

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
2:30 o'clock, Friday, May 24, 1974

Opening Prayer by Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Before we proceed I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery where we have 11 students of Grade 10, 11, and 12 standing of the Fargo, North Dakota School. These students are under the direction of Mrs. Moore.

On behalf of all the honourable members I welcome you here today.

Presenting Petitions; Reading and Receiving Petitions; Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees; Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports; Notices of Motion; Introduction of Bills; Questions; The Honourable Member for Riel.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister in charge of Environmental Management. Can he advise what the Government's position is in view of the report released by the U. S. Interior Department regarding the Garrison project?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

HON. SIDNEY GREEN, Q.C. (Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management) (Inkster): Well, Mr. Speaker, the only knowledge that I have of the report is a cursory examination that I made of the newspaper today, probably the same as my honourable friend has. We'll be discussing the matter with the representatives of the Government of Canada in preparation for a meeting which I know is scheduled to take place with the Government of the United States, Mr. Speaker. And if it is determined that there is information that is required to be checked, that will be done. If it is ascertained that the diversion program can be proceeded with without damage to the people of Manitoba through the Souris waters, we will not be able to allege any violation of any boundary waters treaty, but we intend, Mr. Speaker, to examine very carefully all of the new information before any irrevocable step is taken.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister can advise that in the event that further studies are required, whether his department and the Federal Government have the necessary manpower to put into this project during this year.

MR. GREEN: I believe so, Mr. Speaker, I have had no indication to the contrary.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, just to be more elaborate in the answer, when I say that, I don't necessarily mean on existing staff; it may mean that people will be co-opted. But I believe that the manpower is available.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. I. H. ASPER (Leader of the Liberal Party) (Wolseley): To the same Minister, Mr. Speaker, thank you. The question is, is the Minister's position now that the Government of Manitoba will cease relying on reports prepared by the United States authorities and specifically undertake its own studies independent of those?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, my position has not changed. I indicated to the House on several occasions that until material comes in which in any way changes the position that the United States was taking, that is that they were causing adverse effects to Manitoba waters, that there was no necessity for studies. If that position did change, then we would have to look at that very carefully. That is not my now position; that is my then position, was position and future position.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, in view of the statements by the Minister prior to today that the Government of Manitoba was not planning any studies . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. GREEN: . . . Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. GREEN: I never made any such statement, Mr. Speaker. I made the statement previously and the honourable member knows it, that as long as the United States studies confirmed our fears there was no necessity for us to make an independent study. If that changed, then our position would change, and I can quote my honourable friend chapter and verse in Hansard if he wishes it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER; Order please. I would hope I would get the co-operation of the honourable members not to preface their questions with opinions but just to ask questions and I'm sure we'll have less controversy. The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, on the point of privilege raised by my honourable friend, he certainly conveyed the impression in the answers given to questions over the past three months - and if he says that is not the impression I'll accept his word for it - but certainly that was the impression that was left with this side of the House when, having asked on a number of occasions does the government intend to have further studies of its own, we were left with the impression that he would not have studies. Having heard his answer, I accept his statement of today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question is, does he not consider it advisable to confront in a negotiation someone who presents a position adverse to ours, does he not consider it advisable to go into that meeting with his own independent studies rather than rely on information supplied by someone whose interests may be adverse to ours?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the first thing that we intend to do is to look very carefully at the studies that have been presented to us and base our decision on that basis. Mr. Speaker, I can't be held responsible for the lack of capacity to understand, or the capacity to gain false impressions that is so inherent in the Honourable Member for Wolseley.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, without responding to the Minister's gratuitous comments

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. ASPER: . . . but pointing out, Sir, that that's something perhaps the Chair might watch from the Minister in that he doesn't seem to answer the questions without the comments.

Mr. Speaker, the question is, has the Minister or the Government of Manitoba determined what it considers to be a tolerable or acceptable level of pollution for the Souris River through the Garrison Diversion that it would accept, and has it communicated that to the United States authorities?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, we've started from the position that we want no deterioration of Manitoba waters.

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK, Q. C. (Leader of the Official Opposition) (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is either to the First Minister or the Minister of Labour. I wonder if they can indicate that with respect to the announcement of the new overhaul facility to be constructed here by Air Canada, whether there will be provision made to allow the 400 families that had to leave Manitoba in 1969 to go to Montreal to be able to return and be employed in Air Canada here?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. RUSSELL PAULLEY (Minister of Labour) (Transcona): I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, because there is a collective agreement between Air Canada and the International Association of Machinists, that this is a matter that could properly be negotiated between Air Canada, the Association of Machinists, and if necessary with the Government of Canada, which as I understand is the prime motivator in this move.

