favour of it either. I think his whole contribution was, shall we say, confused, but I think that says something, Mr. Speaker.

I think it says something when the member who has had some involvement as a Cabinet Minister in a previous government for this particular area cannot get up and address this matter clearly. It says something about his approach, I think, and perhaps unfortunately about the approach of members opposite, and says something about the approach of members on this side.

If ever there was an issue that is of concern, Mr. Speaker, to ordinary Manitobans, this is it. The New Democratic Party has taken a clear position in support of ordinary Manitobans in their desire to maintain basic

telephone service, whereas members opposite, despite the grave risk, Mr. Speaker, of increased rates and loss of service, they fudged the issue. They used it for political purposes.

I think what is particularly surprising about this matter, is that their caucus, which does have a fair number of rural members, should be the first to recognize the severity of the problem we're facing, because rural customers would probably be the hardest hit. That's correct, Mr. Speaker, rural customers, because rural customers do not make a great number of interprovincial long-distance calls, they make intraprovincial long-distance calls. And if anybody thinks that this is going to help them in any way, shape or form, they're wrong. It's going to hurt the farmers; it's going to hurt the senior citizens in rural areas perhaps even greater than anywhere else. Because, Mr. Speaker, without the long-distance revenue from the present system, there won't be that revenue to support that service in the same way it is now. There won't be the revenue to support and prove service which is a desire in rural communities where in some cases, people are still faced with having to use party lines in this province at the present time. So they should be the first ones to get up.

I know, Mr. Speaker, when I stand up as a Northern member, I feel a double concern. I feel a concern about ordinary Manitobans in general, but I feel a particular concern about ordinary people in Northern Manitoba because they will pay the price if the CNCP application is approved, because, Mr. Speaker, that is the area where telephone service still needs to be expanded, where basic affordable telephone service is still being achieved in many communities. We're northerners, Mr. Speaker, who are used in many areas to paying more because they live in the North, do find this as one area where due to cross-subsidization they, too, can afford to have a telephone no matter what their income is.

So I am really surprised, Mr. Speaker, by the approach of members opposite, by the fact that they fudged this issue, and in some ways perhaps indicated that they are not concerned about it, or even perhaps that they may even support the CNCP application. I don't know why they are taking this stand, other than the fact I think they're out of touch with the concerns expressed in this particular case by many ordinary Manitobans. I suspect in the case of the Member for Pembina and others, that what is causing the difficulty is an attachment to ideology on their part. You know, they're party has talked in recent years, echoing the statements of the United States of the benefits of deregulation. I suspect they are caught in a trap on this one, Mr. Speaker.

I suspect in this particular case, the reason why they haven't come out clearly on record, it's been concern about this particular matter, that because what CNCP is talking about is essentially deregulation. This is the kind of thing that their ideological inspiration in the United States, Ronald Reagan, has been pushing for. — (Interjection) — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Lakeside I think acknowledges the respect with which members opposite hold that President of the United States.

But just look at what has happened. By that approach, that ideological approach to such an issue with telephone service, in many American communities

senior citizens, Mr. Speaker, and low-income people could no longer afford to have telephones. Is that a great thing, Mr. Speaker? Is that what deregulation means, Mr. Speaker? Is that the benefit they're looking for? Are they going to tell their constituents - and I refer directly to members such as the Member for Lakeside who has many senior citizens and small communities in his constituency - but in the pursuit of ideology, the ideology of deregulation in the pursuit of lowering costs for the 10 percent, Mr. Speaker, the big consumers of telephone service, that they're going to have to pay more, that in some cases they're not going to be able to have telephone service. Is that what they're saying, Mr. Speaker?

Well, I want to hear from them on this issue, and I hope they will state their views today. I hope they will clear that up. I hope they will disown that ideological approach of theirs, that they will disown the pursuit of deregulation, Mr. Speaker, at all costs and they will stand with the many ordinary Manitobans and the members on this side, the members of the New Democratic Party, who are concerned about telephone rates and the potential loss of telephone services.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege for me to rise after that enthusiastic speech by the Member for Thompson, and in addressing myself to this resolution on telecommunications, I remind honourable members of the House that with the measure of modesty that I can always put forward at the appropriate time that I speak also as a former Minister having had responsibility for the Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Speaker, I also speak for those wise fathers in whom this party has its roots and I suspect one could also say, certainly the Liberal Party has its roots, in other words, the old line free enterprise parties, as my ideological friend opposite would like to refer to us. They didn't have any particular set of ideology to guide them by when in 1934 they decided that a basic communication service like telephones in a province with the geographic problems that a province like Manitoba presents itself, it simply made common sense to create a Crown corporation known as Manitoba Telephone System and to provide that service and to continue to improve that service to all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

I remind you, this was well before even such momentous occasions and events in the Canadian scene as the Regina manifesto and the first roots of that gang over there got together in Regina and put together a manifesto that they still have trouble in veering off course.

