



First Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARR, James	Crescentwood	Liberal
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 6, 1990

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement and I have copies for the House.

Mr. Speaker, one year ago today 14 women were murdered in Montreal in an act of violence that has shaken all of Canada. There were some who wanted to dismiss this act as the act of a madman, a random happening, that while it was a tragedy should not be interpreted as anything other than the act of one man. Then the discussion started.

The statistics, while they had always been there, took on new significance, started to be listened to and exposed in the media, the statistics that say 100 women are murdered every year in Canada by their partners, statistics that say one in every six women experience domestic violence, statistics that say one in four women experience some form of personal violence, half before they are 17, statistics that have us all saying, not in Canada, not in Manitoba, not on my street, but we are coming to realize that it is on our street, in our province and in our country. The new awareness and sensitivity to the issues of violence towards women has made what used to be a joking matter deadly serious.

In Manitoba, as a Government, we had already begun the long struggle to reverse the violence towards women that is so evident, but we know that this is a struggle that must take place in society itself. I know that every Member in this House shares my horror, dismay and sorrow when we hear the statistics, when we see the newspaper stories. I know that all our lives have been touched. I believe that our sensitivity has been heightened since those tragic events of December 6, one year ago. It is a terrible legacy for 14 young women's lives, but we are all beginning.

Today I was present for the dedication of the northwest corner of Memorial Boulevard as a site for

a future place of remembrance for the women of Manitoba who have died by domestic violence. It was a moving moment when the site was chosen last spring. Fourteen trees lined the boulevard that is to be a quiet place of contemplation. It seemed to be a symbol that this will be a safe place for women, for us all, when we need quiet times to reflect. On this site it is planned that a mound of earth with a granite wall arising out of it will be erected. This is a memorial to Manitoba women, but it symbolizes that any time a woman is murdered anywhere it affects us all.

One year ago today, 14 women may have been murdered in Montreal, but the violence that must be stopped is here every day.

Please rise and join me in a minute's silence as we remember the sisters, the daughters, the friends, the neighbours and the mothers who have been the victims of violence.

(A moment of silence was observed)

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): First I would like to commend the Government on their fast action on the initiative that the women of Manitoba brought forward after December 6 last year and their quick response in the December 6 memorial that we participated in this morning.

* (1335)

I would especially like to commend, as did the current Minister, the former Minister responsible for the Status of Women, Gerrie Hammond, for her work in this initiative. I know I speak on behalf of all of the women in Manitoba who are greatly appreciative of the work that has been done in this regard. I would also like to thank the Minister for, in her statement, sharing some of the statistics and putting on the record some of the statistics of domestic violence in our society today.

One year ago today, 14 young women lost their lives at the Ecole polytechnique in Montreal. They were not the victims of a natural catastrophe, an act of God or simply of the deranged act of a single man. As the Globe and Mail states today in its lead editorial, crazed as he may well have been, the killer

who carefully separated males from females before the shooting began, absorbed his attitudes from the society around him. Collectively, unconsciously and sometimes overtly, we have provided him with all the context, albeit wildly distorted, that he needed.

Today we also mourn and remember the 13 Manitoba women murdered this year as a result of domestic violence. I would like to read their names into the record if I may. Carole Watson, Teresa Lori Murdock, Stella Jaskiewicz, Gloria Hart, Shirley Ruth Andronowich, Brigitte Grenier, Isabella King, Monique Newman, Joyce Rae, Merle Ruby Owen, Martha Trout, Iris Muzylouski, Desiree Watson.

I call on everyone here today to dedicate themselves to an understanding that these acts of violence against women, whether they be against one woman or 14, are a violation of fundamental human rights and the law, and that these issues must be addressed by all of us.

The only way we will ensure that women of all ages and backgrounds—our mothers, our daughters, our sisters—can live their full lives free of fear, free of violence, and free to be whatever they choose is to work together. We must work here in the Legislature, in our workplaces and in our schools to change basic attitudes and values.

As a woman said in response to a vigil that was held the other day, "We will have really made progress when we cannot remember his name, but the names of the 14 women that he killed."

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, 14 young women thought they were safe, thought that somehow or other they had special treatment because they were able to go to university and into a faculty that was not traditional for women. Their parents and their society had said to them, yes, be what you want to be. Fly like an eagle, soar like an eagle, feel that you can be invincible. Someone said, no, I have a right to shoot you down. I have the right to perpetrate a violent act against you, and so 14 women are not with us today that should have been in the normal course of life.

When my daughter, Jennie, went to university this year, in September, she had an experience I thought was one like mine and like so many here. She sat in a room, and they said, look to your right, look to your left and look ahead. I thought the line she was going to then tell me is, you know, one of you will

not be here, one of you will not graduate, but that is not what they said.

They said one of you will be assaulted at this university, because that is the statistic, so do not walk in the dark. Do not cross the campus in the dark. Phone, and we will come and accompany you home if you must walk alone.

My daughter, Cathi, spent 12 hours twice a week on the phone last year at her university taking calls from young women who had experienced date rape. She would get three or four calls a night. These are the daughters of our society in which we said be strong, be free, do what you want to do.

* (1340)

I am proud today that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province is wearing a button which says "feminist," because I am a feminist. I am proud of it. I think all of us should be, because all it means is that we want for our female children the same opportunities as for our male children. We want them to be free to grow and to soar. We do not want them to be endangered, but we must internalize and say, what can I do as one person to stop the violence, to stop the violence in our society as a whole?

I would ask each Member of this House to do one simple thing, and that is to watch the violence of their own language. We are all guilty of it. We talk about whippings: "You got whipped today" or "I beat up on you today." We sometimes use a clenched fist or use the expression, "Want to do it outside?" or "Want to talk about it outside?"

Those are very violent words, unless we internalize our own reactions and say, I will not say those violent things, remembering that violent words can be listened to and can sometimes lead to violent acts.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I too have a statement to make to the House today.

Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of this Session, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor announced the Government's intention to establish a Manitoba constitutional task force to follow up the work of the Meech Lake Task Force and to provide advice on priorities for future constitutional negotiations.

After consultations with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), I sent a letter yesterday

to the chairperson of the task force, Professor Wally Fox-Decent, outlining the mandate we are asking the task force to follow. Copies of the mandate letter were distributed with the copies of this statement.

The mandate entrusted to the task force is an onerous one. It reflects the fact that Manitobans want to be well prepared for the difficult constitutional negotiations that lie ahead for our country and want to participate in the most constructive way possible.

The letter specifies that we are not looking to the task force to propose a series of specific constitutional amendments. Rather, we are asking the task force to assist the Government in establishing a positive agenda for constitutional reform.

After the events of last year, I know that many Manitobans and many Canadians would like to set aside constitutional debate for as long as possible. That option is simply not open to us. The Province of Quebec has embarked on a major reassessment of the constitutional changes and the kind of future it wants. The Belanger-Campeau Commission on the political and constitutional future of Quebec is to report by the end of March.

The federal Government has appointed a Citizens' Forum on Canada's future, the Spicer Commission, and has also announced a parallel review of the constitutional amending process. A number of other provinces have also initiated their own review processes.

* (1345)

In the circumstances, it is essential that Manitoba be ready and ready soon for a national debate that seems certain to be amongst the most critical in the history of our country. Manitobans have a proud tradition as nation builders. We are Canadians first and very proud of that fact. We want Canada to remain united and strong. We want every province to feel that its voice is being heard when national policies are being established. We want every province and every region to be treated fairly.

That is the kind of Canada I believe we all want to pass on to our children, but it is not the kind of Canada we have now. There have to be changes. There have to be reforms.

We are looking to the new task force to help us identify the kinds of reforms which will rebuild co-operation and trust and a sense of common purpose across this country.

As the mandate letter states, the new task force is a solid base on which to begin its work. That base is of course the report of its predecessor, the Meech Lake Task Force. That report was developed with more public input and openness than any other across the country in the last two years. As the mandate letter points out, that openness contributed to the public understanding of the issues and to the depth of the consensus that emerged.

I believe that Manitoba will be best served if the new constitutional task force approaches its duties in the same positive spirit as the Meech Lake Task Force and continues the same kind of open, consultative process.

The letter defines a broad and flexible mandate for the new task force, but also asks that the members direct much of their attention to reviewing and making recommendations in six major areas:

First: Senate reform, including the conclusion of the Meech Lake Task Force that Manitobans favour an elected, equal and effective Senate and its recommendation that Senate reform be given top priority in future constitutional discussions.

Second: The other conclusions and recommendations of the Meech Lake Task Force, including those on the Charter of Rights, aboriginal rights, the rights of women and the recognition of Canada's multicultural heritage.

Third: The amending formula and the amending process for constitutional reform, including the need for greater flexibility and greater public input.

Fourth: The division of powers between the federal and provincial Governments with the overall constitutional priorities for Manitoba, which are in the best interests of our province and the unity of Canada.

Finally: Constitutional reform proposals which may be put forward in other jurisdictions across the country.

We are asking the task force to give us a brief interim report by the end of March and a more detailed report or reports later in the new year. As with the Meech Lake Task Force, the new Manitoba Constitutional Task Force will have seven Members, three from the Government side and three from the Opposition, plus an independent Chair.

Government Members will be the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (Mr. McCrae), the

Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) and the Member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render). I believe the Leader of the Opposition will be naming two Members in the near future, while the Leader of the Second Opposition has advised that her Party will be represented on the task force by the Member for Crescentwood (Mr. Carr). As in the past, the Parties may name alternates as required.

I have asked the chair of the task force to call the Members together at the earliest opportunity with a view to beginning hearings after Christmas. Once the task force has held its initial procedural meetings, it will announce the dates, locations and other arrangements for the hearings.

I believe all Members will join me in wishing the task force well as they undertake the responsibilities we are entrusting to them. I am confident that that trust is well placed.

The work of the Meech Lake Task Force enabled our province to have a key leadership role in the last round of constitutional debates. Now it is even more essential that Manitoba continue to show positive leadership, that we continue to reach out to other provinces and regions, that we continue to show a willingness to respect the views and aspirations of other Canadians and, most important of all, that we continue to affirm our fundamental commitment to the future of a strong and united Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1350)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to rise on the occasion of the creation by the Premier of an all-Party committee dealing with the constitutional challenges we have before us.

I would like to say at the outset that we support the manner in which the Premier has established the task force in terms of it being all-Party, and we support the components that allow the greatest public input possible about their Constitution.

I want to say at the outset, Mr. Speaker, that we consider the unity of our country and the challenges for the unity of our country to be of the highest priority for our Party and for the people of our province, as the Premier has outlined.

We are concerned though about our country. We are concerned about the values that continue to be eroded in our country. We continue to be concerned about the priority of the recession and the economic

savagery that is on our communities across this country and the priority that should have in our Manitoba society and in this Legislature.

We are concerned that the very fabrics and values of our country on a daily basis are being eroded. We had yesterday the announcement of our public broadcasting corporation being decimated. That follows on announcements on transportation across the country, announcements of the whole status of rural Canada, the whole values of our country.

We see potentially a discussion on medicare today, Mr. Speaker, which again is one of the items and programs that binds our country together and makes us different from Americans—makes us Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say in all honesty that we will work together on an all-Party committee, but there are other priorities that must be addressed by this Legislature. We have proposed an all-Party committee on medicare. Why are we not having an all-Party committee on the thing that makes us so different from Americans?

We have proposed an all-Party committee dealing with our economy. Yet we are only going to have an all-Party committee dealing with the Constitution. We believe the values of this country and the values of Manitoba are paramount to start getting Canadians working together again in a unified way, Mr. Speaker, not just words on a document.

I want to comment on a few of the items in terms of reference. I participated in the task force report before and signed the document. The task force report does not say—and I have mentioned this to the Premier (Mr. Filmon)—that Manitobans are in favour of a Triple-E Senate. They were in favour of public hearings to deal with the whole issue of Senate, because there is a great deal of confusion of where the powers of a Senate will be and what that will mean for Manitobans.

Second, I want to emphasize that we consider the highest priority of constitutional reform to be our aboriginal people. We do not necessarily believe it is just a thought on a piece of paper. We think that aboriginal rights and aboriginal people should be the paramount consideration of all Canadians, because we all have failed, all Parties, all Governments have failed to deal with our constitutional obligations of Canada's first peoples, Mr. Speaker. I want to

mention that in terms of the recommendations made by the Premier.

I participated in the Meech Lake Task Force. I think the format of an all-Party system on the Constitution is a valuable one. I am very worried about what is going on with all these committees all across the country right now. We have two federal committees. We have committees in Quebec. We have committees in Alberta. We have a committee coming in, in Ontario, and we have a committee now in Manitoba.

Surely as Canadians from coast to coast to coast we have to start working on the fundamental values of our country so we can keep our country together. As a person who worked before on the last task force report, and as a person who was involved before listening to people, and tried to hammer together an all-Party consensus the last time we dealt with this issue, we will participate in an all-Party forum with the people of Manitoba. We look forward to those deliberations, although we are very worried that those deliberations will take place in the middle of a recession with the savagery that will inflict upon families in our province and in our country.

Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker.

* (1355)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this announcement today, because it is a further step in nation building, and we have seen far too much in terms of the destruction of our nation over the last few years.

I have great hopes for this particular task force because, as wonderful as the last task force was, and I think that those of us who sat on it realized that we were quite often reaching out and touching the heartbeat of Manitobans, we also felt a great deal of pressure because some of the decisions had been made by others.

We had limited input. We knew what Manitobans were saying, but we had to take our report to Canadians. We knew that there were Canadians who for one reason or another were not prepared to listen to us, were not prepared to address the serious questions that we were asking and stating through the report of that task force.

That is why it is so important that we do this task force now before any constitutional proposals are on the table, so that when those constitutional

proposals are ultimately put on the table, either through Quebec or through the federal Government or indeed through us, that we have done this through an active participation with the people of the Province of Manitoba and so that we will not be doing it after the fact; we will be doing it before the fact. That is why I feel some optimism with regard to this particular report, an optimism that I never felt totally with the others, because I knew within the framework that we were working.

I feel that the scope of the task force as outlined by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is broad enough to address many, many issues, not only those that were discussed in the last task force report, but new views that Canadians, in particular Manitobans, would like to put forward about this nation.

What kind of a nation do they want in the 21st Century? If we put that challenge to Manitobans, I think Manitobans will be very quick to come forward and tell us what their vision of Canada is. Then we can go, whether it is any one of us here or someone different from any of us gathered here, forward into the future with a Manitoba vision for Canada, because I think that Manitobans are, as the Premier said today, first and foremost Canadians.

As Manitobans, we do see Canada from a Manitoba perspective, and it is that Manitoba perspective we want to ably represent.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the gallery, where we have from the Neepawa Collegiate thirty-four Grade 11 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Wayne Hollier. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

Also this afternoon from the St. George School we have twenty-five Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Clint Harvey. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render).

From the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, we have seventeen Grades 7, 8 and 9 students. They are under the direction of Darlene Loewen. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Finance Ministers' Meeting Economic Discussions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

Again we had confirmation today that the items dealing with our economy and the recession will not even be discussed by the Finance Ministers' meeting in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, we have a recession that has been confirmed by a number of independent sources, including the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). We have high interest rates. We have a proposed tax that is going to increase inflation. We have a dollar that is unrealistic, and yet the Ministers of Finance are not even going to deal with the issues that people are talking about in their community halls, in their coffee shops, and they are scared about it. They are very scared about it.

My question to the Premier is: Will he have his Minister of Finance, as chair of that meeting, start to deal with the real issues facing Manitobans and Canadians at that Finance Ministers' meeting? We have no leadership from the Prime Minister. Can we get a little leadership from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) today at the meeting in Winnipeg?

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I think we might first ask for some consistency by the Leader of the Opposition. For two straight weeks that side of the House has assaulted the Minister of Finance with questions and demands that the future of medicare be the issue that be decided upon and worked on by the Finance Ministers—day after day after day the lead-off, opening questions from that side of the House. Now, when that is the prime issue that has been set aside, that has been identified, that has been prioritized by the Finance Minister, he is saying no, they should not talk about that, they should talk about the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Leader of the Opposition ought to be ashamed of himself, because he does not know where he is going. He is all over the map.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, if the Premier would read the record, he will find on the Friday we asked about the GST, the high interest rates and the dollar, and

on the Monday we asked about medicare—just to be totally consistent and look at the facts.

Health Care System Government Action

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the Premier. The Government of Manitoba is playing all sides against the middle on medicare. They are supporting Alberta. They are supporting British Columbia. They say they are dealing with all options. Yesterday we had a statement on medicare from the New Democratic Minister of Finance from Ontario, who said, I will lead the charge against these proposals from the western provinces.

Will the Premier of Manitoba join with the Government of Ontario in opposing the disentanglement and the disenfranchisement of Canadians from their medicare program, rather than playing all sides against the middle with the other western Premiers in Alberta and British Columbia?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the only thing consistent about the Leader of the Opposition is his inconsistency. Day after day after day we have an inconsistent approach.

I would invite the Leader of the Opposition to read that article in which Floyd Laughren, the Minister of Finance for Ontario, is quoted, because in exactly the same article, our Minister of Finance is saying that he too is opposed to the British Columbia position on it.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Minister did not tell us what he was in favour of, a question we have been asking for weeks in this House. We know where the Minister of Finance from Ontario is at. We know where the Minister of B.C. is at. There used to be an old saying that Vander Zalm used to come to these meetings to explain the hard parts to Don Getty. What does that mean about Manitoba now in terms of medicare?

Government Position

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier.

We have statements from his Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) dealing with user fees in the Brandon Sun. I have read articles too. Can the Premier please tell us what he is in favour of rather than letting us guess continually day after day as

Manitobans have had to do over the last two weeks with his Government?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we have Question Period so I can explain the hard parts to the Member for Concordia.

On the record, over the past 10 days, despite the fact that the Leader of the Opposition has put plugs in his ears, I have stated that this administration is totally and completely opposed to user fees in medicare—period, paragraph.

On the record we have said that our objective is to insist that Ottawa, no matter who is in Government, whether it be a Liberal Government or a Conservative Government or a New Democratic Government, that whoever is in Government, Mr. Speaker, that they live up to their obligations to fund medicare so that we in the provinces can deliver the highest —(interjection)— We have indicated, I have indicated that the objective is to ensure that there are no further reductions in EPF transfers to Ottawa so that we can ensure that the highest standards of health care are able to be applied in this and every other province in this country.

That is what has brought this whole discussion to the forefront, Mr. Speaker, so that there is something that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) can wonder about.

Abuse Against Women Education Programs

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education.

A recent study done by the Canadian Teachers' Federation of 1,000 teenage women across Canada found that many of them were frightened to be alone with boys. "I personally know when to say no, but you could still get raped," said one young ninth-grader.

What programs are being developed and put into place in Manitoba grade schools, junior highs and high schools to reinforce the fact that date rape is a serious crime and that "no" means "no"?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate to the Member opposite that just recently we announced the new family life program for schools in Manitoba. Indeed in our family life program, which is part of the health program, there is a section which

deals with those kinds of situations and those kinds of matters.

The program is a new one. It has been revised from the program that was established two or three years ago, and I would be happy to share copies of the program with the Member for her own information.

Protection - Universities

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also to the Minister of Education.

What plans does the Minister have for combatting the series of incidents at both the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg recently, the latest of which was a smearing of a poster advertising the University of Manitoba vigil for the December 6 massacre? What assurances can the Minister give women on these campuses that they will be fully protected?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the Member well knows the university campuses are indeed the jurisdiction of each of the universities. Universities operate as autonomous institutions in this province. There is no way that I, as a Minister, would try to attempt to implement special programs at the university campus.

This is a matter of course that has been discussed very seriously by the university community, and indeed I think they have taken some positive steps in the past to try and ensure that women in our universities and in our schools feel that these institutions are safe places to be at in this province.

The Member raises a very valid concern that is out there. I think our universities are trying to do what they can at this time to ensure that these places are safe places for women to become educated in.

Firearms Legislation Government Support

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, my final question is to the Minister of Justice.

It appears that the federal Minister of Justice, Kim Campbell, has shelved her proposed gun control legislation which would have prevented the purchase of weapons such as the one used by Marc Lepine a year ago.

Has the Minister of Justice communicated this province's complete support of this legislation and our deep concern over the delay in bringing it forward to Parliament?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We have made known our support of that legislation, and with regard to any undue delays we would be registering our concern.

CBC Cutbacks Government Reaction

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we had confirmed what we had heard in earlier reports, that major cuts will be made to the CBC.

All of us recognize that in recessionary times tough choices have to be made. However, in this case a deliberate decision was made not to have an across-the-board cut, but to slash and therefore destroy the lifeblood of regional services across the country. All regional programming other than local news in the Province of Manitoba has been canceled.

Can the First Minister tell this House what official reaction his Government has taken with respect to the further disentanglement, if you will, of Canada?

* (1410)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, like all of those who work with and recognize the value of the CBC here in Manitoba, I was concerned about the reductions that took place, in particular those that will mean that various regional programs will be slashed and will be eliminated. That obviously is a matter that we have great concern about.

We also have concerns about the announcements taking place just prior to Christmas. I suppose there is never any good time, but this is a particularly bad time for people to learn about loss of employment and so on. Under those circumstances we I suppose are yet to be convinced of the method in which these were planned for, and we have to examine in detail what that means.

I guess we can take some comfort in the fact that many areas suffered much greater cuts, particularly Alberta, particularly other regions of the country, the Maritimes and so on. The cuts are never palatable.

I guess the bottom line that all of us have to ask ourselves in the face of recessionary times is, how can we justify seeing consolidations,

amalgamations and reductions being made throughout the private sector in the broadcast industry and not have any of it affect the public sector broadcasting? It is a difficult one. I know that these are the difficult choices that we face in this province as we look at how much money we have to support Government supported activities.

Mrs. Carstairs: Our concern is not that there have been cuts, but the type of cuts that they have taken, specifically to regional programming. Canadians need to learn more about themselves, and Manitobans have to be able to express themselves through our so-called national broadcasting system.

Can the First Minister tell the House if he will make representations to the CBC and to the Government of Canada about the nature of the cuts and the resultant inability of Manitobans to represent themselves to the Canadian people?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I guess I would have to know a great deal more about what the alternatives are. I would have to know where the money can otherwise be saved. I would have to make the kind of judgment that we make when we sit at the Cabinet table, when we sit at the Treasury Board table.

When we look at the expenditure of some \$900 million annually on the public broadcasting corporation and the fact that we are currently arguing for more money to be made available for health care, for EPF transfers and all of those things, I would have to say to myself, what are the alternatives that we have to face and, within the corporation itself, what are the other areas that could be cut in place of the regional cuts? If the Member opposite has some suggestions that she wants to make, I guess she can share them with me.