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder if the Minister is in a position to indicate whether the Government will undertake to attempt to negotiate with the Government of Canada so that there will be an allowance made to provide for those families who had to leave in 1969 to be able to return with the overhaul facility now being reconstructed back in Winnipeg.

MR. PAULLEY: On that, Mr. Speaker, I can only reiterate what I said a moment ago. There is a collective agreement between the International Association of Machinists and Air Canada. At the time of the transfer of personnel out of Winnipeg to Dorval, there were provisions contained within the agreement of that day for transfer charges to be levied against Air Canada in respect of moving costs. This is also, where moving takes place on my old love the Canadian National Railways, at the request of Management in co-operation with the union, that allowances are made. I suggest that this is a negotiated item.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, my question then is to the First Minister. Without in any way relating to the chronology of what has happened but in view of the announcement will it be the Government's intention to intervene on behalf of the 400 families that had to leave notwithstanding . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. I have entertained the question twice. The third time, after really giving it some analysis, it's hypothetical because it's contingent upon those people wanting to return and we don't know that. The question is out of order.

MR. SPIVAK: The question is not hypothetical for one good reason, Sir. Since . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I have ruled on that particular question, if the honourable member wishes to challenge it, he's entitled to but I'm saying it's hypothetical.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if before that ruling is made you would allow me to at least put on the record information which may not be available to you and which you may not have known, and that is, Sir, that since 1969 the individuals who left Manitoba have maintained contact with the government and with the members of the Opposition, asking for opportunity to be able to return. As a matter of fact, there have been meetings held here, public meetings, press meetings, that they have asked for, and Mr. Speaker, the fact is that they have asked for . . . -- (Interjections) --

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I agree. The honourable gentleman is using the question period to place matters before the House which are out of order. I have ruled in regard to the particular question. The honourable member can ask other questions if he likes. The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. STEVE PATRICK (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Honourable Minister of Labour. Has the Minister of Labour investigated if the \$18,000 owing to the workers for the Pas Metis Development Corporation, that's owing to workers, will these workers be able to recover the wages that's owing to them because of the company going bankrupt?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm sure honourable members are aware that the Bankruptcy Act is under Federal legislation and that there are orders of priority as to the recovery of moneys due to creditors and they have a three or four level return in bankruptcy. All I can say to my honourable friend is that I will certainly be pleased to look into this matter and to inform the House through you, Mr. Speaker, that this is a matter of active consideration by the provincial Ministers of Labour right across Canada to see whether or not we can convince the Federal authority to have legislation changed to give a greater priority to the payment of wages in bankruptcies.

MR. PATRICK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker, or maybe the Minister of Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation can answer it. I understand the contract was between the Manitoba Housing and Renewal and the workers. Will the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation live up to its commitment and pay these workers?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. SAUL MILLER (Minister of Health and Social Development) (Seven Oaks): If there is a contract, I'm not aware of the details of it, I'd like to make inquiries.

MR. PATRICK: Will the Minister make inquiries and report to the House and see if these workers can get paid for lost wages?

MR. MILLER: I'd have to inquire from the Corporation the details of this matter.

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

MR. HARRY E. GRAHAM (Birtle-Russell): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to also direct a question to the Minister of Health, the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, and ask the Minister if he has any plans to change the status of the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation so that it does come under the Mechanics' Lien Act the same as any other company in Manitoba?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware that it isn't under the Mechanics' Lien Act. I think it operates like any other corporation. I think it is covered.

MR. GRAHAM: To the same Minister. Could the Minister then explain to all those companies which have been denied that right under the Mechanics' Lien Act, why the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation refuses to recognize the Mechanics' Lien Act.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I'd have to know the nature of the problem, the nature of the agreement, whether MHRC was the contractor or someone else was the contractor and somebody was simply acting on a tendered basis. I don't know the answers to these; I don't know the details. I'll have to make inquiries and ascertain whether . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. EDWARD MCGILL (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable the Minister of Industry and Commerce, again with reference to the announcement about the reinstatement of the regional air service by either Air Canada or another carrier. Can the Minister indicate to the House whether this resumption of the regional air service will in any way reflect upon the application presently before the Air Transport Committee from Transair to institute a Jet Service which would include Prince Albert, Brandon and Toronto?

HON. LEONARD S. EVANS (Minister of Industry & Commerce) (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would think not. What is being proposed by Mr. Trudeau, the Prime Minister, is utilization of Saunders on a demonstration project, possibly with a two-year limit. As I indicated earlier, details still have to be worked out, but we regard the application by Transair before the Canadian Transport Commission to institute the Jet Service that the honourable member referred to, to be a completely separate matter and a matter in which the Manitoba Government has taken a particular position, which it still maintains.