I only simply say because the member has spent so much time worrying about the ideology on this side of the House, where the Manitoba Telephone System had its roots and foundations from, who created that Crown facility that has served Manitoba well all these years and I know will continue to serve Manitobans well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are very different than my friends opposite. The ideology that blinkers their vision doesn't

blinker our vision because, first and foremost, we want to see things work and we want these things to work in the interests of all Manitobans.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no hesitation on our part in having had a great deal more to do with the formation of the Manitoba Telephone System, its existence and its continuing existence than members opposite to from time to time look at the operation of that Crown corporation, of any other Crown corporation, and indeed of government itself and look at it as we are charged to look at it by our constituents from time to time, to make sure that it is working in the interests of all taxpayers, all ratepayers and all Manitobans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me put it very clearly on the record, that we and subsequent speakers, or speakers who proceeded me, like the Member for Pembina, were acting precisely in that concern when they spoke to this resolution on the first instance.

We will be supporting this resolution and that's for the Member for Thompson. He is momentarily distracted, but I just thought he ought to know that, that one should never jump to conclusions as to what action a particular group will take. I just indicated that we will be supporting this resolution, of that there is no question, Mr. Speaker.

But, having said that, let me put very clearly on the record, I think the mover of the resolution for having put this resolution forward because it does afford us to look at a problem that has some very serious ramifications and concerns for Manitobans and their alliance and their hope for affordable telephone rates in the future, because, Mr. Speaker, what would of course be worse is to have the worst of both worlds.

What happens, because technology is changing, if some of our major users, as the Member for Thompson read into the record, sure it's not the average Manitoban that is placing that heavy toll or heavy usage of long-distance telecommunications, we use them less seldom - usually for family reasons, sometimes for some business reasons - but it is your financial houses, your stock exchanges, your insurance companies, those companies that are very heavily involved in moving massive amounts of data through all corners of this continent and, indeed, the world; who are aware and who are being equipped to handle this data with all the modern technology, computer-aided services that the marketplace now brings forward. And, Mr. Speaker, by simply putting our blinkers on and not recognizing that fact, could well leave us with a situation where that very revenue that the Honourable Member for River East and the Member for Thompson wishes to protect and keep in Manitoba and keep in the Manitoba Telephone system, may not be there.

If we do not acknowledge what is happening in the technological world about how data and information services moved, you may well end up in a situation where that is moved by satellite to a station into the United States and distributed from there to the far corners of the world and this continent. Then we would have, Mr. Speaker, what I fear most, loss of the revenue, even worse perhaps loss of some the business and their employers and their taxes that centre in Winnipeg currently and make use of those kind of services, and how would the ordinary telephone user then find any measure of protection; how would the system then find the revenue to continue the cross-subsidization to provide us all with affordable telephones?

So, Mr. Speaker, I haven't the answers for this, I'm simply saying that merely closing our eyes to it and standing up and voting and saying, no, we're not going to talk, we're not going to have any discussion about this matter, may not solve the problem.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't that long ago and was at a time that I was responsible for telephones, that the issue of a satellite reception of TV signals first really became an major issue in the telecommunications industry. There were great pronouncements from Ottawa that said who could and who couldn't receive signals. And there was, of course, great temptation in the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadians to test that, and we had commercial organizations, such as hotels and beverage rooms setting up satellites on their roofs and picking up what was termed illegal signals.

Well, Mr. Speaker, speaking as a rural Manitoban, I recognize that I will never have the services of cable in my home at the farm, nor will 99 percent of other rural Manitobans who live in my situation, not in a community or town of 500 or more that can possibly be served by current cable companies.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I drive through my constituency, indeed as you drive throughout Manitoba, you see more and more of these dishes in farmers' backyards, and we are picking up our signals and we're enjoying the multi-choice of television viewing that that affords us to have in our homes. There's no talk anymore about pirating signals; there's no talk anymore about sending Ottawa bureaucrats out to spirit away these dishes overnight and charge us and put us in jail for that. No, it's simply acknowledging what technology's all about.