CBC Cutbacks Alternative Employment

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have just a very brief suggestion. Quite frankly, when we went through Meech Lake, we watched these national reporters coming out in droves to cover events that quite frankly could have been covered very easily by the local reporters and then maybe our true position could have been represented in Ottawa and Toronto.

My final question is to the Minister of Culture. CBC Manitoba has always been both a training ground for new talent as well as a place for more mature

talent to obtain work on a freelance or contract basis.

What alternatives is her department now looking to so that these young people can remain in our province to obtain their training and more senior artistic talents can find alternative work?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not think there are any of us here who are pleased whenever cuts are made by other levels of Government or any decisions are made to try to prioritize what is happening throughout our country, throughout our province. I do know that every new program that we look at as a Government has to be looked at in conjunction with 50 other programs I might say that are all good programs.

We have to prioritize what we do in the Province of Manitoba. I know that our Government has prioritized health care, education, family services, and I cannot indicate today that there is going to be any increase in expenditure on areas that the Member has indicated.

Mental Health Centres Patient Abuse Advocate

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, today and every day we should be working to end violence against women.

I want to ask the Minister of Health some questions flowing out of the allegations of sexual abuse at the Eden Mental Health Centre in Winkler. I realize he has asked for a report on the allegations and that the Ombudsman is investigating.

I would like to ask the Minister if he will address this matter on a broader basis and have the Government show it is willing to assist in the healing of those who are or have been victims of some form of abuse. Specifically, would the Minister consider establishing a small, perhaps three-member independent commission to hear the stories of mental health patients who have suffered some form of abuse, to make referrals, counselling and therapy services if that is their wish and to advise such victims of their legal rights and the chance of seeking justice?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the issue of the unfortunate abuse of patient rights, really, that was identified and actioned at Eden Mental Health Centre is one which the centre itself has attempted to, through offering those

very services that my honourable friend refers to, provide that kind of support and counselling to the individual who made the original allegation.

In terms of the larger issue of the extent to which those unfortunate circumstances may have happened, of course, it is very much the mandate that the Ombudsman will investigate and report to us.

Mr. Speaker, I can only say to my honourable friend that those kinds of counselling services are available at the institution mentioned, as well as throughout the department and professionally through a number of institutions in the province, and are there very openly and I hope accessed completely by individuals.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, yes, I realize that is the fact, and I appreciate the fact that the Minister will take my suggestion seriously sometime in the future for a healing process for the victims of sexual abuse.

Would the Minister also consider implementing something along the lines of the Ontario model of appointing advocates who are independent of the hospitals and the boards to defend and advise patients of their rights and also develop a set of guidelines on patient abuse?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, to a substantial degree the current Mental Health Act provides a very much open forum of identification of patient rights and their abilities to seek a second opinion in terms of treatment and involuntary admission and other processes involved in The Mental Health Act.

I am hopeful that early in the new Session that we will have further strengthening of those initiatives through amendments which will clarify and make, I think, better the current circumstances which deal with the patient rights in institutions.

Patient Abuse Reporting Guidelines

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Minister would give some consideration to a development of an across-the-board protocol for all facilities in the Province of Manitoba so that there is a set of procedures that a hospital or a facility must follow when allegations of abuse are made.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I will take my honourable friend's suggestion, and I will make inquiries as to what each

institution does. Out of knowledge of the institutional management and their approach to patient care, I think that you will find that there is substantial consistency between the institutions in terms of how they approach allegations of patient abuse, et cetera, by employees of institutions. I will attempt to verify the consistency that exists between institutions presently.

* (1420)

Bill 24 Consultations

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, my first question is for the Premier.

The current Environment Act was developed through consultation with the public. In accordance with the Act, amendments are also to be developed by consulting and through consultation with the public and environmentalists.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to attend a press conference where nine groups are asking for a meeting with the Premier to discuss the current amendment before the House.

My question for the Premier is: When will the Premier meet with these environment groups regarding Bill 24?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for Radlsson for the question. I point out to her that this is not an extensive Bill. It is a page and a half, a handful of clauses. It is enabling legislation that is the product of extensive public negotiations and consultations amongst 10 provinces and the federal Government—all different political Parties represented at the table. It enables the passage of regulations that have already been out for public consultation throughout the province in a variety of different areas.

Mr. Speaker, under those circumstances, we are dealing with legislation that is to provide for a harmonized process to the highest standards between interjurisdictions and to the most restrictive process. The objective is to be able to make legislation of various jurisdictions work and work effectively to protect the environment. In no way is the objective to in any way diminish either process or standards. I believe under those circumstances that all Manitobans should welcome that.

Bill 24

Federal Responsibility

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

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): My first supplementary is for the Minister of Environment, who will know that although the Bill is short it has far-reaching implications.

I want to ask the Minister: Why is the province rushing to take away environmental responsibility from the federal Government as this paper recommends, which was developed by the Environment Ministers from all the provinces? Why are they wanting to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I want to correct any implication that would indicate that we are trying to take away responsibility. In fact the thrust of the amendments that we have under Bill 24 is to repeat Justice Muldoon's admonishment that we embrace warmly the concerns and the issues that are raised in the federal interim guidelines. The fact is, we want to be able to make our system work so it can accommodate the federal process.

The larger issue of what is in front of the committee in the House of Commons is of harmonization that has been endorsed by all political stripes across this country. Mr. Speaker, the intent is to make sure that we do the best job we can of protecting the environment.

Wording

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

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Can I address the question to the Minister of Environment? If this Government is so interested in having the highest standard attained when assessing the environment, why is that not stated in the Bill specifically?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that the Bill is worded the way it is is that in striking an agreement with the federal Government, it is very obvious that the standards that are the highest in either our Act or their Act will have to be achieved or an agreement will not be struck. The simple fact is that there are some almost 50 joint processes going on across the

country today, and we want to make abundantly sure that there is no question within this province that we have the capability to enter into a joint process and do that to the highest possible standards.

Firearms Control Purchase Restrictions

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

This being the first anniversary of the Montreal massacre, I believe it is appropriate to yet again raise the question of gun control, which has already been referenced by the Member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) today.

Ironically, as she has pointed out, we have now learned that the federal Minister of Justice is letting the gun control legislation presently before the House of Commons die on the Order Paper. This is indeed regrettable. It is unacceptable to Manitobans, and I know it is unacceptable to this Minister.

My question for the Minister is: In the absence of federal action, can he indicate whether or not he is willing to move to require the vendors of firearms in this province to require at least two pieces of identification to correct the problem that exists, which is that those who qualify to own the gun are not necessarily the people who get to purchase it?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The Honourable Member's question is well taken, Mr. Speaker. The problem that seems to arise though on occasion is that guns used to commit criminal acts are very often acquired by virtue of a criminal act. -(interjection)- The Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) says not always. Of course, he is correct. It is interesting how two Members can somehow get in on the same question.

In any event, our Government will continue to do all in its power to make Manitoba a safe environment for women, for families. We indeed expect to be hearing from Dorothy Pedlar with respect to gun control, which was part of her mandate for her review.

Mr. Edwards: I did put that suggestion forward at least a year and a half ago. I would like the Minister to consider it, because I think he does have jurisdiction to do that.

Family Violence

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Can the Minister indicate whether or not he has taken action as he promised some months ago to ensure that the various agencies that may become aware of a domestic violent situation or a potentially violent situation inform police, who can then act to remove firearms from homes where it is felt that they may be used in a violent way, remove them for the time that is necessary?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Both the Department of Family Services and the Department of Justice have taken very close note of the findings of Judge Norton with respect to the Reid inquest, which touches on the matters the Honourable Member is talking about. The Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), I think may be able to answer better for the Department of Family Services, but certainly communications among agencies, the Reid case I believe does point out that there is room for improvement in those communications.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Program Implementation

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

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Finally, for the same Minister, will the Minister consider amending The Criminal Injuries Compensation Act in this province to provide for damages for pain and suffering? Those damages are presently available in eight other provinces and one of the territories; yet regrettably, they are not available in Manitoba.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I appreciate the Honourable Member's suggestion, Mr. Speaker.

GATT Negotiations Government Position

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, farmers throughout Canada are suffering because of low grain prices resulting from the international trade wars. We are all waiting for the results of the GATT talks, but it appears that the talks are on the verge of collapse.

My question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). What is the position of the Government if the agricultural issue is not adequately addressed? Is the

Government recommending to the federal Minister of Agriculture that the Canadian delegation walk away from the tables, or is there an alternate suggestion?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member's question is hypothetical. I would ask the Honourable Member to kindly rephrase her question, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the Premier tell this House if he has a guarantee from his Tory counterparts in Ottawa that farmers will get a deficiency payment this spring, a payment that is so desperately needed, if the talks fall through?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that is highly hypothetical.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Swan River has the floor, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the Government tell us what its policy is if the GATT talks are not successful?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Swan River, kindly put your question, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us what this Government's policy is on GATT and the agricultural issues?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, we have strong representation in Brussels. I, as the Member knows, led a delegation including the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) in late September to the GATT in Geneva, because we were concerned about the outcome for farmers, concerned about the major challenge that faces farmers and concerned about the necessity of removing export subsidies on grain.

We led that delegation. We went and spoke with people from the GATT, from the EC, from all of the various Cairns Group of countries, the United States and all of these people, to ensure that Canada's position was strongly and forcefully put forward, that we must have a major reduction of export subsidies on grain to prevent future grain wars, prevent our western Canadian farmers from losing their livelihood.

That is why the two Ministers are there. That is why we are very forcefully pursuing that issue on behalf of western Canadian farmers, Mr. Speaker.

* (1430)

Agricultural Assistance Deficiency Payments

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Can the Premier tell this House if he has a guarantee from his counterparts in Ottawa that farmers will get a deficiency payment this spring, a payment that is desperately needed seeing the crisis that the farmers are in?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, again we are on the record way back to September, perhaps it was August, that I wrote to the Prime Minister and said that even with the GATT talks, regardless of their outcome we were going to need a deficiency payment for farmers based on the low prices of grain this year.

I issued a news release, either late August or early September. In fact I issued it when I was in Swan River, so the Member may well have a copy that she could see that for months and months and months that has been the position of this Government. Perhaps she is reading my old press release to get her question, Mr. Speaker.

Land Lease Program

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Given that farmers are having difficulty maintaining their land base, is this Government willing to implement a long-term land lease program, which has been recommended by the United Church and many other groups who consider this to be a very important thing for farmers?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that the Member for Swan River speaks for the majority of farmers. They do not want to be tenants in their own province. They do not want to be tenant farmers. They want the opportunity to own their land and to have a reasonable income on that land. They need that in order to have their dignity, in order to have their ability to -(interjection)- well, Mr. Speaker, if they are speaking for a groundswell of people, if the NDP want to turn everyone into tenants on their own land, I do not accept that whatsoever.

Social Assistance SAFFR/SAFER Benefits

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, this honourable minister has a question for the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

Today several Cabinet Ministers and Opposition Members met with a delegation from the United Church of Canada advocating not for themselves but on urban issues for the poor and marginalized.

The Minister knows that existing social assistance rates, especially rental allowances, are totally inadequate to allow any choice in the housing market, forcing frequent moves and use of food bank outlets.

Therefore could the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) make a change in existing policy and permit social assistance recipients and the elderly to qualify for and receive without penalty SAFFR and SAFER benefits in order to improve the quality of housing they can afford?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, first of all it was the Housing Minister that discussed the SAFFR and SAFER issue with the delegation, and I must mention that it was a very, very good meeting. This Government was congratulated on finally bringing forward good legislation on The Residential Tenancies Act, long awaited for many years.

However, it was explained to the group that the original SAFFR and SAFER proposal set up by the former Lyon administration was principally to deal with the low earners and the pensioners, not the welfare. There was discussed at the meeting the court issue that is going on at the present time, Mr. Speaker.

Housing Advocacy Group

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Would the Minister of Housing establish an advocacy office for tenants, since many low-income tenants will not approach the Rentalsman's Office and to prevent abuses by some landlords who unscrupulously exploit tenants?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, it was also discussed with the group that under our legislation there will be an advisory committee established. There will be an education fund established. Maybe under that educational

funding that will be established through our Bill, some type of advocacy group would be established under the education funding.

Central Housing Registry

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

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Would the Minister of Housing agree to use the education fund to establish a central housing registry which would allow tenants access to information on landlords, such as the existence of health and by-law infractions so that tenants can make choices and not be forced into substandard housing?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, first of all I also explained to the group that made representation that it is this Government that established the first registry, and that was with the Natives, through the core area grant in the past year, and also established a form of registry for the disabled. It is an experimental program.

We did talk in regard to a registry. This would be a result of the educational fund. It was considered and discussed at that particular meeting.

St. Boniface Hospital Obstetrical Unit Closure

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

This Minister has failed to solve the issue of the obstetrical unit at St. Boniface Hospital, which has caused significant pain and distress to pregnant women and the staff.

The unit has been closed more than 40 times since he took over as the Minister of Health. For the last three months the unit has been closed more than 665 hours for low risk.

Can the Minister of Health tell us why he has failed to solve this very important issue?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as my honourable friend well knows, and it was indicated to him in Estimates last week, the issue of obstetrics and the capacity for obstetrics amongst our urban hospitals is the subject of a task force of the Health Advisory Network, the report of which we are expecting in the near future. I give him the agenda and the timing of the receipt of that report.

I will, as I did with the extended treatment bed review, be prepared to consider the advice of that report and make decisions in very quick order.

Obstetrical Unit Expansion

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, this issue has been raised on September 9, December 17, 1988, and September 27, 1989. This unit is being closed more than once every week.

Can the Minister tell this House when finally he will expand the obstetrical unit at St. Boniface Hospital and when he will finally organize the obstetrical services in the Winnipeg hospitals.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, this is sort of the *deja vu* scenario again with the—is it *deja vu*? How do you say that? I am sorry. I do not have, you know, sort of the experience that Members of the New Democratic Party have in *deja vu*.

This is exactly the position my honourable friend and his Leader took in January of this year where they urge the acceptance of an extended treatment bed recommendation that was incomplete and would have left Concordia Hospital, the whole northeast quadrant of the city unserved by that report.

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to repeat and take that bad advice again from my honourable friends in the Liberal Party. I am going to wait for the advice to come from the task force studying the issue with expert input from hospitals and professionals, and I will thank my honourable friend for his endorsement of the results and recommendations I will make pending receipt of that report.

Obstetrical Transfers

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, while this Minister is waiting, patients are being transferred.

Can he tell us how much it is costing the taxpayers by his management, because patients are being transferred from the St. Boniface Hospital to the Misericordia or the Victoria hospitals once at least every week? Can he justify rather than his making fun of a very important issue?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there are patients being transferred from Misericordia, from Victoria. I think what my honourable friend meant to say is that

when the St. Boniface unit is at capacity, which has happened a number of times over the last three to four years, that those patients then go to Victoria Hospital or Misericordia Hospital and from time to time Health Sciences Centre to be admitted and to have delivery of their babies.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the quandary that Government is in and has asked for expert advice on. We have one hospital at capacity, an unused capacity, within 15 minutes of that hospital in the City of Winnipeg. My honourable friend is urging capital investment to expand in one area when we have unused capacity in other hospitals to be utilized.

Now I am seeking advice from the community, the hospitals to make reasoned decisions on what Government ought to do to approach this long-standing problem. Mr. Speaker, I think the system will be well served by decisions—

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I ask the indulgence of the House for one minute while our Deputy House Leader is completing arrangements that we will be recording.

Hon. James Downey (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before entering into the Supply motion, which we are intending to do, I would ask if you would canvass Members if we would have leave to waive private Members' hour this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to waive private Members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, as I thought they would be in the Christmas spirit and want to be in the mood of giving. It is unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you would canvass the House to see if it would be in agreement to sit this evening from either eight until 12, or seven to 11.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to sit between the hours of eight and midnight?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied for that. Is there unanimous consent to sit between the hours of seven and 11?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied for that.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, so far I am not batting very well. I will try the next one. -(interjection)- Well, this is what Clayton had asked me to ask for.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Acting Government House Leader, what are your intentions, sir?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding then that we would provide the Minister of Environment's (Mr. Cummings) Estimates in the House and proceed to do Family Services in committee room. Having the completion of either, we would proceed to do the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to do Environment within the Chamber, Family Services in Room 255, and if that is completed, to do Health? Agreed.

* (1450)

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Family Services, and the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Environment.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY—FAMILY SERVICES

Mr. Deputy Chairman (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. The Committee of Supply, please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering the item 6.(b) Child Day Care: (1)

Salaries \$1,679,800 on page 64 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass? The Honourable Minister, you had some opening comments and answers to some of the questions?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have a couple of items to deal with. When we were reviewing Family Services Information Systems branch, the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) requested that I provide him with copies of input documents for the various information systems of this department. I can now provide the two Opposition Critics with a set of input forms for the department's information systems. This information constitutes a rather extensive package of forms and is preceded by a summary which lists each of the systems and the related input form titles contained in the package.

The second item I have, the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) requested clarification regarding the availability of federal cost sharing under the Canada Assistance Plan for per diem payments to St. Amant on behalf of persons 18 to 21 years of age. I am advised that the Canada Assistance Plan will provide full cost sharing for payments to institutions like St. Amant up to age 21, provided these residents are legally defined as children under provincial legislation.

Under Manitoba's Child and Family Services Act, however, legal guardianship and voluntary placement agreements for children automatically expire when the age of majority, 18 years of age, is attained. With the written approval of the director of Child and Family Services, child welfare agencies can continue to provide transitional services for former wards up to age 21. However, under the Act, these services are technically provided to adults, not to children.

In the case of St. Amant, legal guardianships and voluntary placement agreements expire under The Child and Family Services Act when residents turn 18, at which time an order of supervision may be obtained under Part 2 of The Mental Health Act. Because 18-year-old St. Amant residents are no longer defined as children under provincial legislation, Canada Assistance Plan cost sharing is limited to the OAS/GIS maximum. This limitation is based on the assumption that institutional costs for adults above the OAS/GIS maximum are already being cost shared under the EPF arrangement.

In answer to the Member's question, in order to obtain full CAP cost sharing at St. Amant, provincial legislation would have to be amended to allow for the formal extension of legal guardianship or voluntary placement agreements for children to age 21. Legislative amendments to this effect are not being contemplated at this time. That is it.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): In the interests of expediting the Estimates process so that other important departments can have adequate time for their Estimates to be undertaken, I am going to ask very few questions in the department of Day Care, not that I do not think that it is an important division in this department, but I just have a few questions. Then we will look forward to additional meetings with the Minister and the staff on any other questions I might have.

I am wondering if the Minister can provide us either now or later with a copy of wait lists for day cares. I understand that there are day cares that have made application to be part of the process, but have not yet come on stream.

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have the information here. It is quite extensive, involving 10 or 12 pages, and we would be quite prepared to forward that to you.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, and I would be quite prepared to wait for that to be forwarded to me. As well, could you include, or do you have available, the criteria for funding that you look at when assessing the appropriateness of these day cares for funding?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Decisions with respect to new, provincially funded day care spaces are made by the Minister of Family Services following the finalization of the department's budget for child day care services each year. During the annual budget approval process, a specific number of new day care spaces are identified for development within the budgetary allocation. The budget may specify approval for certain types of day care spaces or the geographic location.

The decision as to which group or type of day care will be allocated spaces considers the following factors with there being no specific formula or weighting of any one area: (1) Government priorities for day care development; (2) financial viability; (3) licensing and quality care issues; (4) availability of other services in the area; (5) need for subsidy by parents; (6) relative demands for spaces in other areas of the province; (7) whether a centre is already

operating; (8) need for community development of day care where no group has requested funding; (9) geographic location.

Ms. Barrett: Can the Minister table or read to us, or get for us, what the Government priorities are?

Mr. Gilleshammer: In the last period of time, the emphasis has been on family day care and workplace day care. We have also included some group day care.

Ms. Barrett: Is there a list of the grants that make up the item in the budget that we are discussing? If that is available, if I could ask for a copy now or have it delivered at a later time?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There are a number of grants available. There is a start-up grant -(interjection)- that is not what the Member wants?

Ms. Barrett: I am sorry I asked for grants. What I meant to ask for was a list of the day cares that receive grants. I apologize for that.

* (1500)

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is a list of centres that were funded this year. In Winnipeg: Sister MacNamara Pre-school, which has 40 spaces; Pinkham, which has 40 spaces; Panda Bear, which is a Burns employees' day care, 40 spaces; Bumper Crop Day Care, 40 spaces; McPhillips Co-op Day Care, 40 spaces; Action Centre Day Nursery, 8 spaces.

In addition, some rural centres: at Lorette, the Tache Community Day Care, 40 spaces; at Ste. Anne, Ecole Pointe de Chenes, 13 spaces; and at Fisher Branch, the Fisher Branch Care-A-Lot for Tots Inc., 24 spaces.

In addition, some family day care homes: in Winnipeg, homes amounting to 56 spaces; in greater Manitoba, 84 spaces.

Ms. Barrett: Do these grants add up to the amount of money in the Estimates under Grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The list I provided for you are the new spaces that came on stream this year and are over and above the existing spaces.

Ms. Barrett: Would it be possible for the Minister to provide me, at a later date, with the list of the day cares funded by this province?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We can do that, and we will do that.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you. On the Grants, could the Minister explain to me what the criteria are that the Grants are based on? Is there a formula?

Mr. Gilleshammer: As I started to indicate before, there are a number of grants such as the start-up grant, and it would be based on the number of spaces that would be in the centre, the maintenance grants similarly. Salary enhancement grants would depend on the background of the instructors.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, I appreciate that. Is there any recognition, in the operating grants that are given to day cares, of variations in their actual operating costs due to some centres, I imagine, owning their own space, others having to pay rent, the problems with rural and northern centres?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The income that the centre gets over and above the start-up, maintenance and salary enhancement is the fees that are charged per child. In many cases, that fee is paid by the parents. In some cases, the department has full responsibility for paying that fee. So the amount of money that the centre would get for operating on this basis would reflect the number of children that are in the day care centre. Also, the day care for infants is more expensive than pre-school, and in some cases, there are special needs.

Ms. Barrett: So those grants that we have been talking about are volume sensitive.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, with the caveats that I put on there, but yes, the centre's income would be based on volume.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Deputy Chair, I have one final area of questions, and that deals with the goods and services tax and the implications on day care.

I received from the Manitoba Child Care Association a letter that they requested information from a chartered accountant as to what the potential implications of the goods and services tax would be on day care centre operations. It states that it appears there will be a very high likelihood that centres will be required to pay goods and services tax on at least some items.