MR. MCGILL: A supplementary question. With respect to the date, the probable date of resumption of this regional service, would the Minister be able to support the view of the spokesman of the Minister of Transport that it will definitely start before the end of '74? Is that a realistic assumption on that part?

MR. EVANS: Well, the honourable member has obviously heard a news statement which I have not yet heard or been made aware of. I would hope that that would be the case. I would hope that this service would be instituted with all expedition but I'm not in a position to really confirm whether that is possible. I would hope so.

MR. MCGILL: A supplementary. Then, from the earlier answers, may we then assume that the Province of Manitoba will continue to give complete support to Transair's application for Jet Service involving Brandon and Toronto?

MR. EVANS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we indicated this position a year ago and we still hold that particular position.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, my question's to the Minister of Mines relating to the report on which he was questioned earlier on the Garrison Diversion. Has the Minister requested and received copies, or has the Minister received copies of the two reports on which he was questioned about a week or two ago, one being a report by the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, the other being a report given to the Canadian Embassy in Washington relative to the Garrison Diversion, on which he had been previously questioned?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, not to my knowledge at this point. They may have come in to the Department but I have not been made aware of them as yet. They were given to the Canadian government.

MR. ASPER: I wonder if the Minister would undertake to personally, this time, make a request for those documents so that he can table them as he indicated he would when they were received.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can't give the kind of undertaking that the honourable member wants, but I tell you that we have been assured by the Canadian Government, or at least on our discussions with the Canadian government, which is the negotiating agency in this respect with the United States, that we will be receiving the information, and I have no doubt at this point to distrust the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Minister of External Affairs of the Government of Canada. Perhaps the Leader of the Liberal Party mistrusts him.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, my question is, since when did the Minister drop the Manitoba-North Dakota committee and now dump the matter into Ottawa's lap?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I indicated earlier that it's very difficult for me to compensate in my answers for the lack of comprehension on the part of the honourable member. I indicated at all times that Manitoba and North Dakota were meeting under the auspices of Canada and the United States of America, and that is the way, Mr. Speaker, it has always been and that is the way the Government of Canada insists it should be and we think it's proper for it to be.

MR. CHERNIACK: Trudeau will raise an awful fuss.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the day. The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Honourable Minister of Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services. Can the Minister explain to the House the change in policy by MTS to limit its facilities to applicants for Cablevision?

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Consumer . . .

HON. IAN TURNBULL (Minister of Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services) (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, there has been no change in policy - that's the first thing - as far as MTS is concerned. I have explained before that the relationship between MTS and cable operators is provided in a contract and that that contract runs until 1979, and that that contract will be honoured.

With regard to The Downs Village Trailer Park, the MTS stands ready and willing to provide whatever facilities are required to enable the cablecaster to provide TV signals via cable to the people living in that trailer park. Indeed I am informed that the Winnipeg Videon Cable Company has been provided with two quotes, one in August, 1972 and one in February, 1973; both of those prices quoted by MTS were rejected by the cable operator and I am sure that MTS if at any other time the cable company came to them they would provide likely another quote. The MTS always stands ready to take up and provide service for the provision of cable to customers. To date, though, there has been no authorization for a contract received from Winnipeg Videon. But I'd like to reiterate, Sir, there has been no change in the policy.

MR. PATRICK: A supplementary. Then, can I take it from the Minister's answer that the facilities were not denied to Cablevision at The Downs Village mobile home site?

MR. TURNBULL: My information, Mr. Speaker, is that the Winnipeg Videon and the MTS were unable to agree over price and that is a straight commercial matter for negotiation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. GEORGE HENDERSON (Pembina): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Does the Minister intend to do anything about the use of electric kettles in the Province of Manitoba?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Speaker, the matter that Mr. Gray blew the whistle on, namely kettles, is a matter for federal jurisdiction. It falls under the Hazardous Products Act and I would think that the publicity given to this issue, to this matter, would certainly be knowledgeable or a matter known to the people in Manitoba and they would stop using those kettles if they want to prevent themselves from being poisoned by lead.

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

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Development Corporation and also the Community Economic Development Fund; and I would ask the Minister if the Community Economic Development Fund has brought bankruptcy proceedings against The Pas Metis Development Corporation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

HON. SIDNEY GREEN, Q.C. (Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management) (Inkster): Well, Mr. Speaker, I note again from the newspapers, and it's probably on the record, that the Fund has an advance to that organization. I do not know that the Communities Economic Development Fund would have initiated the proceedings but any creditor could, and I will take the question as notice to find out.