What I'm saying to the mover of this resolution and to the speaker who just spoke, that by just closing our eyes to it does not in any way guarantee that the Great West Life Insurance Company across the way from us, will continue to funnel all its long-distance telecommunications through MTS, not at all, or that Richardson and Son and the other financial houses, and the stock exchanges will do so. There's nothing preventing them from putting together a little consortium, shooting it up in a satellite, having Minneapolis pick it up and having them for them, or Denver.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's not ideologically be blind to what technology is all about. Let's walk a little cautiously and make sure that MTS is instructed. MTS is governed by the fact that, yes, we want that revenue, that commercial revenue, that information and data service revenue, that by the way is a very increasing business. Well, let's bring about a satisfactory conclusion to negotiations with the major users in this field so that we continue to enjoy the best of both worlds, provide the service that modern industry needs and continue to provide a base of the revenue that makes affordable telephone rates one of the advantages of living in this country.

Mr. Speaker, it's understandable that the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Manitoba takes the position that it does. I don't think that we have any choice in the matter and I'm certainly indicating to members opposite, the official opposition will be supporting this resolution for that reason. But I clearly put on the record, that we have a problem in this area and it needs to be addressed, because we cannot just simply assume that by simply

saying no to those who are seeking some means of reducing their communication costs.

Mr. Speaker, by and large, it's an accepted fact that if you're using something in very large quantity, you are putting less of a strain on this system, or at least you're contributing and there ought to be some discounting of rates, or some acknowledgement of that quantity. I'm sure that is the case. We do so in our own government services with the WATS line, with the 151 WATS line service that makes the telephone usage that we as members, and members of the Civil Service, the entire government operation, we get a massive subsidy as I understand by having that channel open to us for government use. I have no doubt the same applies to major industrial commercial users.

Mr. Speaker, what this resolution also does and that is of serious concern to members opposite, certainly was of concern to me in my tenure as Minister responsible for telephones, and I regard as one of my singular failures, as Minister of telephones, was that although I successfully piloted and got passed through this Chamber Bill No. 57, which spelled out a little more clearly the parameters of Manitoba Telephone System's activity with respect to people who are offering similar services in the private sector and how the two could interconnect and how the two could work towards a common goal in providing maximum services to Manitobans in a vast array, a whole new horizon of services now being offered through computer and telecommunications services, whether it's burglar systems, fire alarm systems, medic-aid, whether it's in the future shopping or banking.

Mr. Speaker, I had no objection, indeed it was under our administration that we allowed to complete a project commenced by the Schreyer administration, a very extensive experimental program carried on by the Manitoba Telephone systems referred to as the Ida program, where some \$5 million was spent to develop some of the technology for the new wired city.

But, Mr. Speaker, what was becoming also very clear was that Manitoba Telephone System all too often was prepared to use its favourite position, its monopoly position, in an unfair way to push the private sector aside and not allow them access to their equipment, not allow them the freedom to retail and sell their equipment in what you would call fair circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I had occasion to raise in this House a little while ago a situation that I personally am acquainted with respect to two firehalls that were built in my community, Fraserwood and Inwood. And Mr. Speaker, this is an example that I don't mind repeating and putting on the record as we will be dealing with Manitoba Telephone System in committee in short order and Manitoba Telephone System will be asked to provide us with what, in fact, is going on in these extra-curricular activities, if I can so call them, when they're out there selling computers, when they're selling mobile communication systems in competition with companies like Motorola and RCA. That's fair, if they're selling them on a fair basis but, Mr. Speaker, if, on the one hand, they are denying the competitors access to their system or, even worse, if they are heavily subsidizing these services in order to knock out the competition, then I ask my honourable friend, the Member for Thompson, where is the benefit to the average telephone user.

I want to know what cross-subsidization has taken place from the Manitoba Telephones experimentation in Ida, in their work in Saudi Arabia, in their work in selling computers, and in their competition with mobile communication devices with other private firms? Mr. Speaker, I fear that in fact the subsidization is the other way around, that they have contributed nothing to the affordable telephone rates in this province.