I am wondering if the budgeting process for next year or for the final quarter of this year has taken that into account or if the division has been talking with day cares about the financial requirements that might be upon them on January 1.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, we have some information on the GST impact as we understand it and know it

to date. There will be no GST payable on parent fees for child care. There will be some areas that day care centres will be paying GST on services and goods they have purchased. Salaries and basic groceries are not taxed, and certainly with day cares, their predominant cost is salaries.

I would also mention that 50 percent of the GST paid can be refunded to day care centres if they meet one of two criteria. The day care centre could be a registered charity, or the day care centre must be in receipt of at least 40 percent of their funding from one of three levels of Government.

I would add that Child Day Care has been in touch with customs and excise information for charities and non-profits, have been advising centres to register for the GST and become registered charitable organizations, and to call the toll-free GST number for more information.

So the impact of GST does not seem to be a major factor with the day cares.

Ms. Barrett: I will just put briefly on the record that it may not be a major factor insofar as a certain amount of money, but there will be some additional expenditure required because they are only eligible for 50 percent rebate of those rebatable items. So I am just asking if that has been taken into account, or is the department saying at this point, find from within, we will not look at additional requests from day care to assist them with the GST costs in the first quarter of 1991.

The other area of cost that I think is going to potentially be the most substantial for all of these organizations is the administrative costs attached to getting the rebate and registering and doing the accounting and the administration that will flow from this. Again, as we have talked about before, the impact is unknown. The fact that there will be an impact is, I believe, known. So I am just asking if the division has made any recommendations to the Minister on that, or if there is any plans of what to assist day cares in this endeavour?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have indicated in my previous answer the impact that we see, and we think the impact will be minimal. Certainly we will monitor that and take that into consideration. I would indicate that funding for day cares has been increased substantially in the last couple of years, and I think to the point where they can manage this impending impact.

Ms. Barrett: I have a great deal more questions to ask in this division, but I will hold those questions until a time when I can meet with the staff, and thank you very much.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to start in this one with just first some questions for information. Before we do that, I wonder if the Minister would entertain two questions from the income security area, not typical questions?

* (1510)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Certainly.

Mr. Alcock: The first one I meant to ask yesterday and I forgot to, currently I am told that in the provincial library here there is no current up-to-date copy of the Income Security Standards manual, and I am wondering if it would be possible to see that one is there and one is kept up to date on a regular basis?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We would be pleased to accede to that.

Mr. Alcock: The second thing is that in a case of excess special needs, I was led to understand that in order to access excess special needs funding a person has to have a medical certificate or has to have a recommendation from a doctor. Is this the case?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told the answer is no.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps the Minister then could make that information available to staff because a person, in attempting to access the special needs funding to replace a coat, was told that he could only get that on presentation of a medical certificate.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Perhaps if you could give us the individual case, we could sort it out.

Mr. Alcock: I will endeavour to do that, and perhaps at the end of today's discussions. Okay, on Child Day Care now, can the Minister start just by answering a few simple questions about the size and the scope of the program for this year? How many new spaces is it intended that this year's program will create?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There will be 517 new spaces.

Mr. Alcock: How many of those new spaces will receive the grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told all of these will be receiving grants.

Mr. Alcock: What is the percentage increase in the grant paid this year over last year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The maintenance grants were increased by 5 percent, and salary enhancement grants by \$500 for funded centres, and \$750 for nonprofit centres not funded by Government.

Mr. Alcock: Were there any increases to the other lesser grants that are given: the audit grant, the infant grant, the start-up grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No.

Mr. Alcock: Will each of these 517 spaces be receiving the start-up grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, they will be receiving the start-up grant.

Mr. Alcock: There is a one-time only equipment grant for unfunded nurseries. Do any of these qualify for that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps, then, the Minister can just help me understand the information that the department has presented. When one looks at the Grants list here, the figures that are presented in the Grants list for '89-90 totalled \$19,432,600 on the Grants line, and that reconciles to the dollar, or to the hundred dollars actually, with the Grants information presented on page 95 of the supplementary information booklet.

For the year ending 1991, the figure is \$19,602,200, which again, when one totals up the various grants that are presented on the Grants list, there would seem to be some equating, except when you look at the Day Care Centres and Homes change, year over year, we go from \$18,724,800 to \$18,874,900, an increase of .8 of 1 percent in the overall amount of grants that are being paid. The question is, where do we find the funding for 517 new spaces receiving grants, and where do we find the funding to increase the maintenance grants by 5 percent?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There was an overestimation the previous year, and the actual amount spent in '89-90 was \$16.5 million. That accounts for that discrepancy.

Mr. Alcock: Now it is the second time we have encountered an overestimation as soon as we moved into this particular division of the department. Why are we some \$2 million out in our estimations

of something that is easy to identify as day care spaces requiring grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: A couple of reasons for that. Some of the new centres that were being started the previous year were delayed. The start-up actually took place later in the year, so they received only a part-year funding. Secondly, funds were set aside for salary enhancement grants, and a somewhat lesser figure of uptake there was realized than had been predicted. So for those reasons there is a difference between the actual expenditures and the estimated expenditures the previous year.

Mr. Alcock: In the new centres that were delayed then, how many spaces within new centres that delayed opening do they take into consideration? What is the number there?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have given you the new spaces for this year. What you are asking is the new spaces for the previous year?

* (1520)

Mr. Alcock: If I understood the Minister correctly, you are saying that part of the reason for the \$2 million difference between what appears here and what was actually spent was that a number of new centres last year, presumably centres that were planned to come on stream last year, came on later than was originally intended. I am just asking, how many—not just how many centres, but how many spaces?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The total number of spaces that came on stream in 1989-90 was 376. I can give you a listing of the Winnipeg centres and the rural, but I do not think that is really what the Member is looking for. So the funding had been put in place for these in the anticipation that they would come on stream at the beginning of the year. Some of them had some difficulties and, as a result, came on stream later in the year and received partial funding.

Mr. Alcock: That was 376 spaces, and now we are bringing on stream 517 spaces. How many of these spaces that are due to be brought on stream this year are currently in operation?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Of the 517 spaces, 425 are now operational, but they were not all operational April 1. They came on stream throughout the first three quarters of this year, so roughly some 80 percent of those anticipated spaces are now operational.

Mr. Alcock: Is it anticipated that the 92 remaining spaces will become operational before March 31st of this year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mr. Alcock: Now then, the estimate that we have here of \$8,874,000 for the grants to day cares in this year, does this estimate carry within it the same shortfall, the same amount of flexibility, if you like, as the one in the year before, particularly given that we are opening another 130-some odd spaces?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is anticipated that the figure that we have in the Estimates will more accurately reflect the expenditures for the current fiscal year.

Mr. Alcock: This lag between what we say publicly that we are going to spend in these particular areas and what we actually spend, is this something that is chronic in this division? Is this something that occurs year over year because of forecasting difficulties in the start-up times, or is this something that is unique to the past few years?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is something that has happened over the last few years. It is one of the difficulties that the centres that come forward with enthusiasm anticipate that they are going to be open early in the fiscal year and then run into some of their realities of opening a centre, and they are delayed. So it is something that has happened over the last few years.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is an understandable circumstance for some centres, but a \$2 million shortfall strikes me as rather large. Can the department offer any kind of estimate on what the difference is between what they have budgeted here and what will actually be spent in this year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have indicated in a previous question that we think that the current figures will be a close reflection of the situation this year.

Mr. Alcock: The department makes available to centres, or at least some centres, an audit grant. Can the Minister tell us which centres are eligible for it and how much it is?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Each centre gets \$1,030 in an audit grant.

Mr. Alcock: Is that every centre that the department funds or is that just not-for-profit centres, or is that just funded centres?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This grant is to the full-time non-profit centres.

Mr. Alcock: Can the Minister tell us how many centres would be eligible for this grant in the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There are 307 such centres.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so the total is some \$300,000.00. When is this audit grant paid?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is paid when the centre is conducting its year-end audit.

Mr. Alcock: Is there any estimate, I mean, is there a common year end? Would the majority of centres have a year end that parallels the Government's fiscal year, or conversely would they have a year end that comes at the end of June?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It appears to be varied throughout the year.

Mr. Alcock: Given that the audit grant is paid to audit funds received from this Government's fiscal year, the current audit grant—I mean, the centres are currently receiving funds under this fiscal year, so the audit grant that is paid relative to this year would not be paid presumably until after this fiscal year is complete? Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It is usually done after their year end.

* (1530)

Mr. Alcock: Well, that does bring me to an area, and I was pleased actually to see the response that the Minister was able to give the Member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) relative to the GST, because it is the first time in this department we have seen a division that has at least some understanding that there will be an impact and has done some preparatory examination of what that would be. I think the staff that did that work are to be commended.

I would like to ask one question. I think the Minister is quite right, the fact that there is no tax on fees and no tax on salaries, and that means that the impact on a day care will be relatively small. The proportional amount that they will pay for papers and pencils is relatively quite small, but they will pay the full 7 percent on the audit fee. That is a service that is provided. The question is: Is the Government going to increase the audit grant to reflect that increase?

(Mrs. Linda McIntosh, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

Mr. Gilleshammer: We are going to monitor the impact of the GST to see the effect it has on day

cares. We have indicated we think it will be minimal. We would make no further commitment at this time.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Acting Chairperson, just so that day cares are aware of how that process is going to proceed, at the end of this fiscal year when we have a full quarter in, are day cares being asked by the department to monitor their costs for this first quarter of '91 so that we can assess the impact? What study is being done with the centres or with the child care association that will allow you to do that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: On a quarterly basis, we get financial data from the centres that is sent to the day care office.

Mr. Alcock: Are the centres being asked to supply information specific to their payment of this new tax, or is it just the regular quarterly monitoring?

Mr. Gilleshammer: They have not been advised to do so.

Mr. Alcock: Why would we not do that when we have known for some time that this is coming, and there has been an awful lot of concern expressed about the impact that this is going to have? We hear statements of concern about it. I mean, why would we not ask them to report if they are already reporting quarterly on the impacts of this new tax on their ability to provide services?

Mr. Gilleshammer: In their reports, we expect they will give us a comprehensive picture of the situation that exists at their centres.

Mr. Alcock: Is it satisfactory to the Minister that we do this in sort of an ad hoc manner, if they choose to raise it? I mean, should we not be investigating this a little more closely, the Government, the Finance Minister? The Government has expressed repeatedly their concerns about the impact of this on the ability of the system to provide services. Would it not be a prudent measure to ask them to report specifically on this, so we could report specifically to the federal Government on the impact this is having on services?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have indicated already that we expect the impact on the day care centres is going to be minimal. They will be forwarding the information to the day care office. The relationship that exists between the day care office and the centres is a positive one. The centres have been part of the working group that has come forward with a number of recommendations for short term, were

excepted by Government and there is now a good relationship there.

I do not anticipate that the advent of the GST is going to seriously flaw that. We have indicated that we will be monitoring the situation. I am sure it will lead to some discussions with them.

Mr. Alcock: Well, now I will come back to the question of the relationship between the department and the centres in a moment, but I do want to talk, just to finish off this comment on the GST.

The Minister says you are going to be monitoring it and, yet, you have made no provisions to do that. My question is: Will the Minister, given that we have not entered this first quarter, send out instructions to the centres that effective their first quarter report in 1991, which would be the first quarter in which they will be experiencing these new costs, add a provision to the reporting that they are doing that asks them to report on what they have paid in this new tax?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That information will be encompassed in the reports that they forward, and that monitoring will be done on that basis.

Mr. Alcock: I am not certain whether the Minister has just now said something different than what he said earlier. Is he now saying that there will be a specific identification of the amounts of GST paid reported to the department by the agencies?

Mr. Gilleshammer: What I said was they regularly put forward their information on financial statements and we anticipate—and I believe this is what I said before—that any impact on their operating expenses as a result of the GST will be included in the information that they regularly send forward.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Acting Chairperson, given that we are entering very uncertain times, and we do have an inflation rate in this country, and there is—who knows what is going to happen with the Gulf crisis. There are all sorts of things that could impact on the operating costs of these centres, so your quarter-over-quarter reports will not be quite as useful on the specific issue of the GST unless you ask them to specifically identify that.

That is all I have asked the Minister, is whether it would possible to request of the various centres that when they are sending in these reports—that you indicate they already prepare and send in—to ask them to specifically report on the amount of GST that they are paying quarter over quarter.

Mr. Gilleshammer: If that information on their quarterly reports is lacking, and I do not think it will be, we will be pleased to inform them when we need more information, and we will do so.

Certainly there are a lot of things impacting. You mentioned the Gulf crisis, and if the weather gets unseasonably cold it could be heating costs. A variety of things will impact on their operations, and we will be apprised of that when they put their quarterly statement in.

Mr. Alcock: Yes, well I am glad that the Minister concurs with me about that, and this underscores the reason why we need to have this particular item identified if it is to be teased out of the overall increase in cost that centres will incur.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Chairman, in the Chair)

I would like to spend a moment on the question of relationship, the relationship between the department and the centres, because the Minister did make a point of mentioning it. I think it is only appropriate when we go through different divisions in this budget we are often quite critical of things, and I think that certainly in the Estimates in the last couple of years—and given all of the turmoil in the system over the last couple of years, there was a great deal of concern about the relationship between this department and this division in particular and the centres in this province.

So that was something that I did spend some time investigating prior to these Estimates. I had a number of conversations with people in the field just to get a sense of how they do feel, particularly given the change of director, because as the Minister will recall, there were serious debates about the removal of that particular director.

I am pleased to report that the attitude in the field is very positive, that they feel the replacement—in particular a lot of the credit goes to the current, I believe it is the ADM in this division who is well regarded and feels that the transition has been smooth and that the division is continuing to offer a very high quality of service.

The issue is not the provision of support from the department to the centres any more. The issue is the policy that this Government adopts in funding and supporting this particular division. Those are the kinds of things that I would like to talk a little about. I certainly share the Minister's positive statements

about the work that is done within this particular division.

Now can the Minister just talk a little bit about the fee increases and what sort of support his Government is making available to centres now?

* (1540)

Mr. Gilleshammer: The fee per child per day is \$14.75. In some cases we fund all of that, in other cases we fund a portion of that, and in some cases none of it.

Mr. Alcock: Infant preschool and school-age fees vary, do they not, or are they all \$14.75?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The fee that I gave you of \$14.75 is for children aged two to six. Infant day care is more expensive. It is \$17.70. The after-school care for ages six to 12 is \$8.60.

Mr. Alcock: Are these all fees in centres or is this the family day care fee?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is the fee for funded centres, for funded homes, for unfunded centres and for unfunded homes.

Mr. Alcock: In the 517 new spaces that were created, the Minister read a list into the record. Was that the list of the ones that are currently up and running, the 425, or was that the complete list of new centres that have been created as a result?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No, the list I read were the ones that are up and running. There are a number of them that are not yet open. That was the difference between the 425 and 517.

Mr. Alcock: Am I correct in stating that the decisions have been made about where those other 92 spaces are allocated, but the centres are simply not up and running yet?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

Mr. Alcock: Can the Minister tell us where those other 92 spaces are located then?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, there are a number that are not open yet and in fact have not been notified, because they are still in the process of getting their licensing and doing some other arrangements. I am not able to share these with you at this time.

Mr. Alcock: Help me understand this. The Minister said in response to an earlier question that it was anticipated that all 92 spaces would be open by the end of this fiscal year. Now we are saying that where it is not possible—then he said that the decisions

had been made about where those 92 beds would be allocated, yet three months before they are to open, we do not know where they are going to be, or we have not informed the centres?

I mean, if we have not informed the centres that are receiving those 92 beds three months before the end of this fiscal year that they have them, how can we possibly expect them to be open within the next three months?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would not want the Member to make this into a bigger problem than it is. There is a question of them completing all of the requirements, and some of the i's have not been dotted, and the t's have not been crossed, but it is anticipated that this will happen in coming weeks.

Mr. Alcock: Are they completing these requirements not knowing whether they are going to get spaces?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It appears that they will get the spaces once they have completed the requirements. They are aware of that and it is just a matter of them completing these arrangements.

Mr. Alcock: If the department has made the decision, and the agencies or the centres are aware of it, why can that information not be shared?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We would prefer to wait until they are officially notified that all the requirements have been met. The Member told me the other day he was a patient man. We are just going to have to ask him to be patient until we are able to officially announce these.

Some of these others have been announced throughout the year. In fact, I think I attended the ribbon cutting at one of them back in September. Once they reach that stage where they are operational, then an official announcement will be made.

Mr. Alcock: We anticipate having those announcements and cutting those ribbons on 92 spaces before March 31 of this year. We have told the centres that they are going to get the spaces. We have allocated the funds for them. All they are doing is going through the legalities now, I presume, of getting their health care licences and those various checks done.

Yet we are not willing to—despite the fact that they must presumably know, to be going through this, the only way we are going to find out is if we go and ask everybody who has applied whether or not

they have been told secretly that they are going to get—I mean is this secret information? Do you send out a confidential letter, please do not tell anybody in your community that you have received approval? How do you handle this? This is an interesting area.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am sure that we could whip this into a real interesting topic that it could be secretive and clandestine and create a lot of attention. I am telling you that it is as simple as they have not completed all of the requirements. We anticipate that they will. They are working actively on that, and at that time we would be prepared to make an official announcement.

I do not think there is anything untoward about that. These are people who are working actively on their plans. We do not anticipate any problems, and we would make that information available when it is an appropriate time to finalize it.

Mr. Alcock: Far be it for me to make more of this than exists, heavens.

I just simply would like to ask the Minister then: Are the individuals who are involved and on the boards of these centres aware that they have been approved for these spaces?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The day cares that are pending are well aware of that, and I believe they are well aware of the items that they have to finalize. We do not anticipate any problem. It is just that we are not prepared to publicly announce these until they become finalized. I am sure the Member understands that.

* (1550)

Mr. Alcock: I am just kind of interested in the process. I will just ask a couple more questions, and then we will move on.

So a day care centre applies for spaces. They presumably, once the Government has made its decision about the allocation of spaces, receive some sort of letter from the Minister, from the department, that says, subject to licensing you have been approved for x number of spaces. Now does this come out in a special confidential communique from the Minister's office that says, please do not tell anybody about this, but if you pass your licensing requirement you will be funded for these, or does it come out that says, well, go ahead and go do all the work of getting licensed and if you get licensed, we have a nice surprise for you.

How does this message get communicated to the centres who have made application?

Mr. Gilleshammer: They actively work with staff and in a spirit of co-operation put in place the necessary information. Then when that is done, it becomes official, and they are notified of such.

Mr. Alcock: So at that point at which they are acting co-operatively with staff and staff are co-operating with them and we are having this sort of mutually satisfying exercise, are they aware that they got these spaces?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can tell the Member that the people involved, I think, are proceeding with some degree of confidence and competence to get the job done, and we anticipate that these will be completed in the not too distant future.

Mr. Alcock: Would it be fair to say that the only reason for not releasing the information is so the Minister can have the joy of sending out an action-oriented press release and cutting yet another ribbon as opposed to sharing that information with the community at the appropriate time?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No, I think it is more than that. It is out of respect for these groups that want to plan some sort of opening and apprise their membership of where they are at with the plans and how the process is coming. I think that they should have that opportunity.

Mr. Alcock: But the Minister said they already knew before they applied for licensing.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am talking of the wider community that may not be closely in tune with the comings and goings and plans of the day care people.

Mr. Alcock: Far be it for me to interfere with the Minister's desire for secrecy. Perhaps he could tell us, these 92 spaces then, how many of these secret centres will this create this year?

Mr. Gilleshammer: None. These will be public centres.

Mr. Alcock: How many yet to be announced public centres will be created by apportioning these 92 spaces? Are they simply additions to existing centres, or will there be new free-standing centres created as a result of this decision of the Minister to someday announce 92 new spaces?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There are five centres involved.

Mr. Alcock: Those five centres, are any of these additions to existing centres or are these five new centres?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Three of them are new.

Mr. Alcock: Of these five centres that are involved, let us start with the three new ones. Are these three new infant centres, preschool centres or school-age centres?

Mr. Gilleshammer: They are a combination of infant and preschool.

Mr. Alcock: Of the 517 new spaces that are created this year, 92 yet to be created, 425 that have—but of the total, can the Minister tell us how they are proportioned between the City of Winnipeg and the rural areas?

What proportion of those 517 would be located in the city versus those outside of the City of Winnipeg? Let us use the Perimeter as an example, with the exception of the Member for St. Norbert's (Mr. Laurendeau) area which goes slightly south of the Perimeter.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think they would bear a strong resemblance to the figures I read into the record about 45 minutes ago.

Mr. Alcock: Given that was in response to another Member's question, and I have the right to ask the question, perhaps the Minister could read it into the record again.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Two hundred and eight of the spaces are in Winnipeg. Those would be in centres. There would be 77 spaces in rural Manitoba that are centres. Then there are the family day care homes, and 56 of those spaces were in Winnipeg. The remaining 84 are in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Alcock: I wonder if we might just talk a little bit about workplace day care. I understand the Minister has a new program that is going to provide some incentives for workplace day care, capital grants being one component of that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, there is up to \$75,000 per workplace centre.

Mr. Alcock: These are capital grants, as I understand it, so if a company comes with a desire to create a centre in their workplace, they can receive up to \$75,000 in cash. Are these companies not also entitled to write-offs against their corporate income tax for the creation of such centres?

* (1600)

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can tell the Member that the amount of money that we give to the workplace day care, the cheque is written to the centre, which is incorporated as non-profit. I suspect in the financial dealings that the company has that there may be some method whereby they can write off the use of space or whatever. We do not have that information here. That is perhaps information that you could ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) or we could try and get it for him.

Mr. Alcock: No, that is okay. I appreciate the Minister's offer to get that, but I have indeed discussed this with the Minister of Finance, and we in fact are going to be discussing it again.

I do have some questions on it though. First, with regard to these 517 spaces, are any of them in workplace day cares?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, there were two of them. The Panda Bear is a Burns employees' day care with 40 spaces. The Bumper Crop day care, I believe, is the one at the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Alcock: Did both of these businesses, the Wheat Board and Burns, receive the \$75,000 capital grant?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The day care centre received the grant.

Mr. Alcock: I do not mean to intentionally differentiate. I understand that these are both private, not-for-profit centres, incorporated separately but supported by the corporations that they are located within. I think that when you look at the tax implications, you will find that the businesses are able to write off against their corporate tax for the renovations that they undertake and any corporate support that they offer to the centres. Then as incorporated not-for-profit centres, would these spaces—now we said there were 40 for the Panda Bear. Was 40 the correct number?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There were 40 at each of the two mentioned.