MR. GRAHAM: At the same time, would the Minister also find out whether the first meeting of creditors has been held as yet?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Mines and Resources. Can he advise whether the advertisement by Moose Lake Loggers for a bookkeeper and a general manager is to be implied that a decision has been made to proceed with the company?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I could not make that assumption nor could I deny it. I have no further information relative to that matter than was given to the members of the House at Committee because I have not been in touch with them since that day.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister if it was not indicated at the meeting that a meeting would first be held with the native community in early June to decide the future of the corporation before proceeding with it as it is now structured.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, that was the case. I don't remember when the meeting was to have been held, but there was to have been a meeting - yes.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this occasion to indicate that we would like to have Law Amendments Committee meet on Monday evening at 8:00 on the assumption that they will not complete their activities this evening, which I think is a fairly good assumption. And I'd like, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that we have several bills that could be put on the Order Paper on Monday. Normally we would have been meeting tomorrow but my understanding is that it's generally the inclination not to meet tomorrow, so I would like to give verbal notice of bills which would have appeared on Votes and Proceedings tomorrow so that they can appear on the Order Paper on Monday, if that is satisfactory. The bills, Mr. Speaker, for Monday's Order Paper, then:

The Principal Minerals Royalty Act.

An Act to amend The Mineral Taxation Act.

The Statute Law Amendment Act.

An Act to amend The Automobile Insurance Act.

An Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was asked in the House how many bills there were still to come, and I made a guess, Mr. Speaker. My answer was approximately ten, more or less. Now I'm able to tell you that the definition of approximately ten more or less is twenty. Now, Mr. Speaker, having said that, that is today's reckoning, that's errors and omissions excepted, and many of them are very minor and technical amendments so it's not a heavy session although there are some heavy bills included. But when I said ten, approximately, more or less, I was thinking more in terms of the major legislation that I was aware was still outstanding.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the House Leader. I wonder, in view of the fact that we'll be sitting here until October, whether he has any intention of breaking for the summer for any kind of a recess?

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. We will proceed with bills. Bill No. 58. The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. JAMES R. FERGUSON (Gladstone): Stand.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 65, the Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, I'm not speaking on the bill, but just as a matter of explanation I would hope to be able to speak on it in approximately 20 minutes. I'm waiting for a phone call.

MR. SPEAKER: Does that mean that the honourable gentleman will have an opportunity to go 20 minutes later?

MR. GREEN: I don't know, Mr. Speaker, it depends on where -- if there is another bill, No. 65 -- has that been called?

MR. SPEAKER: That's the one.

MR. GREEN: 58 has been called?

MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. GREEN: Well then, the honourable member will wait until next day because we'll be on concurrences.

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MR. SPEAKER: Concurrences. Resolutions 57 to 63, on Health. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell was on his feet.

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, just before the noon hour luncheon we had the occasion to listen to the contribution of the Minister of Finance to the concurrence motion on the Department of Health. At that time, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House were a little bit amused, somewhat confused. We have in the past been able to more or less develop and watch with a certain degree of certainty the involvement of the Minister of Finance in various debates in the House, and they all provide more or less a variation of the St. John's shift and it falls fairly predicably into set patterns. But, Sir, the contribution of the Minister of Finance in this respect, I think, has to more or less fall under the category of a broken plate. The contribution that the Minister made was not one which would indicate a contribution, but rather an attempt to confuse and to divert on the part of the Minister of Finance. He was so intent on what was the Conservative policy, and in that effort he was trying to cover up the lack

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(MR. GRAHAM cont'd) of government policy that exists in the field of health. I said before lunch, Mr. Speaker, that as far as the Conservative policy was concerned and the broad aspect of the Conservative Party, I think it is one that I'm sure the Minister of Finance must be envious of because we in the Conservative Party truly represent the little people in the province. There is a freedom, there is a freedom in the Conservative Party that is noticeably absent in the NDP party, and there is the opportunity for the individual in the Conservative Party to express his views in a manner that you would never find in any part of that government opposite.

Mr. Speaker, we are not here today to discuss the policy of the Conservative Party on this. What we are here to discuss, Sir, is the policy of the NDP Party who are the government, and as the government they have the responsibility to show us what their policy is. Mr. Speaker, we have waited here for four months since the new Minister of Health has taken over, and I think that we have been fairly tolerant with them because it is very difficult for a new Minister to grasp in a very short period of time the enormity of the task that faces him. And I know from personal experience over many years which extend beyond this Legislature, the degree of willingness and endeavour that the Minister, the capacity of the Minister and his wholehearted interest in anything that he tackles. I know him to be a very dedicated man and I hope, sincerely hope, Sir, that that dedication will soon be manifest in some clear-cut policy decisions which will be brought forward, either by the First Minister when he's speaking for the entire Party, or by the Minister of Health when he is speaking for that particular department.