Then I ask myself, what is the Manitoba Telephone System doing in that business? The members opposite then should not allow their ideology to so blinker them, they should be the first to insist, get out of that business. If it's costing that senior citizen that the honourable member read a letter from an extra nickel or dime on his telephone bill so that Manitoba Telephone System can tinker around with and sell computers, and install mobile communications systems at no cost, no interest, in the firehalls of Inwood and Fraserwood just to knock out the competition, then I expect support from honourable members opposite to say, hey, Manitoba Telephone System you've got no business using your weight as a Crown corporation, and your advantage as a monopoly, in terms of the entire structure of the communications system in the province to push and bully and squeeze out enterprising Manitoba firms, Canadian firms who are also employers of people, who pay their taxes and who view that kind of action with understandable concern and outrage, when they themselves of course are part of the whole system that sustains, through telephone rates and through taxes, the Crown corporation in the first instance.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear. We will be supporting this resolution. We take advantage of the resolution to put on the record the concerns that I've mentioned, that it isn't simply a black and white situation of saying, no to those who are asking for this service. We had better instruct Manitoba Telephone System to do some hard negotiating and some hard consultation and co-operating to make sure that whole new industry that is developing in the province, the industry of moving information, data, is not lost to this province, and that we don't hamper our industries by putting them at a competitive disadvantage with similar agencies, financial houses in the east or in the States. We pride ourselves on the few head offices that we have here, let's keep them here.

So I just suggest to the Mover and to the members opposite that, while we support this resolution, there is a great deal of discussion that needs to take place that ensures that the system does indeed provide the kind of services that a modern age requires.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question?

The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, like my colleague, the Member for Lakeside, wish to take the opportunity and put a few concerns that I have with regard to the Manitoba Telephone System on the record. As my colleague from Lakeside has indicated, we are on this side going to support the resolution, but I have to say to members opposite, in doing that that does not mean that we do not have some concerns about the operations of MTS. I think, as the Member for Lakeside put it so aptly, the Member for Thompson

would have one believe, and if you had listened closely to his speech, it's almost like they invented and created MTS in the first place, and now it was us on this side who were now attacking the very fundamental principles and reasons for MTS being established. Well I think historically, Mr. Speaker, the record speaks for itself.

It has to be clearly understood, Mr. Speaker. I know that the New Democrats are looking for every issue they possibly can to try and find something that will give them at least a little bit of a leg up on dealing with people who they're trying to woo for the next election, but I have to tell the members opposite that the Member for Thompson's admonishment really was thin gruel. I think that I would like to today put a few things on the record which, I believe, Mr. Speaker, will give the people of Manitoba better service and also help keep the rates down.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. R. BANMAN: How, Mr. Speaker, do you explain to the people of La Broquerie, Manitoba who have been waiting for eight years to join the Steinbach Exchange, how do you explain to them that MTS is busier with sending people on an exchange program to Saudi Arabia? How do you explain to them, Mr. Speaker, that they're busy selling Commodore 64's?

There are, Mr. Speaker, a number of areas which are of concern to my constituency that have not been addressed over the last number of years. I suggest to you that a lot of the concern, and a lot of the problems are that MTS is too occupied in very many instances in trying to get into the retail business and trying to get into businesses which they should not be in. After all, they should be providing the best possible telephone service to the people of Manitoba at the lowest possible costs, and that's what my people want MTS to do.

I would say, that 99.9 percent of the people in my riding would want the Government of the Day and the Chairman of the Board, as well as the Board of Directors of MTS to know. We want the best possible service at the lowest possible price. They don't want them to sell Commodore 64's, or go around in competition with other companies installing equipment in competition with Motorola and all the private companies around here.

So I say to members opposite, and I'm getting a lot of flak from the Member for Wolseley in that. I'll tell the member, I would like her to get up and tell me that she wants MTS to sell Commodore 64's, because let me tell you the problems that you're facing with that. I had a constituent call me the other day who went to pay her telephone bill at the Steinbach office. The Telephone System has done a really good job in the last number of years of developing their business office where people can come in, pay their bills. They have a friendly counter service which a lot of people really like — (Interjection) — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm coming to that. What happened was, there were about 10 people in the office wanting to pay their telephone bills, and here somebody had bought a Commodore 64 and was complaining because it had a problem. So you had 10 people lined up in back waiting to pay their telephone

bill, and they couldn't. They waited for half-an-hour in line just to pay a simple telephone bill, because the employee was doing her job in trying to provide good customer relations with the individual that was complaining about the Commodore 64. So my constituents said, I thought this was a telephone system; what are we doing selling computers? This, Mr. Speaker, was an individual who is concerned about the direction we are taking.