Mr. Alcock: As incorporated not-for-profit centres, are each of them then also eligible for the maintenance grants, the salary enhancement grants and the audit grants, et cetera, et cetera?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

Mr. Alcock: They are all available and presumably the start-up grants also. Can the Minister tell us whether or not these two corporate—let us use

"these." The policy I suspect is common. Both of these corporations provide financial support to these centres?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think the two we are referencing, one of them gets space provided, and there is some financial contribution by one of them as well.

Mr. Alcock: But both of them provide space?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told just the one.

Mr. Alcock: That is 80 of the 517 spaces. We know that five centres are sharing in the 92 that are yet unallocated, but we will be informed of at some point, three of which are new centres. How many new centres were created this year out of that total allocation of 517?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There would be a total of 12.

Mr. Alcock: The Government is prepared to offer \$75,000 capital grants to the two within corporations. Do the other 10 receive \$75,000 capital grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No.

Mr. Alcock: Why is that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is a new concept which is just coming onto the scene. The workplace day cares have received a fair amount of favourable comment, both from employers and employees. As a result of some of the thinking that went into this, there was a major grant awarded to them. It would seem to be a positive new direction for day care in the province.

Mr. Alcock: Leaving aside the discussion about this positive new direction, the question is simple. We are prepared to give companies who have the ability to write off their costs incurred in setting up a day care a \$75,000 capital grant. Yet we do not seem to be prepared to offer that same support to a not-for-profit group that opens a day care centre in a community centre, in a church basement or wherever. Why not?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would mention the other side of the coin to the Honourable Member that non-profit day cares are able to access Community Places grants up to \$75,000.00. I believe some of them have gone that direction.

Mr. Alcock: But I thought the Minister told me a little while ago that both these centres were incorporated not-profits.

Mr. Gilleshammer: These two centres that we have referenced are not able to access the Community Places program.

Mr. Alcock: Did the Minister not say a few moments ago that these centres, these workplace day centres, specifically the Bumper Crop and Panda Bear, were incorporated not-for-profits, were separate entities?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I said that, but they have been sponsored by the company.

Mr. Alcock: They are specifically excluded under the terms of a Community Places grant from accessing Community Places funds despite the fact that they are incorporated non-profits?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is my understanding. We would be prepared to check into that further.

Mr. Alcock: I would ask the Minister to do exactly that. I read the criteria for the Community Places grants. I do not recall an exclusion for not-for-profit company day cares. If the Minister would undertake to check that, that would be useful, and we can come back to that when that information is available.

The rationale that we have on the table is that not-for-profit day care centres are able to access Community Places grants, therefore they do not require the \$75,000 capital grants. How many of the—well, 12 minus two—10 new centres that were being created have been awarded \$75,000 Community Places grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We do not have that information. You would have to get that from the Minister responsible.

Mr. Alcock: I thought the Minister said earlier that these day care centres submitted quarterly financial reports to the department. Is this information not included in that?

* (1610)

Mr. Gilleshammer: We will check to see if our financial data includes information on Community Places grants.

Mr. Alcock: We have had two statements that are a little bit contradictory. It may just be lack of information. When we asked the Minister about the giving of \$75,000 capital grants to two companies, he went to some length to point out that these grants were not given to the companies. They were given to incorporated not-for-profit centres operating with

the support or under the sponsorship of the companies.

Nonetheless, if a company sponsors a not-for-profit day care, it automatically receives a \$75,000 capital grant, but if you are a church group or a community group sponsoring a day care, you do not automatically receive a Community Places grant. You have to go through the application process and receive it. Is that not the case, or is there an agreement between this department and the Department of Culture, Heritage, which I believe is the lead department on that, that then makes available these grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The workplace day care providers have to apply for the grant. Similarly any community group who is accessing a Community Places grant has to fill out an application. In both cases, it probably results in increased numbers of day care spaces and enhanced spaces throughout the province whereby day care is provided.

Mr. Alcock: Let us differentiate—when one is applying for a Community Places grant, you apply as one of a great many groups. It is not limited—the Community Places grant program is not just a day care program. A great many groups can apply for support under Community Places.

Can other groups apply under this special \$75,000 capital grant program—that is question one—or is it only workplaces that are sponsoring day cares that can apply to this program?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The \$75,000 that we speak of in reference to Panda Bear and Bumper Crop day care comes under workplace day care. I would point out that the previous Minister had commissioned a report that was brought in by the Manitoba Child Care Task Force, and their recommendation was that we provide incentives so that the workplace day cares could be provided.

Because of the reasons that I mentioned before, it appears to be a very sensible way of delivering day care services in the province. There are benefits for the employer. There are benefits to the employee. As a result of that, this type of incentive was put in there, and from our early reports it appears that it is meeting with favour with both the employer and the employee. At this point in time we are very pleased with it.

Mr. Alcock: I suspect all of that to be exactly the case. It was indeed a recommendation of the task force. It is indeed a progressive way to go, and it has

been taken up in the instance that the Minister reports now by two places.

Nobody is arguing with the validity or the value of that. When I asked the Minister the simple question about, are you prepared to give \$75,000 cash grants to businesses to sponsor day cares, and said, why are you not prepared to give those same grants to not-for-profits who sponsor day cares, the Minister's response is, they can go to Community Places—except the Community Places grants are a pool of capital that is available to a great many organizations, not just day cares as in the workplace day care incentive program.

It is not an automatic \$75,000.00. Seventy-five thousand dollars is the maximum made available under the Community Places program. These are two things that are not analogous at all. Have there been applications for the \$75,000 capital grant under the workplace day care incentive program that have been turned down?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Not at this point. Just going back to the Community Places, there are day cares that do not require additional funding and as a result will not apply to Community Places, or they may only require a small portion of that. Certainly they compete with other Community Places within the greater community.

The Community Places grants are a broad grant that is used for the benefit of communities, whether it is curling rinks or halls or in some cases there is some funding put in place for day care centres. You know, if the Member is suggesting that they all apply for \$75,000, I would tell him that a lot of those day care centres do not require that. They are up and running and successful and are looking after their own needs.

By and large, the Community Places grants have been accessed for small renovations and small changes that have to be made. They have to contribute an equal amount to access Community Places grants.

I think, getting back to the workplace day care, this is a new area that we are entering and a new era. From the early reports this has been very successful, and it is in compliance with one of the recommendations, as I indicated, from the Child Care Task Force, and it appears to be something that has been very successful.

Mr. Alcock: The two new centres that are currently in place under this program, have both applied for

the grants and both received the \$75,000 capital grants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

Mr. Alcock: What commitments do the companies have to make when they are applying for these?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The commitment that is made by the employer is that 50 percent of the spaces be made available for the children of the employees of the company.

Mr. Alcock: I am sorry. When a company comes to apply for spaces and for the \$75,000 capital grant they have to agree that 50 percent of the spaces within that centre will be made available for employees of the company. Is that it?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, for the children of the employees of the company.

Mr. Alcock: Is this the only commitment they have to make?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, that is the commitment they make. It is based on the fact that we are approached both by the employees and the employer to put in place the workplace day care, that we proceed with it and their willingness to go ahead with the day care program.

* (1620)

Mr. Alcock: Do these funds, these \$75,000 capital grants, come through the Grants line that is referenced on page 95 of the—

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mr. Alcock: Yet when we asked for a grants list—I guess it is concluded in the day care centres and homes.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

Mr. Alcock: When a not-for-profit centre, other than the two workplace centres, applies for Community Places grants, they have to apply to another department, and that is funded through a different division?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, the Community Places grants are part of the Culture, Heritage and Recreation Department.

Mr. Alcock: So when a workplace day care, when a company applies to create one of these day cares, are they given a set of forms they have to fill in to make this application? Are there a number of criteria they have to meet?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, they make formal application.

Mr. Alcock: Might I have a copy of that application form, please?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We do not have an application here, but we will provide you with one.

Mr. Alcock: If I understand the Minister's earlier comments then, when a company makes such an application, they have to commit that 50 percent of the spaces in the day care will be made available for children of their workers. They do not have to, although in the case of the two that have been created, one of them has made space available, the other one has not, so it is not a requirement that they make space available.

Are there any other requirements that they have? Oh, the centre has to be an incorporated, not-for-profit centre, I believe that was a requirement that the Minister had stated? I would like that confirmed. Is that it? Is that the list of requirements that they have to satisfy in order to receive this \$75,000.00?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Basically that is correct.

Mr. Alcock: Why is it then that if you are a church group or a community group that is starting a day care and you do need the capital funds—the Minister referenced as to the Community Places and the Minister himself said that they have to contribute an equal amount to the amount they are being given by the department. Why are corporations not required to do that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I do not think we need to get into discussing the Community Places grants, but that has been a four-year program that has provided grants for groups and organizations across the province. As far as the workplace day care, this is a new concept that has been recommended, that we have proceeded with. Once we gain more experience in the field of workplace day care, we will do ongoing evaluations. If there is a need to make modifications or changes in the program, certainly we will.

Our initial evaluation is that both the employer and the employee seem to be very pleased with this. We see some definite advantages for employees to have their children located at a day care which is either on the premises or nearby. It is a commitment that the employer enters into as well. It seems to be working well, but it is a new concept. If we need to

change regulations or guidelines after we gain a little more experience, that is a possibility.

Mr. Alcock: The question now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the only reason we even talk about Community Places is that is the source that the Minister referred us to where he tried to justify the fact that business-oriented workplace day cares get \$75,000 for capital without any other commitment. He said, well, that is not any significant difference between what church groups and community centres get because they can go to Community Places.

Well, the fact is it is not the same thing. The amount of money is not the same, and a group going to Community Places has to raise and contribute offsetting funds. So it is not an analogous position at all. We are treating one subset of day cares supported by corporations such as Burns and the Wheat Board, which theoretically have some resources to draw upon. We are not asking them to contribute any of their resources. We are allowing them to take capital write-offs on any of the renovations and such that they take. You can check with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on that particular thing.

We are prepared, on top of that, to give them a \$75,000 capital grant, yet if one of the St. Norbert church groups decides to come together and go to build a day care in their church basement, we will not give them the same consideration. I do not understand where the equity is in that, and I would like the Minister to explain it to me.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, you are partially right. Out of this program we do not give all day cares \$75,000.00. I referenced the Community Places as an area where day cares as well as others in the community have an opportunity to access money up to \$75,000.00. It appears the Member is opposed to the workplace day care and the fact that we do fund it for \$75,000.00.

I can tell you that it was the recommendation of the task force. It has resulted in new spaces for children, and it has been accepted by employees and employers. It is a new initiative that has come forward, and we are very pleased with it at this point.

Now, other day cares, if they have a need, can make application to the Community Places program, and some have. If they do not need to, naturally they do not, and they are able to handle their finances in a different way.

We are breaking new ground with the workplace day care, and it seems to be a very positive innovation. I am not sure I understand why the Member is so opposed to it. This has met with the support of both the employees and employers, and it seems to be a new initiative that has gained a lot of favour.

Mr. Alcock: I have said several times, nobody is in opposition to the report of the task force, which recommended the creation of these centres. They are a progressive step forward. The Minister, as I said earlier, and the department should be congratulated for making this initiative available. At the same time though, you are treating other centres unequally.

You created 12 centres this year. Two of them you gave \$75,000 in response for no commitment other than that they make 50 percent of those spaces available to their employees. The other 10 had to go out and raise money on their own and find their support within their own community and stand in line with everybody else for Community Places. So there are two distinctly different systems.

I would suggest to the Minister that the Canadian Wheat Board and Burns Meats have greater resources to rely on to find that \$75,000 than does the St. Norbert church group that is looking forward to building a centre in their basement.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The department worked very closely with the Manitoba Child Care Association on a report that came forward. They have been a part of that group. Their recommendations were accepted by Government in March of 1990. They are on record as being very pleased with what they term the largest revenue package ever provided to the child care system. I would think that the report reflects the Manitoba Child Care Association's thinking. It reflects the Government thinking.

The workplace day care has met with favour from the employees and the employer. I think the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) must be in a very lonely position as the lone voice in opposition to this new initiative. It is something that has been accepted by the Manitoba Child Care Association. Again, I would emphasize that we are breaking new ground here. It appears to be successful. We are prepared to analyze it on an ongoing basis. If we have to make some changes, that is something we can do as we get further down the road.

I think it is probably fair to say that if it had not been for this recommendation and the grant that comes forward from Government, this concept may not have happened. We are pleased that there are employers and employees that come together on an issue like this and bring forward this initiative. We are pleased to be part of it.

Mr. Alcock: Well, I can tell the Minister it is the Manitoba Child Care Association and a number of the day cares that are applauding him for what he has just done as I have and are asking the very question I asked. Why are these grants not available to non-profit centres that are not supported by business?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, we have put a considerable amount of money into the system at various places and various levels. What the Member is asking is that we now contribute \$75,000 to each and every existing day care or each group that comes forward. We simply do not have that kind of money available.

I know the other day, the Member is on record as saying, take it out of Highways, that we do not need to build highways in Manitoba, that money could be redirected into this department. I suppose taking that further, it could put into this area where \$75,000 would be made available to other day care centres. Well, we are not prepared to go that direction.

* (1630)

Mr. Alcock: That is obvious.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think maybe you should, you know, get out and analyze our highway situation, that we need to put millions and millions of dollars into highways across this province in the next few years, because it is an area that had been long neglected by the previous Government. They had put less and less money into highways over the course of the 1980s. There are major problems that have to be addressed there.

The Leader of your Party has been opposed to building hospitals in rural Manitoba. I know this Honourable Member has said that we need to spend that money in the City of Winnipeg on the Municipal Hospitals. Even when we are doing that, Members of your Party are saying, no, do not build a hospital in Minnedosa. Do not build a hospital in Virden or Elkhorn, that the money should be spent here.

It is reminiscent of a former colleague of yours who brought in legislation last year, which was not

passed but seemed to be very much opposed to any development in rural Manitoba. You know, the setting of priorities of spending lies with Government, and that Government has to make decisions to fund all departments and address a lot of the needs that are out there in Manitoba, including highways and hospitals.

Mr. Alcock: I should point out, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that it was not I who raised the issue of the Municipal Hospitals, but since the Minister has, I would be only too pleased to respond to that particular issue.

The Minister makes the point about priorities, and that is exactly the point that is being made. Do you replace a 30-year-old hospital in the Minister of Northern Affairs' (Mr. Downey) riding and leave people in an 80-year-old facility in squalor in the south end of this city, with the pipes breaking in the walls, with the ventilation being so poor that staff are fainting in the hallways, but instead prioritize a Member of the Cabinet's area? I think that is disgraceful.

I think it is a matter of priorities. Do you prioritize paving highways in the southwest corner of this province over protecting children? I think this Government does. That is the discussion we got into before. I think your priorities are wrong. I will say that here, and I will say it in Virden, and I will say it in Minnedosa. The priorities of this Government are wrong, because you are prioritizing little perks in each other's ridings over the needs of people in this province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The Member may think it is a perk to have a hospital in Minnedosa—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I am going to ask the Members to please revert back to (b)(1) Salaries \$1,679,800 and stay away from the hospital issues and deal directly with what we are at or we will be here until midnight.

The Honourable Member for Osborne, would you like to pass this clause?

Mr. Alcock: No, but I am prepared to give leave to sit here until midnight. We could probably deal with day care between now and midnight.

I am prepared to move on to a different area though if the Minister would like to.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item (b)(1) Salaries, \$1,6—

Mr. Alcock: No, not a different area of the budget, a different area within the day care appropriation.

There is more than one issue, as I am sure the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) is aware, and I know he has a great deal of concern about this.

There was in the past, under the tenure of the past Minister, the former Minister of Family Services, a commitment to do a review of day care programs that are within schools. I am wondering what the status is of that particular review and when we might receive a report.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That issue is under review by the two departments involved, and we hope to have a report back on that soon.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps the Minister could just be a tad more enlightening than that and tell us who is conducting the review and by what date can we expect a report.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can tell the Member that the review is being done by Pat Mosiewich from Public Schools Finance Committee; Irene Patterson the resource co-ordinator, Child Day Care; Gisela Rempel, director of Child Day Care.

The study is in progress, and we do not have a target date that is definitive.

Mr. Alcock: When was this study first requested?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The request for this committee to look into this came about a year ago. The committee started work earlier in 1990.

Mr. Alcock: I am just reviewing the three names. I believe it was Pat Mosiewich who, if I understood the Minister correctly, was coming from the Department of Education, Finance—

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, with the Public Schools Finance Committee.

Mr. Alcock: Irene Patterson comes from the Family Services Department?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Child Day Care.

Mr. Alcock: Gisela Rempel, I am aware of who she is.

We had a request one year ago. We have a three-person departmental committee who is working on this. Why are there no representatives of the system or the field on this particular committee?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is an internal committee which is doing work on it at this time. When a draft policy is arrived at, they will be consulting with the wider community on it.

Mr. Alcock: What led to the creation of this committee?

Mr. Gilleshammer: There were a number of problem areas identified in the policy that was in place with the previous Government. It was thought that a committee consisting of people from both of these departments could work toward a solution. I can perhaps give you some of the identified problems.

There was a difficulty in assessing community needs; a lack of specific guidelines for allocation of new spaces; a lack of communication regarding the intent and expectations of the program resulting in misunderstanding among school boards, superintendents, principals, community groups, day care centre boards, directors and others. There were a number of space design problems which could easily be corrected through better co-operation between school and day care staff. Costs and arrangements for custodial service during periods when the school is closed vary between divisions. There were other problems, too.

* (1640)

Generally I would say that this was breaking new ground. School boards who traditionally administered schools and principals who administered schools and staff were in a situation where they were sharing space. A lot of the items that exist between a school and a day care came into some degree of conflict. This was an attempt to iron out a number of these problems.

Mr. Alcock: The review that is taking place, there are two situations. There are the preschool day cares that are located and occupying space within a school, but there are also lunch and after-school programs that are within schools. A portion of this review, will it be directed at the question of lunch and after-school programs?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, it will.

Mr. Alcock: Can the Minister give us a sense of what were some of the problem areas that were identified relative to that specific area?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The after-school occupancy of the building created supervision problems. It in some cases created additional costs for school divisions to cope with. There were jurisdiction problems that came into play between the school division and the day care. Essentially many of the

same problems that existed during the school day also existed after school.

Mr. Alcock: I notice the Minister is just reading a note. Did you get more information on that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would simply say that a lot of the same issues that were identified as existing during the school day existed after school as well and those problems have to be ironed out.

Mr. Alcock: Are these problems common to all school jurisdictions, or are they specific to certain ones?

Mr. Gilleshammer: They would be reflective of certain ones. Others, I think, have worked out their differences. I am doing a little bit of speculating, but as I see more and more school day cares and after-school programs coming into effect, I think there was a need to try and develop a more long-term policy. We have the evolution of a number of these, and it would seem to make some good sense to develop a policy direction there which would prevent some of these problems with new day cares and perhaps iron out some problems with existing ones.

Mr. Alcock: It is an interesting area, and I have a number of experiences that I intend to share with the Minister today and maybe on Monday, whenever we meet again. The one has to do with the way in which these day cares within schools are funded and to the extent to which capital funds are made available by Government to schools in order to provide these spaces.

I am wondering what expectations this department has of school boards that receive capital funds that are given with the intention of creating a day care space within a school. Are there specific criteria that school boards have to fulfill or adhere to when they agree to receive these funds?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The information that the Member is referencing is really part of the problem. Funds had been given to school boards to incorporate day cares into the school system, and there needed to be more strict guidelines about how day cares were to operate and the relationship between the day care centres and the school divisions.

Mr. Alcock: Do any guidelines exist at present?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, there is a leasing agreement that exists between the day care and the school division.

Mr. Alcock: Is this a standard agreement that is used between the department and the schools?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, it is a leasing agreement that had been developed by the previous Government that was used with day cares and with school divisions.

Mr. Alcock: I would like a copy of that leasing agreement, certainly. When a day care is built—and we talked about these day cares awaiting licensing—I trust, of course, that they have to meet local health requirements and receive clearance from the local health department. When they are located within a school, the day care would have to have, for example, in the City of Winnipeg, a three-way wash or a special dishwasher in order to provide proper cleaning of the equipment that is used, the plates and such that are used in serving food in the school.

I trust that this would be a requirement of the day care to fulfill, but is there clarity as to who is responsible for that? Is it the school itself that also has the same problems in having to provide equipment that meets the health standards, or is that solely the responsibility of the day care?

* (1650)

Mr. Gilleshammer: The information that the Member brings forward is one of the problems that exist between the day care requirements and the school division. For instance, there would be a number of schools that do not provide food services, and there would have to be special arrangements made for day cares. There may be schools that have inadequate washroom facilities. So one of the purposes of this committee was to try not only to identify these issues, but also to come up with some solutions.

Mr. Alcock: Has the Minister had an opportunity, or has he had any presentations from the school boards about their concerns about the issue of day cares in schools?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have had no formal presentations from school boards or school division personnel, but I have had, on an informal basis, information brought forward to me prior to my entering this ministry.

Mr. Alcock: Actually, just before I go on to that, I should ask the question about the funds again; the Minister indicated the lack of clarity. When I spoke to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) about this

in the House during Supplementary Estimates, he said that funds that were advanced on behalf of day cares, to create space within schools to provide day cares, were done on a very specific basis and guaranteed day cares access to that space, and that schools could not change that policy without coming back to the department for approval. Are these approvals granted by this department too, and do school boards make requests to change the use of that space?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think what the Member is referring to is that school boards have to return to Public Schools Finance Board to have any changes authorized by them. I am certain that we have not been involved in those discussions between school divisions and Public School Finance. Now Public School Finance has wide-ranging powers to do with additions and modifications and operate as a separate board to analyze those changes and authorize them for school divisions.

Mr. Alcock: I am not certain if I completely understood the answer the Minister gave. I have a case in my own riding. I should share with the Minister that this is an issue that I have spent some time talking to the day cares, to the child care association, to the Department of Education and to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) about, because it is a very difficult, very contentious area and one that I am pleased there is a review going on. I think it is important.

I know within my own area I have a school such as Lloyd Roberts, which has a day care and lunch and after-school program in it that is very popular, very well supported. The relationship between the school and the day care is excellent. The community is happy and supportive and the whole thing runs along beautifully.

I come up not six blocks away from this building to Fort Rouge School, where there were funds given to that school by the Education Finance board specifically to create a multipurpose space that would be jointly used by the school and the lunch and after-school program, and there is nothing but ill will and contention. At least that was the case until this fall. There has been a change in administration in the school, which seems to have improved things.

As we get into this, we find a great deal of concern on the part of the school boards about these facilities and an attempt on the part of the school boards at

times to covertly, if not overtly, try to push the day cares out of the school building.