At the present time, Sir, in the Province of Manitoba, there is much confusion, a great deal of concern, and certainly in some areas a degree of alarm, at the lack of policy, the lack of decision-making, and the uncertainty that exists under the present government. We do know, Sir, that there has been Task Force reports brought forward. We do know, Sir, that there have been civil servants who have some very strong views on particular matters; persons, Sir, that have become civil servants, I suggest, because they have those particularly strong views. And we have seen a general change occurring in the last four or five years by the use of the Civil Service by this government. We've seen this government in an effort to try and either confuse the issue or to try and find out what a policy might be like, or how it would be accepted, where they will use the civil servant to suggest something just so they can get the reaction of the people. If that reaction is bad, well that's tough luck; that was a civil servant that did that, it wasn't the government. If the reaction is good, then it says, well this is government policy and he was just advocating government policy and we accept all the plaudits. Sir, I suggest that leadership and policy planning has to be positive. I don't think any government can expect the civil servants to take the rap if things go bad. I think that government should bring forward clear-cut decisions.

Sir, I heard the Minister talking about, in the field of health services and the operation of hospitals, nursing homes, personal care homes, extended care homes, home care, etc. He used another term now; he talked about "comprehensive care." Now maybe, Sir, that is the policy of the government: We're going to have comprehensive care. The operations of hospitals he expects will be somewhat curtailed in the acute care bed. He said there should be some extension of the extended care in the personal care services as well as the nursing homes, and when the imbalance that presently exists is corrected he thought there would be a more effective play. Now I don't understand why he used the word "play" in there. The whole point of the thing, Sir, is that the rhetoric of the Minister and the use of words is not going to improve the health facilities in the Province of Manitoba. And when a citizen of Manitoba is sick, Sir, he couldn't care less whether he's going to become an acute care patient, an extended care patient, personal care patient, or a nursing home patient, or even a comprehensive care patient. The fact remains, Sir, that when he is sick he wants medical attention. And, Sir, we find that those facilities that are presently in existence and those that are charged with the responsibility for administration in those facilities are a little uncertain as to what the policy of the government is and what the intention of the government is towards the operation of those facilities.

The Minister talks about reducing the acute care beds and he has suggested to hospital boards that they operate within an eight percent ceiling on a global budget, and suggests to them well, you look after the problem; here's the money; you can close some beds if you want or you

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(MR. GRAHAM cont'd) can cut down on the nursing services or not, but here's your eight percent and just don't bother me. Don't blame me if things don't work out right. Sir, that's not good enough. If the Minister wants to close so many acute care beds in the Province of Manitoba let him say so and let him tell the hospitals which ones he's going to close, but don't hide under an eight percent global budget. Tell them what you want done and they will respect you the more for it. -- (Interjection) -- Certainly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member will accept that the logic of his argument is so great and so effective that inevitably he is suggesting, and I'm asking whether he is now suggesting, perhaps the Government should do what it maybe should have done long ago, take over the hospitals.

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

MR. GRAHAM: Mr. Speaker, what the Minister is suggesting now I suggest has been in the back of his mind for a long time. The people in this province don't know where they're going but they are concerned. The Minister has suggested an eight percent ceiling on global budgets and has told them that they can manoeuvre within that global budget; they can close some beds or they can cut staff off here to do something. But, Sir, let's be realistic. If you've got a 40 bed hospital and you close eight beds, how many maintenance staff can you reduce by closing eight beds? How much reduction in operational costs are you going to achieve by closing eight beds? Are you going to cut down on the heating costs? Are you going to cut down on your electrical costs? Are you going to cut down on your maintenance or mechanical costs by closing eight beds? Sir, the only place that you can cut down is in your staff, and the minute you cut down on your nursing staff, Sir, the health of the people becomes the most paramount thing. With the reduction in nursing staff, will those patients be adequately looked after?

A MEMBER: That's up to the board.

MR. GRAHAM: That's up to the board? That's typical government. They will not tell them what their policy is. All they say is, you stay in an eight percent figure.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time we find another interesting thing happening. We find that this government is suggesting, is suggesting to hospital boards and personal care boards and nursing home boards that they get together, that they amalgamate, and that will cut down on the costs. Sir, on paper it looks good but what does it really do? What is the Minister really asking? We do know, Sir, that at the present time if a hospital board has a deficit, that if they are unsuccessful in their appeal to the Hospital Services Commission, that the municipal corporation has to pick up that deficit. We also know, Sir, that in the personal care homes that they do not have that safety valve; that they are entirely at the mercy of government. They cannot go back to the municipal corporation for additional funding. Their sole funding comes from the Province of Manitoba and the inmates of that personal care home. -- (Interjection) -- The way this government is operating I suggest that the word 'inmate' is probably a more correct one.