So if members opposite say that the MTS should be in that type of business, please get up and tell us because I think that's all part of this debate.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, in the retail end of it I don't think they should be competing with anybody, all these small businesses who are struggling to make a living, trying to pay the Minister's payroll tax and all these other things. I think MTS has no business in selling computers and that type of thing. I think they should get out and I think the people of Manitoba and the ratepayers, or the users, would be much better off.

The Member for Lakeside dealt briefly with the change in technology and we are all, of course, concerned with any possibilities of new innovative technology reducing the revenue of MTS. I am always intrigued with the advancement in the technology in the field of telecommunications.

The other day I was on an airplane from Minneapolis to Los Angeles and they had introduced this new telephone service on the airplane. Some members opposite might have seen it too. They have now got a system whereby all you do is take out your Master card, or Visa, and you put it in the machine which is at the bulkhead of the airplane. You then pick up the telephone, which is like a remote telephone, and go back to your seat and for \$7.50 you have three minutes to dial anywhere in the United States. Mr. Speaker, it's truly an amazing thing.

The gentleman beside me used it and I was really amazed. It's \$7.50 if you're flying from New York to Los Angeles. It doesn't matter where you are; that's all the cost is. Of course, they are using one satellite and they are not going through AT and T or through Bell; they're not going through anybody. They're using their own little satellite, it's an experimental machine, which means that they are not using any highway, not the Manitoba MTS highway, nobody's.

Mr. Speaker, the initial response on this has been very positive. I was talking to one of the crew on this airplane and they feel - this is a one year experiment - that there is no question that the majority of aircrafts in the United States, as well as in Canada, in the future will have this type of a service because it is very reasonable and it does provide, I think especially on longer flights, the travelling business person with another way of conducting business in a much more efficient fashion.

So we are looking at technological changes and we cannot just sit here and say we want to not deal with all these outside external influences. We are not an island onto ourselves and we have to take that into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that in dealing with this issue, and I think a lot of members did receive petitions from local telephone operators from local unions with regard to this, and I have to tell members opposite, for years many of us were wondering why, when we

used the operator system - and I have to point out it just so happens when you are up at Flin Flon or you are up at Lynn Lake - you have newer systems in there than we have in Steinbach.

On a credit card call up at Lynn Lake, you dial the operator number, dial your number and the operator comes on and you give her your credit card number. In Steinbach we can't do that yet. This is Lynn Lake; this is the deprived North that the Member for Thompson would have us believe very often. Mr. Speaker, in Steinbach we still have to call the operator, give her the number and give us the credit card number because the system isn't as advanced as over there.

But I want to tell you, and I've told this to some of my local friends that work in the Telephone System as operators, I think what has happened is that with some of the rumblings that CN-CP were making this application, I think the Telephone System, through directives from senior management, the operators have become, I think, a lot more cordial. I think they have been given some more leeway. I think very often they had to follow some pretty strict guidelines. They were told by directive what they could say because they were not allowed to go ahead and make, I guess, gratuitous comments to the individual phoning.

Well, I have to tell members opposite, I understand that that directive has been changed and I think the telephone operators now, I know in the last six months, are much more friendly. They are allowed to now go ahead and be much more open and friendly with you when you are making a long distance call. I think, if nothing else, that has been a positive thing that has come out of this because there have been some

changes made which I think benefit the customer as a whole.

So, Mr. Speaker, that while the thrust of the resolution is acceptable to me, and I will be voting for it, let that not be misunderstood as a total vote of confidence for everything that MTS does. I think it is our job and it is our opportunity here, and this resolution affords us that opportunity, to put some of our concerns on the record.

The Member for Lakeside has indicated that we will take this one step further once MTS appears before committee. We want to know. The Member for Pembina has some very detailed questions with regard to MTX. We want to know what that is costing the ratepayers. After all, if MTX is losing \$2-3 million a year, that affects our rates. Who knows? The person on a fixed income or the person that's on pension that the Member for Thompson referred to might even have lower rates if we didn't have MTX. We might even be able to in Steinbach get the same equipment they have in Lynn Lake, and we might even get La Broquerie tied into the Steinbach exchange if we didn't have all these other things that are costing us so much money.

So, I say to members opposite that it is my feeling that MTS should go ahead and deal with its original mandate, and that is to provide service at cost.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. When this resolution is next before the House, the honourable member will have seven minutes remaining.

The time being 5:30 p.m., I'm leaving the Chair and the House will reconvene in committee this evening at 8:00 p.m.