The question I asked the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) referencing that was that if funds had been made available to the school board to build that school specifically with the intention of putting in place a day care or a lunch and after-school program, then I wanted his assurance that the school board could not on its own initiative change the use of that space over the objections of the day care for which that money was then given.

If I understood the Minister correctly, he is agreeing with that policy and prepared to support that position.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would support any position that said that funds that are allocated for certain developments be used as such.

Mr. Alcock: One of the issues that arises, particularly when you come to lunch and after-school programs and really the provision of care for school-age children, the one for whom the department establishes a fee of \$8 and some cents from our earlier conversation, is that these are children who are cared for by the school from the time school opens until the lunch break and then after the lunch break until school closes.

I understand that there are some concerns that the Manitoba Association of School Trustees has about the question of who takes care of school-age children and that they are considering launching their own review or hosting a series of public meetings on this particular question. Has this been communicated with the department?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am not aware of the trustees association coming forward with that. I note that they are meeting in the city this week and that could well be one of the topics that trustees from across the province are kicking around. They have not communicated that to me at this point.

I can tell you that trustees are responsible for the schools within their division and, for instance, if there are increased costs that are incurred because of after-school programs, that is naturally going to be something that they are concerned with. If there are other activities going on in the building that are planned and take place other than school extracurricular activities, school boards and trustees are going to be concerned with that.

So the committee we have set up to investigate these issues is ongoing, and I think they are finding that they are struggling with some difficult issues. Each school division could well have a different view of that. I can tell you in rural areas, where probably half to more than half of the population of the school is bussed in and bussed out every day, students are on those school buses for an hour, an hour and a half in some cases.

If, for instance, after-school programs were going to have these students remain until five or six o'clock and they had to rearrange bus routes, it would be an issue that boards would be very concerned with. Then of course you get into the supervision aspect of it. Who is liable for the personal liability of students remaining in that building? Are they there for an after-school activity, or are they there for an activity that would be organized by the day care branch? There are a lot of legal issues and liabilities and cost implications that boards would be concerned with.

Mr. Alcock: The Minister raises an interesting point, and I would be interested in hearing more on that. The before-lunch and after-school programs that I reference here in the city, and I am not familiar, I must confess, about the situation that the Minister raises where children are bussed in, are really provisions for working parents who need to go to work prior to the start of the school day. They drop their children off. The centre takes care of them in that short period of time between the time the parents drop the kids off and the time school starts. They again supervise them through the lunch hour, and they supervise them after school until the parents are able to pick them up on their way home from work.

It is not the provision of special, recreational or community programs after hours. It is simply the supervision aspect to ensure that the working day is covered and the parents are guaranteed quality child care during the time that they have to be at work. Do any of these centres exist outside of the urban area? Do they even exist in rural areas? If not, how is that supervision question covered in rural schools where so many kids are bussed in?

* (1700)

Mr. Gilleshammer: My experience is that the staff put on extracurricular programs and are responsible for supervision. The buses will run at the regular times, and parents are responsible for any transportation that takes place after that.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Is it the wish of the committee to pass a couple of items?

Mr. Alcock: I just have a question I asked the Minister, which was: Do any of these before-lunch and after-school programs exist outside of the urban areas?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, there are some.

Mr. Alcock: Are any of those programs in, I believe it is the community of Beausejour or Lac du Bonnet?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We will be prepared to provide that answer when we next meet.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The time is now 5 p.m., and time for private Members' hour. Committee rise.

SUPPLY—ENVIRONMENT

Madam Chairman (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. The Committee of Supply is dealing with the Department of Environment, page 55. We are on item 2.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): There has been reorganization in this department, and it seems like the Environment Management area is one of the areas that has been affected.

I have been looking to find out where the area for environment control is. Can the Minister explain where this section is? Does it have a new name?

* (1450)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): It is under this section, led by the director of Environmental Control.

Ms. Cerilli: Who is the director of this section?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Larry Strachan.

Ms. Cerilli: Just to clarify, this is the part of the department that is responsible for compliance and enforcement of the Act?

Mr. Cummings: Perhaps I could enlarge a little bit on what the reorganization is here. This section that we are looking at deals with the environmental licensing, and the actual enforcement of breaches of the Act, for example, would fall under the responsibility of the regional directors. The enforcement is, in fact, a little bit closer to the local regions, and not a centralized function.

Ms. Cerilli: The environment control responsibilities and the responsibilities for compliance enforcement

are done by staff under the Environmental Management section. I would like to get a year-by-year breakdown of the staff positions that have had this responsibility for the last 10 years, the number of staff that have been responsible.

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairman, if I understood the question correctly, the Member asked for a relationship of the numbers over the last ten years. I do not think there is any way that I could respond to that question off the top of my head or by the memory of the officials here at the moment. Perhaps I could refer to my speaking notes which I distributed to the Members upon beginning these Estimates.

Departmental organization: We became a stand-alone department in '89. We reorganized into four units: Environmental Operations, Environmental Management, Legislation and Interjurisdictional Affairs, Planning and Innovation. With two central support units: Financial and Administrative Services, and Community Relations. Under there the department, in preparing these notes, went into some detail on expanding on each of the sections. I could restate some of the things that are in here under Environmental Management. I can give you the figures: From 1986-87, the number of staff years under Environmental Management were 159.9 or 160; in '87-88 there were 157.25; in '88-89, 151; the Adjusted Vote in '89-90 to 160; and then to 166 today, 166.21 staff years in total.

Ms. Cerilli: What I am wanting to do is to determine if the number of people who are responsible for enforcement and investigation to ensure that environmental laws are respected is going up or going down. There seems to be a lot of mystery in this area. How many staff who are responsible for those functions were in the department in '88 and '89?

Mr. Cummings: The figures that I gave a moment ago accurately reflect the total of the two areas. I think what the Member is referring to is that consistently, in responding to questions in this area, I have indicated that there is a lot more capability out there for enforcement of The Environment Act than just the members of the Civil Service who are employed by the Department of Environment.

We have a number of environment officer positions or licences that I sign for that are in other parts of the Government, including Natural Resources, including police departments across the

province, and they can enforce and report breaches of The Environment Act. In transportation situations, we have had a couple of issues that come to mind immediately that were reported by police officers.

Well, the Member is quite entitled to ask, how many people are employed in this department and under this area and, is there responsibility for enforcement? I can give her the figures that I just gave. The fact is that does not fairly reflect the capability across the province of enforcing The Environment Act. The numbers, relatively speaking, over the last four years have risen by a small amount but not an enormous growth.

The fact is, however, that I think there is some feeling out there among a number of people—maybe the Member Opposite supports that theory—that you only judge the capability of a jurisdiction based on how many fines they levy or how many times they go to court. Compliance is not only judged in terms of how many fines or levies are enforced.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Chair, we will get into that whole area in a moment. Right now I am just trying to establish, in 1986 and '87, of the 159 environment management staff, how many of those staff had the responsibility for enforcement and investigation?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairman, it sounds like we are talking about a police force here. We talk about enforcement and investigation. Public health inspectors, for example, enforce and ticket and do all sorts of work related to enforcement of The Environment Act, but the big portion of their time is also spent working to have people in compliance with the Act.

Remember that there have been an enormous number of changes the last couple of years in this province with the implications of the declaration of The Environment Act. I would hope that the Member is cognizant of the fact that by changing the law, you can all of a sudden bring a whole lot of people into a position where they are not in compliance.

Do you immediately the day after you change the law go out and ticket them? If that is what she is saying, I do not think I would agree with that.

* (1500)

Ms. Cerilli: It seems to me though that we should not have one way of approaching the law in respect to theft and other kinds of crime and another way of approaching the law with respect to the

environment. I am trying to determine how many staff, other than public health inspectors, are responsible for enforcement and inspection with regard to The Environment Act?

Mr. Cummlings: Probably between 78 and 90, a large portion of which are also public health inspectors. I see the Member smiling. That is exactly why I have been indicating that the term public health inspector in itself is a little bit misleading. They are responsible for enforcement of the sections of The Public Health Act, but they also enforce The Environment Act.

The City of Winnipeg provides the total public health inspection within the city, so you can take that area of their responsibility out. We are talking about the outlying areas of the province, primarily where the public health inspectors we have in the department are providing that function. They look after sewage discharges; they would be involved in notification to bring in emergency if it was something of a major nature. They are bringing into compliance any sort of discharges that would be within the regions that they are responsible for.

You could argue that all 166.21 employees in that section are capable of enforcing the Act; and they are. If you want to know how many are in the field at any given day, it is probably about 90.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Chair, of the 90 that are currently in the field, how many of those individuals have the sole responsibility of investigating for the purpose of enforcing environmental law?

Mr. Cummlings: The short answer is all of them. What I am trying to indicate is the same as so many other departments of Government. If you are going to have them specialize in the left nostril, you are not going to get very good work out of a doctor. The same is true of any other civil servant that is involved with compliance. They have innumerable cross-responsibilities that they are expected to deal with out there.

I am not annoyed with the question. I do hope my answers do not indicate that we are. I only want to explain that by saying we have 90 there. I want to qualify that by saying they have much more responsibility than just enforcement. If they just did enforcement, they would only be able to respond to complaints probably, or they would go around doing what they are doing today, which is to work with compliance, where you go where there are

discharges and make sure they are in compliance through either testing or observation.

All of those things are cross-sectorial. They could very well, in a rural setting, for example, be working with a Hutterite colony for the establishment of a hog lagoon in the morning and, in the afternoon, be working with the processing plant that processes that hog to make sure that its discharges are in compliance. The next day, they could be working with a household waste disposal site.

So it is a very broad responsibility, and I guess I do not want environment officers to be seen only as enforcement officers. My very strict directions to the department heads, whenever I have an opportunity to discuss this with them, are that the Department of Environment is there to work with the proponents and to work with the people who are trying to come into compliance. If they refuse, or if they are unable to come into compliance, then you use the full force of the law.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Chair, I hope that the Minister is not saying that we should wait until there is a problem, then send an inspector, then figure out how that individual that is polluting can solve the problem. I would think that it would be much better to have enough staff to go and inspect the kinds of facilities on a regular basis, that potentially could be causing hazards to the environment, and ensure that they are up to the regulations so that those kinds of problems can be avoided. That seems to be more truly environment protection. It seems that if we have 90 people in the field who are responsible for this area, how many of the 90 in the field are also responsible for the public health inspection, and looking for compliance with The Public Health Act?

Mr. Cummlings: We have 40 people, as I indicated earlier, within the department that are classified as public health inspectors. The Member still seems to feel that what I am saying is that we would not go out and work with a client to make sure they were in compliance, or that we would let them pollute before we started working with them. All of this is done in the context that there are an enormous number of operations out there that have to have an environment licence before they start up. We do not let them start until they have an environment licence. Then we enforce the conditions of that licence through inspections, just as she suggested, which is quite correct.

Her question might well be: How often are we able to come around and make sure that they are in compliance? That, same as any other enforcement, is done on a "not advised basis." In other words, the inspection may very well be on a schedule that is set out under the licence that they receive. On the other hand, other types of licences could be inspected for compliance without any prior notice, and certainly that is when you have some certainty, the same as a border crossing guard would have, that compliance is being afforded. In other words, you do not phone somebody up and say, I am coming tomorrow to check your lagoon effluent. If it is one that discharges regularly, you make sure that under the licence, in many cases, we also have ongoing daily testing that is required under certain licences.

Ms. Cerilli: Without getting distracted too much, I would like to ask the Minister to follow through on his example of lagoon effluent. How often, then, are they inspected, the lagoons that you were referring to?

Mr. Cummings: That would very much vary depending on the licence or depending on the type of effluent that would be involved. A private lagoon, for example, might be tested twice a year. An operation such as Repap is tested daily or more than once daily even.

Ms. Cerilli: The number of staff doing those inspections are the 40 staff that are in this area, or do they also include the Natural Resources staff and the other individuals that the Minister indicated previously?

Mr. Cummings: All of those, plus required self-testing, where the material is collected and sent to a lab. If that gives any thought for discussion, bear in mind that is also double-checked by people going in and confirming periodically that those tests are in line with the tests that are taken by independent people. It is a combination of many things. Yes, the Natural Resources people would be more involved where there was a breach, as police would be, as I understand correctly. They would not be assigned a regular route, if you will.

Your original question was, where there was enforcement, I assume you meant where there was an obvious breach or a spill, and anyone can report obviously, but Natural Resources officers or Environment officers and policemen are required to include those types of checks along with their

regular duties. I do not mean that they would take samples. I mean that if they saw a breach it would be their responsibility to make sure it was reported.

Ms. Cerilli: Who would be responsible for taking the samples then?

Mr. Cummings: I will have to get a little further information from the department, but I can tell you that I believe I have just indicated who would be responsible for taking the samples, depending on the nature of the licence. First of all, I want to make it clear I am talking about licensed facilities. So they would first of all have been required to have an Environment licence. Then on the licence it would indicate, as I have said, it could be as low as twice a year when a smaller private lagoon would be tested.

* (1510)

At the same time there could be in combination with that some self-testing which would be required to be sent into the lab in order to comply with the conditions of their licence. That could extend all the way to operations like Repap, where they would be required to do all of the testing, pay the cost for it, and that would be double-checked by Members of our staff.

So if I understand the question, then I guess I have answered it correctly. For example, the proponent receives their requirements of the licence for compliance purposes. In other words, if they do not send in the samples, they would obviously be out of compliance. If the samples they sent in were not within the guidelines that were laid out in their licence, obviously then they are out of compliance. Then we send somebody in immediately or as soon as possible.

Ms. Cerilli: So we have industries that are responsible for sending in their own samples that they are collecting themselves? Is that correct?

Mr. Cummings: One cannot make that sweeping assumption. Sometimes they are. Where they are required to do that we do spot checks to double-check that they are doing what is required of them. It seems to me that is a reasonable basis upon which to operate. The City of Winnipeg, for example, is one of the ones that I am referring to where they have a very competent staff who do the chemical analysis to meet the requirements of their licences. There is another example of another group of people who have Environment licences, to tell you the truth, certain city employees.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the Minister clarify then, when industries or companies that are under their licence required to submit a sample, in what kinds of cases they are allowed or permitted to collect and submit their own samples and, on the other hand, when they are having this done by staff in the department?

Mr. Cummings: There are no predetermined rules on this, frankly. It is included in the licence. I think I can indicate to you why that would be a rather prudent course to follow. It could depend on the competence of the employees available within the organization or whether or not the competence exists for the collection of the sample. It could also have a great deal to do with the toxicity of the material that is being watched for.

So these are laid down within the guidelines of the licence. In order to get a licence, you can take that back another step. That is where you get into the discussion and the public hearings as to whether and what certain conditions should be attached to the licence. So a company that goes through a full licensing process would make application to the province for a licence. They would then receive guidelines from the province as to what would be required under their assessment as to how they would deal with whatever the effluent might be even.

Then it would be advertised that they had applied for a licence. If there were public issues raised at that point, we could then call public hearings. After those public hearings, the licence could be compiled by the department and issued with restrictions to address the concerns that were raised plus the concerns the department had identified, or it could be referred to the Clean Environment Commission if it was a major situation. In fact, very often—and this is where I referred to the other day that the Clean Environment Commission's workload has gone up considerably—we have referred a few what would probably be considered private lagoon systems to the Clean Environment Commission because of the fact that they raised some local concerns when they made their application. Under those conditions, the quantity and the quality of the discharge is very clearly defined.

The thing there is that most of them do not discharge on an ongoing basis, which may be another thing that adds to the fact that there needs to be some flexibility in what is included in the test—no test by the department or whether the department provides the full service or whether the proponent

provides the service with monitoring by the department.

A private lagoon, for example, might only discharge twice a year. Those discharges would be monitored prior to allowing the discharge to be monitored by the department as a general course of events. There is an example of where the department would monitor the discharge, because the discharge would not be allowed without the sample having been procured and accepted by the department and, in most cases, taken by the department—I think in all cases, on those licenses, taken by the department.

The alternative is the other end of the spectrum, where you have a major operation like a large city that has qualified staff on hand to do the work.

Ms. Cerilli: So sometimes there are industries which are producing certain amounts of toxic substance into the environment that are required to have staff come and collect the samples; sometimes for a similar industry they are allowed to do that kind of work themselves. How is the competence of an organization determined, if they are competent or not to handle this on their own?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairman, I would think it would be very unlikely where similar industries would not be treated in the same manner. Where it would be other cases where the responsibility is delegated, we do spot checks for our own sampling to make sure that they are in compliance with their discharges.

I think the Member should reconsider her choice of words from a minute ago where she said where they are discharging toxins or toxic substances, I believe was the word she used, it is very unlikely that we have licences that are allowing the discharge of toxic materials. That is what our licence process is to do, is to eliminate or make sure that is at absolute minimum.

Ms. Cerilli: Certainly if they are not checked regularly, they could be allowing toxic substances to get into the environment, and that is what we are trying to avoid. My question was: How is the competence of licensed industry determined for them being delegated or having the testing of the substances that they are emitting delegated to their own organization?

Mr. Cummings: The conditions under which someone is required to take a sample where the proponent would be required to continuously

sample for testing, those conditions are laid down in the licence. Taking a sample does not necessarily mean that you will not analyze it. Most of the analysis is done by the department unless it is contracted out, which would be very rare.

I guess maybe I made a misleading statement a little while ago when I referred to the technical capability of an industry. There could be situations however, when if it were a technical test or technically difficult to take a sample, where the department simply would either have to be satisfied that the person doing the work was technically capable of doing it or that is an example of where we would be doing it and charging the cost back to the industry. You are getting into the area of very seldom, if you want to ask how often this happens. It is not that often.

Ms. Cerilli: What I am trying to determine is how the department decides on the competence of an industry to perform part of its own assessment, which is taking the sample. The Minister has indicated one thing. It sounds like there is a consideration of the technical capabilities of staff in the industry. Is that correct, or if not, what are the other things considered in determining the industry's competence?

* (1520)

Mr. Cummings: That is what I was trying to indicate a moment ago, that it would be very seldom where the competency of the staff would be the issue if you are simply collecting a sample. If you are doing something more than that, then you have to have some technical capacity. Then that is a different issue. Obviously where you get into very complicated tests even is the capacity of whether or not you are taking samples in a correct manner that is laid down under the conditions of the Act. The capability of doing it is not very often an issue. In fact, I think I would be hard pressed to give you an example of where that would be possible, but theoretically there are situations that could arise where we would have to include, in the licence, some consideration of whether it would be practical to have the sample drawn by someone other than the department itself. If it required something out of the ordinary, the nature of the discharge really dictates the nature of the licence.

That is what makes this department as complicated as it is. You cannot set up a simple set of guidelines that will cover all the licences. You can

set up a procedure and a guideline under which licences are required to meet certain standards in going through the process, but beyond that each issue is very individual.

Ms. Cerilli: The Minister is saying that it is difficult to have specific guidelines written down. Does the department have a written policy on enforcement in compliance with the Act?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairman, we have, over the past six months I think it is, put together a committee that is to do a study and make recommendations to me on compliance standards within the department. Largely, as a result of a new Act—as I indicated earlier—if you are talking about spills or whether you are talking about compliance within licences or whether you are talking about application for a licence, it is very easy for the department to make decisions in terms of what they do with industry or private individuals.

I think that too often we use the word industry, and we think that they are the main culprits out there. They could be. I can tell you that the vast majority of complaints that come across my desk as a result of complaints one neighbour against another—I should not say vast majority, but the majority, so very small issues rather than the larger ones, because the larger ones are pretty obvious and are pretty well controlled.

Ms. Cerilli: I find it amazing that we can have something as important as The Environment Act with no written policy on enforcement and compliance. How does the department then carry out its enforcement without any kind of a written policy?

Mr. Cummings: It is based on many years of experience by various members of the department in bringing offenders into compliance across the province. The Act is clear enough. I think where the Member and I may disagree refers to the summary conviction—or ticket, pardon me—or going to court for a larger fine, which requires the involvement of the Department of Justice. In no way am I trying to indicate that the Department of Justice makes the decision for the department but, as the Member would well recognize, it is very quick and simple to provide a ticket, but very often that ticket may not be significant enough.

The next question becomes, is there enough evidence on hand to have a conviction on a higher charge? Given that we work on the polluter-pay

principle, very often the cost of cleanup is large enough that it brings the offender very quickly into compliance. That is not an insignificant factor in enforcement.

* (1530)

The simple fact is that someone has to make a judgment about whether you proceed to the court, if there is enough evidence to proceed, and quite often we refer to the Department of Justice to see if we have sufficient evidence. When you are talking about something that may not have any witnesses or even have a connection to a direct location, then it becomes very, very thought-provoking as to how far you are able to go through the court system.

Ms. CerlIII: Now we are relying on the cost of the cleanup to deter polluters from not changing their practices. I find that disconcerting. When there is an initial infraction, are there charges laid?

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Ms. CerlIII: How many convictions have there been in the last five years in the different categories?

Mr. Cummings: That would have been included under our Operations Branch which has already passed the Estimates process. I can tell you that the numbers are not overwhelming. When you have situations where it costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to clean up a site, that is not an insignificant cost to someone who is a polluter.

Under the gasoline program, charges from the year 1979 have risen from 18 to 80, in the last 10 years. That is in one section.

Under the ticketing process, the inspection services, it varies between 24 to 27 and as low as nine over the last 10 years. Where they have gone to court, about half, or less than half, have been found guilty.

I think that last figure indicates the degree of difficulty under environmental law, when it goes to court, to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the person brought to court is indeed the one who did the polluting. Exploding manhole covers that occurred in this city a couple of years ago, or less than that, a year and a half ago, are a good example of how you know that somebody is playing games with the system but you do not know who.

Ms. CerlIII: I think it is interesting that the Minister has actually said that there are a very low number of tickets that have been given out, and I would think that this is because there is no written policy, and it

seems like there is not enough staff, and the staff have all sorts of other responsibilities.

Can the Minister tell us how many—he has told us how many tickets there have been—of the offenders have been told that they have to lay information? As I understand it, there are two ways that the charges can be laid. There can be a ticket given out, and the other procedure is there is a laying of information. How many even in the last—you told me that there were between 24 in the last, I think that was, five years? I am trying to get an accurate number of tickets that have been laid over the last five years as opposed to the numbers that have been sentenced or told that they have to lay information.

Mr. Cummings: Well, the Member a few minutes ago in her editorial comment said that the numbers here would indicate that we are not enforcing The Environment Act, or gave that implication. Maybe it is also a case of there not being as many offences out there as she thinks there is. The number of information as opposed to notices have been up and down and all over, but both are relatively small. It runs from 19 to nine, and really that is the range for both of them. The fact is that the Member is overlooking the fact that even in many cases where a ticket is given, cleanup costs will also be the responsibility of the offender. If the argument comes down to, are we going to get the environment cleaned up or are we going to risk having the offender in court and have them found not guilty and then allow them to say, well, we are not guilty. We do not have to clean up. Which would you sooner have?