Sir, I just wonder whether the real intent of the suggestions being put forward by the government is instead of trying to achieve a joint administration, I just wonder whether or not they're really trying to get the personal care homes and the nursing care homes back onto a basis the same as the hospitals with respect to municipal finance, so they can then turn to the board and say, "Well, if you don't like our budget you can go back to the municipality and collect more money." I think that really, Sir, is the intent of the Minister.

Sir, we have seen in the past five years municipal taxation increase at a fantastic rate, and we find this government using what I suggest to be devious means, devious means, Machiavelian schemes -- what other words do you want me to use? -- in an effort to get their hands on some more municipal tax money. And yet at the same time, Sir, they're going to say that, "This is our gorgeous plan. We are the ones that are going to take all the credit, but you pay." But you pay, Sir. Sir, you can't have it both ways. You can't have it both ways. If you want to increase the control, then you have to increase your contributions. Sir, we have seen other places where the government has said, "When we increase our contribution we want to have more control." So it has to work the other way as well. If you want to have more control you have to increase your contributions.

Sir, the other day I tabled in this House a letter from a personal care home in my area, where they expressed the concern that even though they may want to pay union wages they are

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(MR. GRAHAM cont'd) not being allowed to do so, and the Minister today says that he answered that. Sir, he did not answer the question; in fact I would say that he compounded the confusion that exists by the attempt that he made today to answer. And this can't go on, Sir. The people in this province are very concerned and I would say they're very willing to pay a high price for a standard of health care that has been established in the past and is always open for improvement. We also realize that there does come a time eventually where we can say we cannot go any further because of the lack of finance. So there has to be a reasonable approach taken and there has to be some degree of flexibility. But, Sir, we don't see that reasonable approach being taken today; we don't see the leadership that should be provided and we don't see the flexibility that should be part and parcel of any program of that nature.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't really intended to say anything in this debate but since the Minister of Finance tried to draw me in on it I thought I should make my position clear again.

A MEMBER: Unfortunately he's not in his seat at this time.

MR. HENDERSON: And I wish he was in his seat although I know that he will probably have a pretty good idea of the things I might say. I'm one of these persons that believe in encouraging thrift and work and saving and things like this. I believe it's good for people. I hate to see a society that encourages waste and people expecting to get handouts all their life. And people in particular in my area, the people in my area believe in good hospital care for the people that are in need, that are handicapped or deserted, children that need caring for; they believe in looking after them and I think probably it will show that my area with the amount of hospitals it has, senior citizens homes and care homes, that they are people that really believe in looking after the sick people and doing a real good job of it. The thing that they really complain about is when they see a system developing where people don't try to look after themselves any more or don't try to provide for themselves, so that if anything happens they have to go on relief. And that's the way our system seems to be going these days. It's developing to a welfare state, as you could say, where nobody's encouraged to put money by. They say they're taxed too much on it. How many people will you hear now that won't even work overtime because they figure they got to give too much of it away? And yet some of those very same people, if anything happens, they're pretty near going to have to go on relief. Well this is the type of a system we seem to be living in today, is that people aren't encouraged to work or to save, and I suppose the way the government's going they're going to look after them and this is what the people want. To a large extent it does look as if this is the way that the people are becoming but it doesn't say that everybody has to agree with it, and I'm one of these that really don't agree with it.

A MEMBER: Right on, boy.

MR. HENDERSON: And I think that where we have these here appeal boards, they probably do a good job many times but you get some people on the appeal boards like some of them that's on there now, they're so devoted to looking after everybody that they think that a little bit of hardship shouldn't be endured by anybody, and they'll go out and they'll hand out quite generously. And I believe it's up to the local people, the local municipalities and that, to become more involved, because I say when there is an appeal heard or a welfare worker goes out in connection with giving assistance to anybody, she should call at the municipal offices and talk to some of the councillors or the Reeve or the Mayor, because I know in many cases this would eliminate the whole case, because the people that are on council know if there's work available or not. It's just like now if you were in the Carman area and if they had to go to the Mayor to get relief and he knew that there was work needed for sandbagging or other work in the town, he could easily say, "Well, I got a job for you." So they don't go running to the Mayor and the Reeve or councillors for assistance like this. I suppose in here in Winnipeg when they're up against it a little bit they aren't that well-known and they go and apply for assistance, and the welfare worker comes around and sees that they have several children and that maybe things don't look too tidy in the house, so they maybe figure, well, they do need help. But this is where we're falling down.