I can give you examples that make some sense in that respect. Historic, gasoline, ground water pollution is a horrendous cost to whoever may have been found to have done that. It is also darn near impossible to prove if you have more than one or two gasoline suppliers in the area. If you can get compliance from the corporation to clean up the area without having to admit guilt, you will get the environment looked after, and you will not spend your day in court trying to get a \$100,000 fine.

The risk is that you will not be able to prove if that gasoline was there before they became responsible for the facility. If you fall into that category, then the Government will end up paying the cleanup costs.

That is why I think there needs to be some sensitivity on the part of our critics as to how this is

enforced. There is a judgment call, as there is in every enforcement policy everywhere, as to whether or not a charge can be laid.

I would think the bottom line in environmental enforcement is getting the cleanup done and making sure it does not happen again. If we accomplish those two goals the amount that we contribute to provincial coffers in terms of environmental fines becomes less important.

Ms. Cerlill: Madam Chair, the Minister used the example of gasoline regulations. On page 18 of my old annual report, there is a chart which shows that there were prosecutions initiated in 12 out of—I did not add up all the calls and charges, but there were only 12.

I am wondering if the Minister could tell us how many gas stations there are in Manitoba.

Mr. Cummings: I can give the Member a figure, but I cannot verify it. I could verify it with some research. I will give you a figure today for discussion purposes. I think there are close to 3,000 licensed facilities, but bear in mind that there are also other facilities out there on farm sites as well. You want to start adding those in, then you get into a lot different figure.

Ms. Cerlill: We have more than 3,000 gas tanks. There have been prosecutions initiated in this year for 12. What we are trying to do is do an inventory of the amount sold to equal the amount received to determine if there is a gas leak. Is that correct? Is that how the inventory is done?

Mr. Cummings: Service stations, any of your licensed operations require a daily dipping of their tanks to provide record keeping. They are required by law to send that record keeping to us, particularly if there is any noticeable change that is unaccounted for. They are liable to fines. If a change becomes evident and they do not report it, that in itself is a punishable offence.

Ms. Cerlill: So when these tanks are being inspected, they are inspecting the existing tanks. Is there also a regulation for registering new tanks? What is the current number?

Mr. Cummings: All new tanks have to be registered. That number would be included in the number I just gave. That is the total number.

The fact is that this is an area that is extremely important. It is also an extremely interesting area when you start looking at control of this substance. The human palate apparently can detect gasoline in

water when our equipment cannot, I am told by our technicians. Therefore, it is extremely important that this be kept out of the ground water at all cost.

There were new laws regarding tanks put in place in this province. That would have been within the last six years? I am told the new law would have been in 1975 that limits the life span of a tank, so that whether it is leaking or not it has to be removed and replaced after a certain number of years.

I do not know how often this happens, but I know of at least two occasions where leaks apparently came from the installation of newer tanks rather than from the ones that were taken out of the ground. That indicates how difficult it is even with preventative work in place to maintain integrity in this area.

* (1540)

You could indicate, well, you should have above-ground tanks as opposed to below-ground tanks so that any spills would be more obvious for leaks. The fact is that when we talk about hazardous waste, we could relate that directly to the Solvit explosion, where we know that the underground storage was the only safe storage in terms of volatility.

So when people in this province take some considerable umbrage at hazardous waste, the fact is that one of the most volatile and dangerous things that we handle in this province is the gasoline for our automobiles.

You asked the question earlier, how many new installations were completed this past year? The past year in this case would be 1989. There were 80 new installations in the Province of Manitoba. The fact is that we have in rural Manitoba, and I guess I have taken a fair bit of abuse for this, so I want to put it on the record, we have such stringent storage restrictions for bulk storage for the large above-ground tanks that you see, that we have driven the majority of small gasoline wholesalers out of business. They simply cannot afford it.

I think that when we talk about enforcement, we are not only talking about the number of fines that are laid, we are talking about the very onerous regulations and restrictions that we put on these operations.

We have had some considerable experience, as you might know, in the Neepawa area with gasoline spills. That spill probably occurred over a period of 10 to 15 years, and nobody was able to identify that

the gas was being lost. The volatility or the expansion and contraction portion of the gasoline contributed to probably a great deal of suspicion of the people that were handling the equipment because they thought there was not enough gas being sold. The fact was there were other reasons for it which showed up in the ground water.

Ms. Cerilli: We have 80 new tanks in the last year, and these are requiring—how often are these tanks inspected?

Mr. Cummings: They are pressure tested and inspected at installation and randomly tested thereafter. On the testing of an underground tank, bear in mind that a number of your corporations have now undertaken to put their own pressure testing system in place.

The fact is that pressure testing on old tanks under the old system they found probably ruptured some of them and contributed to gasoline spills. The fact is that the best record of maintenance of these tanks is from the bookkeeping.

Ms. Cerilli: How many staff within the department are doing the inspection of gas tanks?

Mr. Cummings: The department has had two people dedicated to the gasoline response and inspection across the province. With the regionalization of the department, we now have additional people. Each region will have people trained to do work in that area so, in fact, we will have tripled our capacity in the last year, I guess.

Ms. Cerilli: It sounds like that is good to hear. It sounds like this is one area for sure that needs more staff. I would like the Minister to tell us if private industry is also doing this currently, doing the oil inspection.

Mr. Cummings: I know for sure of at least one. I would think that it is fair to say that all of the major holders of underground facilities have them regularly checked.

In fact, there has just been new technology that is starting to come into the province now which is a sonar type of vacuum system rather than pressure. The companies have a very great vested interest in making sure they do not have ruptured or leaking tanks. That surely indicates to me that the responsibility for polluter pay is starting to take hold in terms of monetary decisions.

Ms. Cerilli: Before I was asking a question about the number of fines, tickets and the laying of

information; I would like to get back to that. I asked the question of initially were there charges laid? Can the Minister now expand on his answer of "yes" and clarify what is the current scheme that the department is using for the laying of fines, in terms of individuals and corporations?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairman, I will undertake to answer this question, but I would like to indicate to the Member that we passed this section and that we are, by agreement, going back to answer these questions. I would hope that we could move into the next section of the department.

* (1550)

I think it is fair to say that primarily the department today is using a ticketing process and where there are obvious or identifiable areas that larger fines could be imposed, we turn them over to the Department of Justice for pursuit. The problem, as I indicated before, is that very often and obviously, the onus of proof falls to the department or to the Government, and that connection is not easily made to the satisfaction of the courts. So if you have an opportunity to have a corporation agree to a cleanup, then in the terms of the environment you are far further ahead, rather than having to possibly lose a case and meanwhile have the Government do the cleanup itself with no possibility of recovery of funds.

Ms. Cerilli: I think I have a clear idea now of the Minister's position with regard to the enforcement of fines. I would like to know, though—start to get a better idea of the department's record in enforcing fines, so I will try again. Is there a clear policy on the amount of fines for a first-time offence, second-time offence, for an individual and for a corporation?

Mr. Cummings: Fines are identified under the Act and until the Act changes we are confined by that. That Act has been not that long in place.

Ms. Cerilli: I understand that partially the penalties include jail and fines up to \$1 million. Can the Minister explain to me what is the largest fine?

Mr. Cummings: Those amendments the Member just referred to were amendments that I introduced at the last Session to allow for the fines at those upper limits. Obviously when you are talking about a high level of fine, you are talking about being able to reach into the board rooms of large corporations and necessarily, in doing that, prove that they were responsible for knowing that the pollution was going

on and were, not necessarily conspirators, but certainly knowledgeable and guilty of allowing pollution to occur or even encouraging it. The largest fine that we have been able to achieve appears to have been about \$1,000.00.

Going back to the issue of larger fines for corporations, I think that is an example of why we have such ready compliance from corporations to pay for cleanups, for example, that there is a double risk. The risk, as I indicated, for the province is that if we undertake to prove a fine, the person could be acquitted and we might end up with an orphan site on our hands.

The risk for the corporation is that if we are successful, they could be eligible for a very large fine. No one likes to end up in jail. You could also, however, look at it—because we only have two large pulp mills in the province, it would be unfair to refer to that industry, but that is an industry on a national basis where discharges, wilful pollution, they have been accused of historically.

I think the one thing I want to emphasize is that we are only a million people in a relatively clean province. I note when they made comparisons about how this province rates nationally on various different issues, one organization—in Maclean's I think it was—chose to say that one of the reasons they rated a particular jurisdiction very highly was because they allowed only returnable bottles in their jurisdiction. Another reason that they might lower the rating of a jurisdiction was because they had a poor number of fines recorded. They rated them higher if they had more fines recorded.

I take some umbrage at that system because it means you have an awful lot more pollution going on if you get more fines levied. Just the same, and to be fair in this debate, to rate Manitoba highly on the number of towns over 10,000 that have sewage disposal systems, you do not need to think too long about that to know that we do not have too many towns over 10,000.

Let us keep the discussion of fines within context, and that is if you are going to have a lot of fines or a lot of charges, it better be a lot of incidences to have laid them against, or you are running around looking for trouble that is not there. Rather than make the comparison that we do not have enough staff, it is like sending an RCMP officer out to come back with 50 speeding tickets. The issue of quota is one of the more repugnant issues in law

enforcement. If that is what the Member is driving at, then I am rather concerned that this line of questioning is not heading in a fruitful direction.

Ms. Cerilli: If the largest fine that we have levied is \$1,000, my question to the Minister would be: Why increase the maximum fine to \$1 million?

Mr. Cummings: That is fair and reasonable question. I could give you a comparison. When Repap was not a Government-owned corporation, it had historic long-term pollution. They were not within the confines of any kind of environment licence, and when they were Manfor, perhaps the chairman of the board of Manfor could have been charged and put in jail.

That is the type of pollution that would have led to those kinds of charges. Now that we have Repap in there, they have undertaken to clean up that and operate under a tighter licence. To have a fine there and have it never used is not necessarily an indication that it cannot be used, but it is an indication that those who need to be brought into compliance out there are going to move to be in compliance because they do not want to face the full force of the law.

Ms. Cerilli: I am not sure if that answers the question of why increase the maximum fine to \$1 million when the Minister has obviously said that he is following a philosophy, or viewpoint, to go for having the polluters be punished, so to speak, by the cost of cleaning up the mess that they have made. Then why increase the fine to \$1 million, the maximum fine?

Mr. Cummings: It is pretty simple. Let us use the hypothetical case of Manfor again. If it costs them \$5 million to put in the equipment to stop the polluting, and they are only going to pay a small fine, then they may not be so anxious to respond.

The fact is that a judge will make the decision on the size of the fine. All we did was raise the upper limits so that for the type of situation that I described, the judge could be free to levy a fine up to \$1 million. It seems to me to provide a reasonable situation.

I can provide examples of where judges have looked at Acts and have said, well, that is an unreasonable figure in terms of being too high, and that they would not, even though the prosecutor asked for the maximum, even think of awarding them the maximum.

Ms. CerlIII: In Manitoba the highest fine that we have levied is \$1,000, while in Ontario their average fine is \$7,000.00. One of the explanations is Ontario has 18 attorneys.

Point of Order

Mr. Cummings: The fines are not levied. The judge imposes them and the judges have only chosen to impose a maximum of \$1,000.00.

Madam Chairman: The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over facts.

* * *

Ms. CerlIII: How many attorneys does the Department of Environment have in the department?

Mr. Cummings: Perhaps I could refer to Mr. McCrae and ask him how many attorneys are available in the Department of Justice because that is where we go.

* (1600)

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(b).

Ms. CerlIII: Oh, we have a new Minister for the Environment.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Chairperson, I was very pleased recently to discuss our environmental unit in our department—

An Honourable Member: Who is the Minister here?

Mr. McCrae: Well, we regret that there seems to be an echo in this room somewhere, Madam Chairperson, but somehow we will muddle our way through.

I was pleased, and so was the Honourable Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) and the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), to hear that we are developing an expertise in the Department of Justice for the prosecution of environmental cases.

We have a person who has been designated in our department to take part in our—it is a part of our commercial crime section, and this part of it is dedicated to environmental issues. I identified the person as being Mr. Murray Conklin in our department, a very fine and talented prosecutor who is heading up the environmental component of our commercial crime section.

Ms. CerlIII: One of the comparisons that I have already made is the difference between laws and enforcing laws with respect to other crimes and with respect to the environment.

One of the practices that has been proving effective is the Crime Stoppers line and the same type of program for hunting laws. Has the Minister given any consideration to developing programs like that for environmental laws where there can be a phone-in line?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, and in fact we have an emergency response line that could be used and is often used under those circumstances.

Ms. CerlIII: How was the public informed of this line?

Mr. Cummings: It seems to me that it is listed in the Government listing. Every municipality has the emergency response number, the fire departments, police, Natural Resources and there is a public listing. I do not think it is in every exchange, but there is a public listing in several places.

Ms. CerlIII: That public listing I imagine is with the regular phone book.

Can the Minister tell us if there are any programs or initiatives to work with employers, where there is the likelihood of environmental problems, to make this phone line more public or more apparent to employees, because I think it would be employees who would be the ones more privy to if there are any environmental problems from an industry?

Mr. Cummings: That is a reasonable suggestion. Although I would think that if you were—for example areas where they work with gasoline, the company's number and the provincial number are both publicly posted where not only the employees but the general public can see them.

Ms. CerlIII: Are there currently, that the Minister is aware of, municipalities that are allowing raw sewage to pass into Manitoba lakes and rivers?

Mr. Cummings: Not on a regular basis. I am well aware that there are some northern communities on reserves that have not yet got adequate facilities. There, on occasion, are discharges that are allowed by the department under special permit. Beyond that, the answer would be no.

Ms. CerlIII: With respect to Repap, I understand that the bleaching process would have allowed chlorine dioxin and chlorine to pass into the water that would

have been near The Pas. Were these the bleaching agents that were proposed?

Mr. Cummings: They have not yet made application on that phase two licence.

Ms. CerlIII: Is the Minister aware of the bleaching agents that would be used in the Repap facility?

Mr. Cummings: I am sorry, I was in conversation. Would you repeat the question?

Ms. CerlIII: Is the Minister aware of the bleaching agents that would be used in the Repap facility?

Mr. Cummings: The question was, am I aware of the bleaching agents that would be used? Well, obviously, that is part of any application, but the fact is that we also have been working and continue to work with Repap on technologies, and the recent licensing of the Alpac plant in Alberta is considered to be a very acceptable technology. It just went through a joint review, as I understand it. This was one of the plants that was held up for awhile in Alberta, as you would be aware. They came back with a second proposal with a different process, which I believe is now likely to be accepted, if it has not already been.

At any rate, the point I am trying to make is that information was received by our department and forwarded to Repap for their consideration, so that we have constantly got our eye out into the future for the best possible process that could be put in place.

Ms. CerlIII: I think that the Minister is also aware that the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans were opposed to the mill that he referred to in Alberta. Has this Government developed a position on chlorine bleach in Manitoba, and can you explain to us what that position is?

Mr. Cummings: That position has been pretty obvious and has been stated a number of times. That is that the licensing process that a company will be subject to will make sure that any kind of discharge is well below and confined to levels that are basically undetectable. Of course when something cannot be detected, then one would assume that it has been eliminated or is virtually eliminated from any discharge.

Ms. CerlIII: What was the basis or considerations when developing that position?

Mr. Cummings: One of the things that drives any industry is consumer demand. I am sure one of the

considerations that Repap themselves are taking a very close look at these days is what consumer demand will do to their markets. Interestingly enough, they are, I am told, doing much better on the present production line than the previous operation had and, therefore, that has some impact on their decision-making process as well.

* (1610)

The fact is that it is our job to make sure that any discharges are controlled or eliminated and keep them well within the standards that are acceptable. Manitoba's standards are 1.5 as compared to the national standard of 2.5; Repap was capable of coming in at less than a third of what our standard is. You are into an area that is virtually undetectable. The fact is that we cannot dictate what process is going to be put in place, but we can regulate.

Ms. CerlIII: Is the Minister aware of the impacts of dioxins and other organic chlorines that would be the discharge from Repap?

Mr. Cummings: The question implies that there would be a discharge, and I reject it.

Ms. CerlIII: I think the point is, the Minister has said that there will be a discharge although it will not be detectable.

Mr. Cummings: How does one imply an undetectable substance? I do not think you can, Madam Chairman, and that is exactly my point.

Ms. CerlIII: The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has rejected the proposal for a similar plant in Alberta based on the fact that they are not convinced that is the case, that just because you cannot detect it that it means it is fine.

It seems that the economics of Repap have been placed ahead of the fish in the lakes and rivers of Manitoba. I think there will be detectable levels at some point in the future on the fish in that region. Can the Minister clarify if that is the position that they have taken?

Mr. Cummings: There were a number of projects that were going forward in Alberta. I am not sure if the Member is referring to the same one that I am, but if we assume that we are talking about the same one, the position of the regulators has been changed after the company came back with a tightened-up version of their application with further technological advances included. I completely reject any suggestion that we are going to allow environmental matters to slide in order to

accommodate industry. The two have to work together. Simply, the industry will not be there if it has no reason for being; in other words, it has to meet a market demand.

Second, we have to make sure that the renewable resources are protected so that they will be there for as many generations as exist in this area, and I think the licensing process that we are going through, the Member might want to contemplate what is coming down the river before it ever gets to The Pas. The fact is that the total load on the river is much more relevant to the health of the fish and the wildlife in this province than any impact that will be made by changes that are presently being contemplated by Repap.

Ms. CerlIII: Perhaps the Minister could explain what he means about what is coming down the river. What is coming down the river?

Mr. Cummings: The total load of any river, and Winnipeggers should be only too conversant with the fact that rivers will pick up pollution all the way along and the cumulative effect shows up at the mouth of the river. You are at the fork of two rivers that are very near the end of their route. The fact is that there are other pulp mills upstream from The Pas.

Ms. CerlIII: So the Minister of Environment is using the argument that because there are already pollutants in the river that we should allow more dioxins into the water?

Mr. Cummings: No, Madam Chairman, what I am saying is, that is all the more reason that we have to be extremely cognizant and careful about what we do. The Member smiles as much as to dismiss that suggestion. The fact is that in the licensing process the background information of the river is clearly taken into consideration. That is one of the very important aspects, things that are being considered in a licence at this juncture, very important to the health of the river.

Ms. CerlIII: Let us talk about Manfor. The Members opposite have talked about the pollution created by the Manfor Corporation. Can the Minister explain what is the environmental damage of Manfor?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairman, I do not very often get an opportunity like this during the Estimates process, but perhaps one should not take advantage of it.

The fact is that we do not know what the total cost of the Manfor legacy will be, and we may not know for some time. We have PCB storage that was improper. We have ground-water contamination that may well be nearly impossible to totally control. We have sewage lagoons that were improperly constructed, leaking into the ground water and into the river. We have unlicensable discharges. We had underground piping that was leaking. The plant itself has an asbestos cleanup cost. The numbers become astronomical after a while.

If this had been a private company, I think we would be facing an orphaned site, and we would probably be eligible for some significant assistance from the federal Government. -(interjection)- That is right. Now what we are faced with is the inefficiency and the downright larceny that was imposed upon the environment by the previous administration in not dealing with the problems as they became apparent, because they knew they could not afford it. They knew Manfor could not afford it, and now the people of this province are going to end up paying the price.

There is just no question that the price that is attached to this cleanup may very well become a price that the people of this province are going to have difficulty meeting. Because of the cleanup of the Bunker "C" that has gotten into the ground water, the only way that it may be cleaned up is to develop a water treatment plant with capacity to remove the oil and pump all the water out of the ground system over a period of years, and then you might not get it all. That is the kind of environmental foolishness that we have inherited.

We are now sitting here debating about whether or not we fined enough people. The major cost to this province in environmental cleanup is not going to be the Shell spill downtown. It is not going to be the cost of cleaning up or adding additional treatment costs to the City of Winnipeg. It is going to be in the old Manfor site, and there are no resources to get the money from. The plant was worth nothing. The business is worth nothing. We are left with the cost of cleanup.

So I think that we very well are seeing where the one real environmental problem is in this province. It is a result of some very careless decisions that were made over a period of years by an administration that was trying to protect a Crown corporation that was floundering day after day after day. Not only did they lose money, but contributed

to the fact that they were unwilling to spend additional money for cleanup.

* (1620)

In fact I can tell you of people who worked on that mill site since its inception who, when I became an elected official, approached me and said, for God's sake will you get this thing into private hands, it is going crazy here. They were looking at the environmental problems that were going on. They were looking at the management problems that were occurring and they said, the Crown corporation cannot handle this. We have got to get it into the hands of somebody who has some management capability.

Truly the cleanup costs of the ground water are going to be enormous. It is something that occurred over a period of time through sheer carelessness. The loading and unloading of the Bunker "C" need not have been a polluting factor, but there were employees there whose work was not being managed; they were being wasteful in making their connections when pipes broke. So they broke; they did not worry about it.

The fact is that most people assumed that you can scrape this stuff up off the top of the ground and that would be the end of the problem. That is not what happened. It ended up getting into the ground water. I cannot put a price on what it would cost to clean up Manfor. I wish I could. I thought awhile ago that I could.

The fact is that between Repap and the money that they are putting into the cleaning up of the mill site itself and the costs that are associated with the long-term cleanups, it will be several millions of dollars. I would not want to make a guess on one side of the issue or another as to how many millions. It is going to be expensive and it may damn near be impossible.

Ms. CerlIII: Can the Minister explain which laws were broken by this company?

Mr. Cummlngs: Any standards of emission were never maintained.

Ms. CerlIII: When was the pollution detected? When did you find out about the environmental problems?

Mr. Cummlngs: The day my predecessor walked into his office was the day that we became aware of the extent. The fact is that no matter how you cut it, when you have a Crown corporation that knows

where it is going to have to go to get its next dollar, which is back to the Government—and we have had that experience with MPIC. We have had that experience and it is very difficult for anybody in a decision-making position to have to address that.

The comments that I make about the fact that it was not dealt with early on, would have highlighted, in the eyes of the public, the inability of the management of the day to deal with it and therefore, in my opinion was not dealt with expeditiously.

Ms. CerlIII: I would like Mr. Strachan to—is Mr. Strachan here? Could Mr. Strachan explain why no charges were laid, in his view?

Mr. Cummlngs: Mr. Strachan is not here.

Ms. CerlIII: Maybe the Minister can explain how we are to know then that no other situations like Manfor are currently happening in Manitoba.

Mr. Cummlngs: I guess we do not know that there is not a leaking fuel tank somewhere as we speak, but we can be pretty sure there is not. We do not know that somebody is not speeding down Portage Avenue, but we can be pretty sure somebody is.

The fact is that—and I am looking at departmental officials—we do not know today of anybody who is in violation of their licence. There may be some that we will find, or there may be some that have been found in the last few days.

We do not have an outstanding list of people who are in violation of their licence. We do have an ongoing process whereby we are changing directors' permits to licences, but all discharges that we have had under permit or licence appear to be in compliance. One should never assume there is not something that could come off the rails. I am not going to give an ironclad guarantee.

I guess the other thing I could be quite firm on is that certainly it would be my opinion that there is nothing of the scale of what has occurred at The Pas. On the other hand, one should caution that, inasmuch as a gasoline leak can be a latent situation because from an underground tank, as I have indicated, a transfer line with a pinhole in it over a period of 10 years can pollute an aquifer.

This case, by comparison, in The Pas was where we had obvious Bunker "C" being spilled from tank cars. That is not too hard to see that something is going on.

Ms. CerlIII: The Ozone Depleting Substances Act was passed this past February. We know that this

is enabling legislation. The real work is in the regulations. Who in the department is working on regulations for this Act?

Mr. Cummlings: Dick Stephens is the—and through David Johns, Norm Brandson and a number of our directors, but Dick Stephens is the one who is the most deeply involved.

I think it is only fair to say that I would offer the Member the same—I would like to extend the same offer to the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) as I did to the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) yesterday, to have an opportunity to meet with Mr. Stephens and discuss what regulations are seen to be attached to the Bill.

That seems to be one of the touchy issues around here these days. For the information of the Member for St. James as well, I think we can indicate a number of the regulations that would be attached because they are directly related to CEPA, and we can provide that additional information.

Ms. Cerilli: Dick Stephens is a senior member in the department. What are his other responsibilities besides working on this legislation?

* (1630)

Mr. Cummlings: He works on intergovernmental affairs, legislation and regulatory development and a number of other duties I presume, I know that would be assigned.

I think there was some confusion yesterday that I would like to clear up, when you referred to people working in my office. Mr. Stephens is referred to as part of that group in terms of position. While his staff and his salary would be attached in that area, that is not a direct reflection of what happens. He is within the department. He is not within my office, and I did not mean to imply that he was a political employee in any way.

Ms. Cerilli: Does Mr. Stephens have a time line for this legislation? Can the Minister explain what that time line is?

Mr. Cummlings: I had to think for a minute what the Member was referring to in terms of do we have a time line. As a Minister, I am responsible for the introduction of the legislation and getting it through these Chambers. If there is a time line, it is my time line and the time line of the Government. If you are asking how long would it take to develop regulations associated with it, is that what the question was meant to ask? I am not sure.

I will go back to the start of the introduction of Bill 24. Before this House was called, we had principles within the regulation out for discussion about entering into joint assessment, and there were both provincial and federal people at those meetings. Those meetings did not conclude until into November. Legislation was then ready to be introduced in this House, but there was discussion between the House Leaders—go ahead.

Point of Order

Ms. Cerilli: I was asking questions about the regulations for The Ozone Depleting Substances Act.

Madam Chairman: The Honourable Member for Radisson does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Cummlings: Could I finish my line of thought? I will refer to that question, but I think it is relevant what I am trying to say, and that is that when we introduced the legislation in the House, we were interested in introducing it a little earlier in the month. The fact is, it was subject to some negotiation between the House Leaders.

That is really irrelevant at this point, but the time line associated with that Bill is that we put the November 1 deadline on there. That is really what I wanted to get at. The November 1 date on Bill 24 is there because we want to make sure we capture everything that is associated with the Conawapa project. We do not want any questions down the road about what our intentions were relative to Conawapa. What is to be in or out of a joint process? It was to be in, and we want to make sure that was made clear from the start.

I thought your question was how soon we might be able to have regulations out for discussion if we have that Bill introduced. I want to tell you that could be done relatively quickly, early in the new year, January.

Ms. Cerilli: It makes me wonder how many of the other questions I have asked have been listened to because when I started talking about this next section, I specifically said the regulations for The Ozone Depleting Substances Act, but I can guarantee that my mind is more often these days on Bill 24.

Now can the Minister do the same and give us an update on the time line for when he expects the

department to have the regulations for The Ozone Depleting Substances Act to be prepared?

Mr. Cummings: The regulations for The Ozone Depleting Substances Act are drafted, and they will be out for discussion quite shortly. We had some discussion yesterday with the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) on that topic. I do not know that he was satisfied with my answer, but this is the update I have from the department. It may be a more current answer.

Ms. Cerilli: How many staff in the department are responsible for drafting legislation? Sorry, excuse me, drafting regulations?

Mr. Cummings: Primarily, there are two people who are closely involved, but the process that is followed in the department, which is one I am comfortable with, is a process I inherited. The department was functioning before I came along and will function after I leave, I hope. The fact is that a number of people across the department have suggestions and input, but primarily the work comes up through two people.

Ms. Cerilli: So there are two staff primarily working on regulations. I have a number of other Acts that are in process for developing regulations.

Can the Minister give me a clear number of Acts that are currently having regulations drafted in the department?

Mr. Cummings: While the department is getting the exact numbers out here, I think it should be fair to indicate almost all of our areas are being worked on and upgraded regularly. The total looks like four Acts that we are mainly working on right now. The Environment Act, Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation, Waste Reduction and Prevention, and The Ozone Depleting Substances Act. The two that we are not working on are The High Level Radioactive Waste Act and The Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation Act.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Chairperson, before we leave the topic, generally, on Bill 24, I want to ask a couple of questions. I do appreciate the candidness of the Minister and his department yesterday, in inviting me into their office. I simply want to indicate to the Minister that the regulations which are indicated as coming forward—I want to ask if the Minister anticipates having another public consultation process involving public hearings, whatever he would

propose coming forward further to Bill 24? I just want to confirm whether or not what I heard him say is what, in fact, he meant.

Mr. Cummings: What I want to indicate is that we have some ability to bring forward a package of regulations that would not be complete. I have to indicate I would not have all the regulations complete that would be going out for discussion. The regulations that are relevant to, I think, the areas of concern that both Opposition Parties have in relation to Bill 24, I believe we have those regulations well enough in hand that we could give you a draft copy. They would go from that to public review. That would not entail carte blanche approval from my critics or from any critics. It is simply a matter of information to make sure that people understood what regulations were being considered in relationship to these two amendments, particularly the amendment regarding joint process. They are, as I indicated in Question Period today—would be largely a reflection of regulations that are in the federal process, because obviously they would not enter into agreement with us if we do not go to that standard, particularly on the appointments and a couple of other areas, the scoping area, as well.

So I am prepared to get that information in the hands of my critics as quickly as possible.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, with respect to the Endangered Species initiative which has come on to the scene, happily, in the last year or so at the instigation of many groups, the Wildlife Federation, I believe, and certainly the Sierra Club and others have been involved. I received correspondence. I think the Minister, certainly the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did as well, in November, from the Sierra Club. They indicated there that Manitoba's record in the area of protecting habitat and wild lands is far below the national average. They say that currently only 1.5 percent of our province is preserved, and that considering the rate at which it is disappearing, if action is not taken immediately the goal of 12 percent may never be attained.

* (1640)

Is the Minister of Environment aware of these concerns, and is he planning to take any action, in concert no doubt with the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), to deal with it?

Mr. Cummings: This sounds like a revisiting of the debate we almost got into on policy for parks. The

fact is, yes, I am aware of the interest and the concerns of the Sierra Club. I do not necessarily—and I am not equipped to get into a debate this afternoon on whether or not their figures that are indicated there are accurate except that it is my opinion that we can meet the Endangered Spaces guidelines. We have committed ourselves to doing that, and I am very pleased with that commitment. The Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources have certainly been willing to be as accommodating as is reasonable, and I think our record shows that we will probably do quite well in that area.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, the Minister has talked about the City of Winnipeg, and, of course, the City of Winnipeg being exempted when the new Act came into place immediately before this Minister took office, or at least given special status in order to recognize the realities of the City of Winnipeg complying with The new Environment Act. I wonder if the Minister can give us an update on what is happening between the representatives of the city and him with respect to compliance and in particular what has happened with respect to snow dumping on the rivers?

Mr. Cummings: First of all I will respond to the snow dumping and then I want to consult with the department on a couple of other items. The snow dumping—we set a deadline, we issued an order, and, as far as I know, I would expect it will be met. The date on that order is that by '92 there will be no more snow dumping. I believe that the city has voluntarily eliminated all of their sites. I knew they were going to do some of them. I understand from my colleague, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), that it looks like they will all be eliminated now. So there is an example of where a little bit of enforcement and a lot of agreement goes some considerable distance.

I should put on the record, because it makes some difference in the long run, the fact is I have found the City of Winnipeg has moved some considerable distance in the way they respond to issues our department raises. Within the last year I do want to indicate that I felt there has been much better co-operation as the period of my tenure in this office has progressed, and I think the city needs that recognition because there are a number of areas where they are open to criticism and have been criticized. I will get some further information in just a minute.

Madam Chairman, from the date of the proclamation of The Environment Act the city has been under The Environment Act. They were not exempt after it was proclaimed. All of the discharges of the city are within compliance of their present licence, but we are in the process of upgrading their licences and that involves resetting of standards and objectives. So there are two of them that have already been done and also, as part of that process—the two I am referring to, the south end pollution control centre and the west end pollution control centre have both been redone. Those are fully in compliance under the new Act. The Clean Environment Commission hearing slated for the water quality of the two rivers is in fact also relevant to the licensing process for the city because what they discharge is very relevant to the quality of the river. The debate we had with the city last year was that we did not need to wait on the water quality issues, that we could set standards for discharge without the water quality levels. That is what we did, but further fine tuning of the water quality objectives within the boundaries of the city or within the greater city area will be set by the Clean Environment Commission after the hearings.

I think there is a very good process in place here that I also know is not widely known in the public, but it is all interrelated. I sit on a committee with the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister of municipal affairs, which is the greater municipalities or the City of Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities, discussing planning and issues. One of the issues that is very relevant to that as well is water quality, and the quality within the city is relevant to the municipalities upstream and the municipalities downstream. The city of Selkirk has been invited to become part of that process as well because it is certainly very relevant to them what goes down the Red River after the two rivers have joined.

I think we are embarked on a very positive track in the long run in developing long-range plans to complement and enhance the short-term things that we are doing in terms of licensing and controls. Licensing and controls in themselves will not answer all the questions or problems.

Mr. Edwards: The Minister has indicated that the Clean Environment Commission hearings are scheduled on this on the issue of water quality. Can he indicate when those hearings are scheduled for,

or if they have not been specifically dated, when he expects they will be?

Mr. Cummlngs: When we announced that these hearings would take place, we indicated that we knew it would take a while to get everything in place to do it. We are expecting this coming spring, but we have not set a date. The commission is working with the various jurisdictions, but it will be a very large undertaking and one that will have to be done with a great deal of preparation. That is what is going on at this time.

Mr. Edwards: The Minister and I have already discussed earlier in these debates the involvement of the federal Government and, indeed, the City of Winnipeg in dealing with our rivers. I think we canvassed whether or not there was likely to be any kind of a three-Party initiative in this area and, as I recall, the Minister indicated that he was certainly hopeful that we would be able to draw in some federal contributions. In particular, as we are dealing with the City of Winnipeg, I think of the enormous cost of dealing with the sewer and storm sewer linkage problem at the city which, of course, is estimated to be a billion dollars or more to deal with that problem.

What is happening with that issue in respect of any negotiations with the federal Government to contribute to this infrastructure need, which is clearly a need from an environmental as well as, I am sure, an engineering standpoint, but certainly an environmental one? Is there any ongoing discussion or any hope for some kind of a contribution from three levels to deal with this problem?

* (1650)

Mr. Cummlngs: Madam Chairman, obviously the combined outfall sewers are an issue that is going to be there for a long time. I would not want to leave any other impression but the fact that that is not the area where I am anticipating necessarily federal support, although certainly it is always something that can be pressed for. The city has been pressing for support from the province, as well, and it is a long-term infrastructure issue.

What I am indicating is that I feel that all three jurisdictions may have a possibility of being able to do something for river quality, but I in no way can make any comment other than to say that I am hopeful. I am not indicating that we are in the middle of some sort of negotiations. I am simply saying that it is not an area that is confined to interest here, that

I have received some positive signs of interest from other people. That is the only thing that I can offer. In political reality some people might say that is nothing, but the fact is there is not as much negativism there as might be expected.

Mr. Edwards: Can the Minister indicate what the compliance rate is from the city with respect to the interim measures, I think, which were recommended a couple of years ago, I believe? That is, given that a billion dollars is not going to be spent to separate the systems, I believe there were some interim measures which were supposed to have been taken or were recommended. It was, I believe, the Clean Environment Commission that made those recommendations.

Can the Minister indicate whether or not this city is complying with those and whether or not the province is attempting to enforce those interim measures?

Mr. Cummlngs: I am not sure that I can answer that question. If I cannot answer it, obviously I am not enforcing them. We may have the answer, but I do not deduce it from your question. The city has taken in their construction program, I know, some measures wherever they are replacing sewer and water. They are replacing the old combined sewers and putting considerable money and effort into that, although it is still a number of years away from ever being halfway completed.

If that is what he is referring to, that seems to be moving along adequately, but I am not aware, off the top of my head, of any orders or advice that we are supposed to be enforcing.

Mr. Edwards: I do not have the document in front of me, but it is my understanding that there were some recommendations made with respect to measures which could be taken at the point of where the storm drainage drains entered the rivers, that there was some form of technology which could be employed to lessen the negative environmental impact.

I recall the comment at the time, and I believe it was a comment which was circulated to various politicians. The comment at the time was that they were not being complied with, that there was not an adequate interim effort—not spending a billion dollars, but not an adequate interim effort being made at the place where the storm waters entered the Red River. I wonder if that has jogged his

memory as to any discussions he has had with the city on that issue.

Mr. Cummings: I am still a little bit at a loss in terms of the documentation the Member might be referring to. We may be addressing it anyway inasmuch as the Clean Environment Commission, during this process we are embarking on, will be identifying just the things that he is talking about.

That is why I am a little bit concerned that perhaps what he is talking about is something that is already under way as a matter of course, because my predecessor referred to the fact that there were some recommendations regarding treatment. Those are ongoing. I know that the replacement program is in place. If they are talking about an installation of some sort of facility, then I can be pretty sure that has not happened.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairman, these Estimates no doubt will not finish today, and what I will do is bring back that document to the House the next time we meet. I hope the Minister will give me leave at that time, regardless of what appropriation we are on, to be more specific about that question.

With respect to the Assiniboine River and indeed all rivers, the Minister may recall, I believe it was last year, Headingley jail had a problem. Instead of paying money at the time to get trucks to ship the sewage to appropriate places to dispose of it, it was pumped into the Assiniboine River. It was in the wintertime, as I recall, and the statements at the time, I believe, were that the Department of Environment had been consulted and agreed.

I took issue with that at the time because, of course, mine as well as many other's constituencies are along the Assiniboine River. We all have an interest in the cleanliness of the Assiniboine River, but those constituencies in particular - (interjection) - and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) indicates it goes through his constituency, and I appreciate the importance to him. I am sure that he would join me in the astonishment that the Headingley jail was allowed to pump raw sewage into the Assiniboine River. I do not recall him standing up at the time and saying that he supported us, but I am sure that he would at this point.

I wonder if the Minister can indicate whether or not there have been policy changes since that incident to ensure that for the relatively small investment it would take to make sure that the sewage is properly disposed of, we do not

compromise the environment and just allow institutions like Headingley jail to pump that raw sewage into the river systems?

Mr. Cummings: Unfortunately, Madam Chairman, this is one of those issues that has a bad optic to it, but does have a logical answer. The fact is that—

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Bad optic?

Mr. Cummings: That is right. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) knows what that is. The fact is, that in licensing the discharge, the Department of Environment looked at what the oxygen demand would be, and determined that by the volumes of the river and the volumes that were to be discharged and the contents of what would be discharged. By comparison, the oxygen demand load that limited discharge put on the river was less than half in total than what the west end treatment facility puts in the river daily.

In terms of damage to the fish or aquatic life, it was minimized. Therefore, the levels were controlled, and it was predetermined what would be discharged and what the contents would be. It was meant to clean up a long-term issue in terms of maintenance of the facilities in that area. One never appreciates having to do these sorts of things, but taken in the context of management, it was not a situation that created any damage within the river. Certainly, those types of things need to be kept at an absolute minimum. This was not a toxic discharge. It was a sewer discharge, and it was pumped into the river in a manner that was meant to be as minimal impact as possible.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private Members' hour, the committee rise and call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): The Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL 9—MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 9, Manitoba Intercultural Council Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil interculturel du Manitoba, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

SECOND READINGS

BILL 5—THE RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: Second readings, Bill 5, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act; Loi modifiant sur le ventes au détail.

Order, please. In reviewing Bill 5 sponsored by the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), I had some concerns that this Bill might be a money Bill and therefore contravene the rules of this House.

Because of my concerns, I sought the advice of the Law Officer of the Assembly respecting the objective of this Bill and was advised as follows:

"The definition of 'purchase price' in subsection 1 (1) of The Retail Sales Tax Act at the moment includes the amount of any tax imposed by any level of government. The effect of the amendment in Bill 5 is to exclude from the calculation of purchase price the amount of the GST. Because the tax is calculated as a percentage of the purchase price, to reduce the amount of the purchase price is to reduce the amount of the tax that is payable.

In my opinion, therefore, the Bill is a money Bill and requires a Royal Recommendation, because it has the effect of reducing the amount of the tax that would otherwise be payable to Her Majesty."

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Our Rule 53 (1) provides, in part, that "Any vote, resolution, address or Bill introduced in the House . . . to release or compound any sum of money due to the Crown . . . shall be recommended to the House by a message from the Lieutenant-Governor before it is considered by the House."

Beauchesne's Citation 599 (1) indicates that where any motion requires but fails to receive a Royal Recommendation, that is, a message of the Lieutenant-Governor, it is the duty of the Speaker to inform the House that the motion may not be proceeded with or to declare the Bill out of order.

I must therefore rule the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) that Bill 5, The Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act be now read for the second time, out of order, because the Bill is a money Bill, and therefore as it has not been recommended by a message of His Honour, contravenes our Rule 53.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, just by way of clarification, I appreciate your ruling and the research that you have gone into on this matter. I just want to make the point that this Bill did serve to focus the attention of this Government on this very important matter.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. 8—BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Mr. Bob Rose (Turtle Mountain): I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer),

WHEREAS bridge construction has been a long-standing concern of many municipalities; and

WHEREAS the Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program was introduced in 1989 to help alleviate the burden carried by municipalities with respect to infrastructure investment; and

WHEREAS six construction projects, worth over \$600,000, have been approved under the auspices of this program.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the positive steps taken by this Government to improve rural infrastructure and to ensure the safety of the motoring public.

Motion presented.

Mr. Rose: It is an honour for me today to move this resolution, and I think it gives the House an opportunity to recognize some of the good things that are happening, some of the good things that this Government is doing. I guess it is the nature of the debate in the House that we do spend a lot of time looking at the negative things. Particularly at this time of the year, it seems to me that it is an appropriate time of the year to take time to recognize the good things that do happen.

I am not suggesting, of course, that we should exchange cards and gifts, decorate our streets, decorate our houses, bring trees inside our homes and decorate those, to create songs and to sing them in groups just to honour the birth of the Honourable Albert Driedger, the Minister of Highways—not those things that I am suggesting, but rather that we think of the feeling that is prevalent at this time of the year, and have an open mind and a supportive approach to this resolution.

I am confident that when the Members of this House did not waive private Member's hour today, it was because they knew that this Bill was on the Order Paper and they wanted the opportunity to recognize the contribution that this Government is making to bridge construction in rural Manitoba.

I know that most Members will have taken the time, when they saw this resolution on the Order Paper, to have researched the bridge construction in rural Manitoba. I also recognize that all Honourable Members are very busy people. They may not have had the opportunity to research as in depth as I have, so I would like to share with the Honourable Members today the reasons why I have brought this resolution to the House.

Mr. Speaker, the rural municipalities, as we all know, do not have a large enough tax base so they have difficulty raising enough funds for large capital projects. It is a good thing that the provincial Government is in a position to help with these large capital projects, and we know that this program to which I am referring was introduced in 1989 to help relieve the municipalities of the burden of infrastructure investment. The construction of

bridges has been a long-standing concern of many municipalities, and with the provincial Government's assistance, this program is beginning to alleviate some of that concern.

We have improved motorists' safety on municipal roads, resulting when we have six construction projects worth more than \$600,000 completed under the Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program.

* (1710)

I think it is a measure of the need of this type of program and the popularity when we examine how much it has been used. One of the major projects in the program is in the Rural Municipality of Macdonald at the La Salle River. The provincial Government's share of the cost of the construction of this bridge will total more than \$400,000 to be paid to the municipality over two years.

Of course there are many other construction projects under this program under way. Just to read a few into the record, the Rural Municipality of Minitonas at the Woody River, with the Government's share totalling more than \$150,000; the Rural Municipality of Cartier at the La Salle River, with the Government's share totalling \$80,000; the Rural Municipality of Dufferin at the Boyne River with the Government's share totalling \$65,000; the Rural Municipality of Glenwood at Elgin Creek, with the Government's share totalling more than \$62,000; the Rural Municipality of Ritchot at the Natural Coulee, with the Government's share totalling \$20,000.00.

In addition to these programs already under way, engineering design work has been approved for the Rural Municipality of Ste. Rose at Turtle River, the Rural Municipality of Ochre River at Ochre River, and the Rural Municipalities of Louise and Argyle at Pembina River.

This illustrates, Mr. Speaker, that our Government is playing a key role in helping to alleviate some of the infrastructure concerns voiced by municipalities through the construction of these bridges. This demonstrates our Government's commitment to improving the infrastructure of rural Manitoba as well as improving motorists' safety on these municipal roads.

I would like to take a moment today to talk a little bit about history. I go back to when I was a young lad and my father, who was the reeve and a councillor of the Rural Municipality of Whitewater for

over 20 years, as well as the president of the Union of the Manitoba Municipalities and president of the Good Roads Association. Because of that experience in my family I did have exposure to municipal problems.

I can remember my father coming home from a council meeting one day at the Rural Municipality of Whitewater and saying to us, we got rid of statute labour today. Now I am confident that there are a number of Honourable Members who do not know what that is, or what that was. The statute labour was the original procedure that was used in the development of the roads in rural Manitoba. What it was, was that each farmer was given the opportunity to go out with his team and work on the piece of road that ran by his buildings, and that was credited against the taxes on his land.