I think probably that welfare workers should be a little bit more practical, and I'm sure that possibly many of the people in the back rows over there maybe won't understand just

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(MR. HENDERSON cont'd) what I'm talking about, but if a welfare worker comes around to a tenant's place and he's got an enormous fuel bill and he's saying this old house, how much it's taking to heat, and probably if they looked around they'd see that there'd be probably some windows broken out of the basement which the tenant has broken out himself, and they didn't even know enough to put the windows in or to do anything to care for the house. Probably talking about it being cold and the storm windows not on or a storm door on. I've seen this. So I think that if they get some of their social workers that go around to just come back down to earth, you know, and do some of the little things that can be done around places. Tell them maybe to get out and you aren't working and you have no job, so why don't you make some bread, you know, do some of your own cooking instead of buying all baked stuff and sweet stuff and all that? I think probably a little bit of that common sense would help a lot. If they'd grow a garden in their back yard, some of these welfare people, instead of wanting to live in some apartment up some place where they claim they're screaming about the rent they had to pay. They could be out some place where they could live much cheaper and providing for themselves.

This is the kind of thing that we see going on, and I do know that in some cases - and I certainly wouldn't say them all - that many of the people that are on welfare really don't seem to have the ability to be able to manage money and this is one of their problems, but certainly I believe some of the social workers that you have go around don't try to help them in that way either. So I'd like to disagree with the Minister of Finance to the extent that I don't believe, like I do believe in helping people that are in need, and I always was for that, but I said when I first came in the House here - and you'll all probably remember it, because I said if they didn't work I'd let them starve, and that wasn't a very diplomatic way of putting it, but basically I'm still the same. Basically I'm still the same; I just put it different. Because if I had somebody that was coming to me looking for welfare and he was able to work, I certainly wouldn't give him welfare. I'd offer him a job and I know darn well he'd work before he starved. I know well he would. So I still feel the same way about it and I'm sure if you get right back down to it there's an awful lot of people that feel the same way. It's just that politicians go out and they think, well, there's an awful lot of people on welfare. I don't want to hurt that one's feelings and so I'll try and get them on, or I'll try and do something, you know, to make it easier for them. And I think possibly that politicians are partly to blame for a lot of the people being on welfare. I also believe that our church organizations go a little too far. They're all heart. They're all out to, shall we say, they think that compassion or whatever you want to call it, they're out to help them and -- pardon? Well, no, they are concerned about it but they don't realize some of the people are abusing it. We have people in the church organization that are helping out many people, so they think, by all their work and I think if they really left them alone they'd be all right. I feel even with our Indian population this is one of our problems. I think if we left them alone they'd do a lot better for themselves. I feel a lot of people are this way.

So anyway, I just want to clear that up. And I wouldn't want to say that I was against day care altogether where it's needed, but I'm still of this opinion that where there's a family involved that the parents don't think they can raise, they shouldn't think they can raise their children like as if they are incubator chickens or something and have them farmed out all their life. If it's so important that they get proper care in the earlier years of their life, I think it should be up to those mothers to stay home and see that they get it. I certainly don't believe in doling out too much money like that, because I still think you'd be better to give a lady that needs welfare money to stay home and look after her own children and do it in a proper way than to just have them sent away to institutions where they're looked after all the time at everybody else's expense. And then you can think of the good ones there, but you can also think of the abuses that creep into this thing so easily, where you'd find people that would be using day care centres to have their children there and they'd be out on the town, and that could easily develop. So while I'm in favour of it for the people that need it, I'm one of those people that just can't go along with this. I believe that it's good for people to work, I believe it's part of our life and I believe that if people that want things that strive and end up by accomplishing them, it makes their life more meaningful, objective, and I don't think that we should take this away from people, and if we can keep the incentive system in our society it's a good thing. We don't want to tax him every time he makes a few bucks either or you destroy that. This is all that I would like to say on this at this time.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J. R. BOYCE (Winnipeg Centre): Mr. Speaker, if I needed help the first person I would go to in this House would be the Member for Pembina. And I say that sincerely, because what the Member for Pembina says he truly believes but yet he's one of the kindest hearted people in this place. And I don't say that jokingly either; what he says has a lot of validity. You know, one of the things in our society people are losing for some reason or other is the ability to strive and this has, you know, through history been important to mankind that they strive toward this, and when he says his point about a broken window in a basement, people spending more money on heat - in the odd case this does occur. In fact from a personal experience a friend of mine owns a house over in my constituency that we moved a family in that would be of that nature that they really didn't know how to live in that type of accommodation, and one night he called me up that he just got his gas bill and the heat had gone away up and what had happened is the people left their door open, the kids ran in and out. So in conversation with the people he quietly explained to them that it was a relationship between how much rent they had to pay and the amount of gas that the fellow burned; they quit leaving the door open.