The only construction or repair work for those trails were the farmers that went out and hooked their team to whatever piece of equipment they might have, or maybe just an old log, or else they would hook their team to a wagon and with a shovel go get a few shovels full of gravel and go throw it in the low spots.

Obviously, if there were any bridges at all in those times, they were very primitive structures and in most cases the way across the streams were through fords.

When they were rid of statute labour, they were able to go ahead, the rural municipalities, by modern construction equipment and that was the beginning of the road system in the rural municipalities across southern and northwestern Manitoba.
-(interjection)- That is right. That is why they run the sections in squares.

I also remember watching the painfully slow progress of an International TD 9 caterpillar with a blade on the front of it, in the middle of winter coming the seven miles from the highway to our buildings so that we might get out off the farm for at least one Saturday night in the winter. We hoped that the wind did not get up while we were away to fill in the bit of a road that was made.

So you can see that there is quite a history to the development of the road system and the bridge system in rural Manitoba.

It was interesting to me also in the agricultural discussions in Estimates how we talked about how the returns in real terms, the prices of the commodities that the farmers are growing, are really

no different than they were 20 years ago and certainly the inflationary costs that go into the production of those products has been dramatic.

The obvious question, of course, is how have so many of our farmers survived in conditions where the price of their product is less than it was 20 years ago? The answer, of course, is because they have become much more efficient and have been able to produce much higher yields. Which results in more product. Which results in larger equipment to grow that product. Which results in the fact that you need better bridges to get the equipment and all that product you grow to market.

I would like to remind urban Members when we talk of how difficult things are in the rural economy, that is quite true, and despite the fact that we have a Farm Debt Review Board which has lots and lots of customers, the majority of farmers though are still excellent managers.

Occasionally we hear about bringing in programs to help the people on the farm become better managers, and I submit to the Members of this House that no one is a better manager than the farmers we have in rural Manitoba. How many industries do the people of this House know which are able to survive when the prices of the commodities that they sell has dropped in the last 20 years?

I was interested, Mr. Speaker, during the debates on the Highway Estimates and the opening statement from, I believe, the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), who talked of travelling across Manitoba this past summer and how much he had enjoyed it. I would have to consult Hansard, of course, to get his exact words, but I believe he was complimenting the Honourable Minister of the Department of Highways (Mr. Driedger) on the excellent road system that we have in Manitoba. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) got off the well-travelled path of our good highways in Manitoba and on to some of the rural roads, off the beaten path if you like.

I know a semi-retired couple at home who have a unique method of seeing Manitoba or seeing parts of Saskatchewan or northern Ontario or North Dakota. Their method is to decide to go for a holiday for a week or so, pack their bags and enough supplies to keep them going for a week, then they get in the car and when they get out on the road, by

some method of what, by flipping a coin or whatever, they decide whether they will turn left or right or go straight ahead at the next intersection. So they do not know in the morning when they leave whether they may end up near Flin Flon, or they may end up in northern Ontario or they may end up down near Minneapolis, and it is an excellent way, as I say, for seeing rural Manitoba. It also leads, of course, to some forgettable meals and some unforgettable accommodation.

If the Honourable Member for St. Boniface had travelled off some of the by-ways, he might possibly have crossed one of the bridges that I am talking about today, and I would guess that he did not appreciate when he crossed that bridge, how much had been contributed by this Government and by that municipality toward the construction of that bridge to improve his travelling enjoyment and to improve his safety while he was on the road.

Now I do not think, Mr. Speaker, that we can fault the Honourable Member for that thought. I do not even know if he had it. The reason I conclude that is because I had the same thought myself, because one of these bridges to which I referred earlier, is not that far away from where I live. In fact, it is on a road that I travel with some regularity, and human nature being what it is, and I am almost ashamed to admit this, but when construction started on that bridge, what was my reaction? Was it a positive reaction? Did I appreciate what the municipality was trying to do? Did I appreciate what this Government was trying to do by putting money toward that bridge and improving my travelling enjoyment and my safety? No, my response, Mr. Speaker, was irritation, irritation at the inconvenience of having that bridge constructed.

So I believe, and I appeal to all Members of the Assembly today that we take time to appreciate some of the good things, and I appeal particularly to the Members opposite who seem to be daily irritated by progress, that they take this opportunity to vote for this resolution and to recognize a small minor part of the many, many positive things that this Government does for the people of Manitoba.

* (1720)

So, Mr. Speaker, I see the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) is anxiously waiting to explain why he did not have the opportunity to travel on those bridges this summer, but if he had, how much he would have appreciated it, so I will give him

that opportunity to do so and I urge all Members to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Transcona has the floor.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this proposed resolution today. Mr. Speaker, there is a Member opposite who is obviously unaware that there are not some bridges that could be built in my constituency of Transcona. Just to refresh this Member's memory on this, I would like to make him aware of a bridge that should have been built some time ago by his Government in the eastern portion of my constituency of Transcona. That bridge/overpass/underpass, which is supposed to be part of the Perimeter Highway program, has been waiting in the wings for a number of years. Of course, this Government seems to have been stalling in the process to have this project constructed.

Mr. Speaker, bridges are very important to the people of Transcona, because that particular project will alleviate some of the heavy truck traffic that presently goes through my community and, of course, causes some safety concerns for the residents in the community. The Honourable Member who introduced this resolution talked about urban people and rural people, and the urban people not having any insight as to the importance that bridges play in the overall transportation system of our province. I would like to assure the Member that bridges play a very important part, and that we recognize the significance that they play. The bridge, which has been waiting construction for a number of years now, because this Government has not carried through with the plans for this that were started a number of years ago, would service the community of Springfield, which would be very important, I am sure, to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) since that is now his constituency. That will also alleviate the need for a lot of the heavy traffic flow through my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, bridges form a very important part of the overall transportation system in the province of Manitoba, and it is important that we have the adequate structures in the province. -(interjection)- I just received a late news flash, talking about the bridge that is in a portion of Selkirk. I congratulated the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) during the Estimates process on his recognizing the value of that bridge that was started

under the New Democratic Party Government. He saw the merits of it, and he continued the highway completion of that particular project so that it could link up Selkirk with 59 Highway. That bridge was a very important project for the people of Selkirk, and it allowed them access to 59 Highway.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Reid: I am glad to have the opportunity to talk about this resolution, because, as I said, bridges play a very important part in the overall transportation structure and system in the province. We have seen in a number of years recently where there has been increased tonnage of transportation of heavy goods on our highways. It has caused a tremendous amount of stress on the existing structures, a number of them which were put in place the early part of this century; and, of course, we have to look at the overall upgrading of these facilities.

There are also, Mr. Speaker, other stresses that are going to be placed on these structures, highways and bridges in our province, as a result of some of the policies or, I should say, the lack of policies on behalf of this Government. That is to do with an overall transportation strategy that is missing from this province and, of course, this country in general.

The "open skies" of which we had the opportunity to take part in—during the presentation to the committee that was here in Winnipeg last week, there were some presentations by people in the remote and northern parts of this province, talking about the potential loss of service to the communities of remote and northern parts of Manitoba. If we lose that type of service, Mr. Speaker, that is going to force the people in these communities to move onto the highways. Of course, we know that our highways are, in many cases, clogged with the amount of traffic that is on them currently; and, of course, that is going to put increased stress on the structures that are there, including the bridges.

If we had had a strategy a number of years ago where we could have co-ordinated the different modes of transportation, I am sure we would not have had to face the problems that we are now facing; and, if this Government had policies in place to deal with that, these concerns would not be of the magnitude that they are now. -(applause)- I am not finished yet. A few more minutes yet.

An Honourable Member: Stop while you are ahead, Daryl.

Mr. Reid: Am I wandering? Mr. Speaker, the safety of the travelling public has been very important in the minds of Members on this side of the House. I am not quite convinced that the safety of the travelling public is uppermost in the minds on the other side of the House, but I assure the Members of this House that the New Democratic Party will continue to work for the increased safety of the travelling public in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Reid: Of course, with safety being uppermost in our minds for the Members on this side of the House, we have to look at the way the transportation system has worked in this province over the last couple of years, where we have seen increased truck traffic on our highways as a result of the rail line abandonments that have taken place in the Province of Manitoba, forcing the traffic to move from the rail lines onto the highways, which, of course, increases the stress on the structures that are in place there.

Had we had a policy in this place, and had the Government of this day been more forceful with their federal counterparts in trying to bring about a policy that would allow an integration of the different modes of transportation to allow each mode to complement one another, instead of forcing them in one particular direction like the policies of this Government have done, then we would have not been in a position where we are today where we had to look at spending the huge amount of monies that should be required to replace the structures that are not adequate to handle the traffic flows on our highways. -(interjection)- You will enjoy this.

An Honourable Member: Carry on.

Mr. Reid: Of course, where we have seen congested highways and road systems in our province, we have seen increased fatalities on our highways. As a very serious note to that, I think it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that all of the necessary safety procedures are put in place, and that every means available to us as a Government should be looked at to ensure that the travelling public is able to travel safely upon the roads that are in the Province of Manitoba.

* (1730)

If you look at the resolution, Mr. Speaker, it is very important to note that one of the WHEREASes in the resolution itself talks about the six construction projects worth over \$600,000.00. This is just a pittance in comparison to what should be put into a program like that to ensure that the safety of the travelling public is ensured.

I think, Mr. Speaker, if this Government was really serious about the safety of the travelling public, they would have invested many more dollars into this program to ensure the safety of the people of Manitoba, and ensure that these projects are constructed in a more timely fashion as well.

There are many other areas that I could talk about, about the buildings and structures in the province of Manitoba. We have seen difficulties with the overall transportation policy that I have talked about. We have to put together an integrated strategy for this particular province, Mr. Speaker.

I took a look at some of the Estimates when we were going through the Estimates process on Highways and Transportation, dealing with structures. The Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program, \$500,000—just a drop in the bucket. How can we expect to build all of the necessary structures to upgrade our highways in this province? - (interjection) - \$15 million, as the Member—50? \$50 million, Mr. Speaker. When we compare the \$50 million that had been invested compared to the \$500,000 now, it is not going to accomplish very much in the way of upgrading our structures.

I think I am just about out of some facts and figures for the Members opposite.

I would like to move an amendment to the resolution that was presented here today.

I move, seconded by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that the resolution be amended as follows:

THAT all words be deleted following the second WHEREAS and the following be added:

WHEREAS the need for rural bridge construction was first recognized and a program subsequently initiated under the previous NDP Government to improve rural infrastructure; and

WHEREAS the current Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program was introduced in 1989 to help alleviate the burden carried by municipalities with respect to infrastructure investment; and

WHEREAS six construction projects worth over \$600,000 have been approved under the auspices of this program, which is woefully inadequate; and

WHEREAS the current provincial Government continues to support policies of deregulation, rail line abandonment, closure of branch lines, and the open skies policy, all of which lead to more pressures on the provincial roads and bridges; and

WHEREAS the provincial Government has failed to put forward a comprehensive transportation policy that would involve the federal Government paying its share for such improvements; and

WHEREAS there has been a failure of the provincial Government to prevent the offloading by the federal Government of costs associated with bridge construction and rural highways; and

WHEREAS these costs are increasing financial pressure on rural communities which are now facing decreasing population levels.

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Government to develop a comprehensive transportation policy that opposes deregulation, the offloading of federal costs on provinces and municipalities, and recognizes federal responsibility for transportation costs in Manitoba, including major reconstruction of bridges and roads.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: I am satisfied that the amendment falls within the normal practices of this House respecting the relevancy of amendments in private Members' hour, and complies with the commonly referred to Beauschesne's citations respecting amendments.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Acting Government House Leader.

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): I think, Mr. Speaker, the reason I rise is something best discussed between you and I in another place.

Mr. Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Edwards: It gives me great pleasure to rise today to address the resolution put forward by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose). This is indeed an important issue before this House, and I

believe raises rural questions generally in this House. It is an appropriate time in the history of this province to deal with those issues.

With respect to the issue of bridges particularly, we all understand the grave need for bridges. Need is the key word, and I think we should stress that word. Where bridges are needed they should be built. Where they are not needed, they should not be built, and I do not think there is a Member in this House, aside from perhaps the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), who would not agree with that. If you do not need a bridge, you should not build it.

* (1740)

When I think of bridges in rural Manitoba, I do not think there is a Manitoban who does not think about the famous bridge to nowhere, Mr. Speaker. The unmatched incompetence of the prior administration I think was highlighted, illustrated, so poignantly for Manitobans in the bridge that they built to nowhere, wasting taxpayers' dollars. It was so typical of the prior administration. I am reminded of the phrase, we will cross that bridge when we get to it. No one ever got to the bridge that was built by the prior administration. The philosophy of that department was truly bridge mixture. Some go somewhere and some go to nowhere.

There are numerous examples across the range of Government departments that will substantiate the point that is illustrated by the prior administration's failure to deal with rural issues. It is, I would suggest, poignantly illustrated by that perverse decision of that prior administration. Another prime example, of course, is what is being built somewhere in Saudi Arabia with the money we have left there. Who knows what they are building. It could be bridges. It could be community clubs. It could be anything that we could have had in this province, not to mention the things we could have done in this province and built, had it not been for the crushing debt which that prior administration put us into.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to exonerate the present Government on that front, but I do think the record left by the prior administration is yet unmatched, and is likely to stay unmatched, I would suggest, in the history of this province. -(interjection)-

The Minister for Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) has reminded me of the great debt we owe in this province to the former Member for St. Vital and what

a shame it was that none of his former colleagues had, I would suggest, the courage to come to that ceremony. I think it was an appropriate recognition of his role as a Speaker, but also as a Member of the Legislature.

On the issue of the resolution which is before us, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) of a statement that was made in this House before he became a Member. I have not been a Member that long, but it was certainly when I was sitting. I recall the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) suggesting toll roads in rural Manitoba. I remember that suggestion very clearly in this House. Can you imagine the uproar that would be caused and the injustice of imposing tolls on rural roads? I mean, we all talk about the difficulties of living in rural Manitoba in terms of what it costs to phone people and the realities of life in rural Manitoba. In this Government an experienced rural Member actually proposed, in all seriousness, imposing tolls on people to drive rural roads.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I think it was a toll bridge he talked about, was it not?

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Dauphin has reminded me perhaps it was a toll bridge. I do not think it really matters. They wanted to put tolls on roads for rural Manitobans. Now it is true that suggestion, that recommendation from the Minister, died rather quickly as I recall. Members with more experience than I, say they have never seen anything die so quickly as that suggestion, and indeed it should have. It was an embarrassment, I would suggest, which the Member for Turtle Mountain should be wary of in his praise of his own Government.

We have seen this Government congratulate itself before, and this resolution does it again, on their commitment to rural Manitoba. You would think with the level of representation they have in rural Manitoba that there would be some truth to their statements but, indeed, there is as little of the reality behind the words as there was in the prior administration. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of lip service given to the needs of rural Manitobans, but when push came to shove it was not really there. The answer was the wonderful decentralization plan which would offer a nice hit to rural Manitoba, they hoped, which would then translate into electoral support prior to this last election.

I would suggest the majority of Manitobans saw through that plan. The truth is very few, indeed far below the stated expectations of people, have been willing to succumb to the tactics, the hammer over the head tactics of this Government in trying to implement a decentralization plan. Did they do it with sensitivity? Did they do it with the real goal in mind of having the people move, relocate their families, spend their incomes in rural Manitoba? No, they did it for purely political reasons. They did it in a purely political way. They played on what they felt to be a popular perception that the Civil Service was not worthy of our support, and they sent those people on very short notice, demanded that they move and take their families to rural Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, then they have the audacity to try and turn that into a rural-urban division saying if you did not support their plan to the nth degree you were anti-rural. That is what they said.

In fact, if you had taken those tactics, I would suggest, to rural Manitobans, asking them to come into the city of Winnipeg you would have had exactly the same reaction. You cannot take people from their homes and demand that they move on short notice in an insensitive manner. You cannot do that. Far from a rural-urban issue this was a people issue, Mr. Speaker. We saw the true colours of this Government when they refused to deal with civil servants who have served this province tirelessly, competently, for years and years and years with sensitivity, and then they used that for their own political purposes to suggest that those who came to the defence of those civil servants were somehow anti-rural. Mr. Speaker, that is something that I draw to the Member for Turtle Mountain's (Mr. Rose) attention. I think he should know it and perhaps he did not. I would suggest that he must not have known it to have offered this kind of conclusion to this type of resolution.

On the issues which affect rural Manitobans generally, I see, of course, in my critic portfolio the environment is a key one. We have recently seen in the last couple of months the Rafferty-Alameda fiasco, and where has been the true commitment to rural Manitobans and the environment? Indeed, they are the inheritors and the stewards in fact of most of the environmental wealth of this province. Yet, the failures of this Government again are unmatched by what some would call the hypocrisy of the former administration. I know that would be unparliamentary to say that. Mr. Speaker, some

would certainly call it hypocrisy of the former Government when they say with a straight face -(interjection)- I find that hard to believe—they say you should get tough with Repap. That is what they say. They say you should do more for the environment. Manfor operated without an environmental review and without an environmental licence.

We have heard this afternoon from the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) the incredible environmental destruction, outrageous environmental destruction, which was allowed to occur year after year after year up in The Pas. That is the type of what some would call hypocrisy that truly moves me to stand on this issue and call it like it is.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. As the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) has said, we are having difficulty in hearing remarks that are being put on the record at this time.

Mr. Edwards: I appreciate your words, Mr. Speaker. I do feel quite strongly about this issue so I appreciate the fact that I am allowed to speak to my fellow Members.

The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) scoffs at the reference to his Government's commitment to rural Manitoba. That is directly related to the environmental desecration which that Government allowed to happen in rural Manitoba, directly related. They are the ones who have proposed the amendment today, which purports to congratulate themselves for their commitment to rural Manitoba.

* (1750)

I think we all in this House, who are not in that Party, are going to need strength not to want to jump to our feet today, Mr. Speaker, and lambaste them for that audacity of putting forward a congratulatory remark on rural Manitoba when they have seen fit year after year after year to not only rob the taxpayers of this province, and the future generations of fiscal responsibility and fiscal security. They have gone the second mile and destroyed the very land itself.

With respect to another rural issue that came to light in the last Legislature, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) stood on taxation for Northerners, and certainly we all agree that the federal Government moved irresponsibly in that

area in taking away the ability of those living in northern areas to claim tax benefits. That was the same Party that in the course of their prior term created new taxes or increased existing ones some 36 times. That is the same Party that came to the people of this province in the last election and said, we will not increase taxes. Who do they think they were fooling?

Mr. Speaker, I remember when I heard that I almost drove off the road, when I heard the Leader of the New Democratic Party say that. Then he followed it up by comments on pay equity. I remember the newscast. They were talking about pay equity. This was the same Government, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) who in the last Legislature said, we should be doing more for pay equity. We should overturn the Labour Board decision which mandated that the hospitals did not have to pay more than 4 percent of their budget to pay equity.

Mr. Speaker, who put the cap on? Who put the cap on pay equity payments? The Member for St. Johns herself. She was a Member of the Cabinet. That is the type of—what some would call—hypocrisy, which indeed causes many in this House, I am sure, grave concern.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to take this opportunity to propose that all Members of this House, all Members of this House—while we appreciate the integrity and the honesty of the feelings expressed by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) in bringing this forward, we must also encourage him to look very closely at the real rural record of his Government, because it does not belie the congratulations and the confidence I believe he has in it, which is illustrated in this resolution.

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, it certainly gives me somewhat pleasure to be able to rise to just put a few words on the record on this matter of importance on this resolution that was put forward by our Government.

It is certainly interesting to note when you look at the resolution where it says that construction projects worth some \$600,000 have been approved under the auspices of our municipal cost share, our municipal bridge program that this Government introduced in 1989. It is a very significant initiative in recognition of the fact that the previous Government in their wisdom decided to cut our Highways budget,

which has a tremendous effect on rural communities all over the province. Specifically rural municipalities, inasmuch as that they had to, in large part, pick up the cost to put in place a proper road network in our province whereby the provincial Government of the Day decided to cut some \$17 million out of their road program from 1983 till 1987.

I also find it extremely interesting that in his wisdom the then Minister of Highways, during the 1985-87 period, decided to build the road that I would suspect would have cost some substantial millions of dollars, billions of dollars that now cannot be recuperated. I would suspect that maybe the then Minister of Highways had intended for that to be one of his private sanctions and a road to this private area that he might in fact utilize.

I know we cannot use the word hypocritical in this building, but we do know that the previous Government had an approach to many parts of this province, many parts of rural Manitoba, that did not recognize the need for proper road construction, nor did it recognize the need for bridge construction.

I note that under the Department of Natural Resources, there is an amount of some \$500,000 that has been there for years to supplement in some ways the need for provincial crossings of provincial waterways. That has been there for years. However, never once did the previous Government recognize in its entire history, from the Schreyer years on to the Pawley years and throughout that period of time did they recognize the need for municipalities to upgrade their infrastructure, and municipal bridges being a significant portion of the costs that were incurred by municipalities to ensure that transportation was available to those communities and people in communities who depend on a living in those areas. Therefore, it was a decision of our Government to recognize that need and to be able to supplement, to the significant amount of \$600,000, the ability for municipalities to in fact upgrade their crossings in those areas.

I believe the whole initiative that this Government has shown to rural Manitoba has been very, very significant. I find it rather odd that the Liberal Party would have the audacity to stand up in this House and proclaim that the decentralization process we entered into—and in recognition of the needs for Government Services to be brought closer to the people of Manitoba—would have the audacity to stand up in this House and call that a hypocritical move.

The economic significance that will be created by this initiative alone is not recognized by the Liberal Party. Therefore, I would suggest to this House that the Liberal Party will disappear into the horizon as if they had never been here in their lives.

I would suggest also that in recognition of the past record of the New Democratic Party, they will follow similarly in the path of the Liberal Party into being dissolved into infinity, never to be seen again in this province.

However there will, I believe, rise out of the ashes of those two Parties probably some sensible approach as an Opposition Party to the current Progressive Conservative Party. We look for and we appreciate responsible Opposition. However, I would suggest that neither one of them will be here to experience that in the future.

It is simply because people of Manitoba will assess their past initiatives. In the Liberals, of course, we can look at the Trudeau era and what they have done to Canada, to western Canada specifically. We all recognize that the Liberal Party has virtually destroyed the economic base that was initiated in the early history when the railways were built to open up this country.

It was decided at that time that Governments should be involved in supporting those kinds of issues. Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Minister will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Friday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Thursday, December 6, 1990

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