It wasn't too long later that he phoned me again that the kids were bouncing a ball around the house, and it's an older house and the plaster fell off the wall, and it was quietly explained to the people again that, you know, really they shouldn't let the kids bounce balls around the house and knock plaster off. They stopped bouncing balls. It was quietly explained in another case that really when we rent a house and we break a window, we put it back in ourselves; you know, if somebody else breaks a window then the landlord is kind of expected to. What I'm getting at, Mr. Speaker, this friend of mine now tells me he has no better tenant; these people still live there after some years. So these small little aggravating things that aggravate us and we try and help some of the disadvantaged that the Leader of the Opposition says we're not helping at all, I think that we have to keep after and we have to keep reminding ourselves once in awhile that we established a commission, the Barber Commission, to try and isolate so we could see exactly in dollar terms or percentage terms what we are talking about when we're talking about welfare abuse.

The Member for Pembina, I repeat it, I say he's a very kind hearted gentleman and a sincere gentleman, but we have to not differentiate I would suggest between people in need in our society for any reason whether it be a farmer or a person that's in a labour force or anything else. And when we talk about abusive systems that we have to remind ourselves that I hear cases of even farmers abusing permit books and things of this nature. That we have to put things in their proper perspective and I think that the figures that were presented by the Barber Commission Report would probably be in the same magnitude, that the actual abuses are very low.

But, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to note the Member for Birtle-Russell in response to a question from this side of the House as to what the Conservative policy was admitted that the Conservatives have no policy. He said we're here to criticize yours. And I guess the Conservative party does not realize that one of the roles of Oppositions is not just to sit back and criticize but it is to come up with perhaps viable alternatives.

But, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address a few remarks to the Leader of the Opposition's contribution to this debate, and I'm sorry that I had to leave the House for a moment because he said he wanted to talk about five points in his presentation, where he said after having presented three points that he had a couple more to make and I only had the opportunity to record one. But he wanted to talk about confusion, lack of direction, not meeting our commitment to the disadvantaged and how much money the Manitoba Hospital Service Commission was spending. And after that I presume he made one more point.

But during his comments, Mr. Speaker, he started out with accusing the government of confusion. He accused the government of not announcing plans, he accused the government of not telling the public what they had in mind in the future. But it was not too long ago in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition piled on his table reports of all kinds most of which or a good percentage of which referred to the Department of Health and Social Development. And what did he do with these things, he threw them on the floor. Well the shame of it is - I don't fault him too much for that because I can understand his frustration. Because regardless of how well the government enunciates its policy, no matter how well it is researched and presented, if it is presented to an Opposition that is led by the current Leader of the

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(MR. BOYCE cont'd) Opposition who makes no attempt whatsoever to understand what is presented then I would suggest he is going to continue in his frustration.

As an aside one of the members on this side suggested that the Leader of the Opposition turn around and ask his backbench because it is becoming more and more apparent that a number of his backbenchers are better informed in this area than he is himself.

The government is getting more and more complex and it is taking more time of all members to apprise themselves of the consequences of direction of government policy, then it becomes incumbent upon not only the Opposition but all members to apprise themselves of the information which is available. And I don't know how the Conservative party is going to solve this problem. But it was interesting to note in another occasion that the Minister of Mines said that he was going to give the Conservatives some good advice but he didn't need to be afraid because they wouldn't take it anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I think I had mentioned in anger one time that this was probably the worst session of the five sessions that I have been involved in because of the lack of depth by members opposite in most instances and the contribution of the former Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Leader of the Opposition. To epitomize once again what I was talking about. In his presentation he said that, and I quote his phrase - that people in health and social development lack "the proper kind of direction". And if the Leader of the Opposition will read that statement in the context in which he presented it I'm sure that even he will have to conclude that what he meant by direction was a superimposition of policy from Broadway. That all policy in Manitoba should be directed from Broadway. The government announced and has announced on several occasions, starting out with a position paper, a white paper on health policy, which is set forth in very simple terms that this government is committed to moving back to the people the control of the services provided to those people in communities.

When the Leader of the Opposition admits that he is confused there are others who are confused also. And until such time as this new approach has been in place long enough for people to become familiar with it it will be confusing. Under a couple of other hats that I have the honour to wear I get confused. Because from my position in another area I think that the Minister should accept my advice, and as he mentioned himself that dialoguing, consulting with people does not mean concurrence. And it would be much easier for me, Mr. Speaker, to have the Minister concur with my advice in many areas, but the Minister's responsibility is to listen to the advice from all areas and then make up his mind.

The Minister mentioned in his presentation this morning that they are moving towards establishing health boards. I'll just share with you an experience relative to Churchill. There is in place in Churchill a Health Board, and this Health Board is operating the hospital, they are moving out to become involved in other things, specifically in the field of alcoholism. Here just recently these people have developed the knowledge in this field, what they were faced with in this field, what kind of staff they would need in this field. The Minister has given this reign over to them, and in fact if you would read the newspapers you will see that the Health Board of Churchill has advertised for two staff positions. One of them is a Director of Outreach Programs and one of them will be in charge of this particular program. Hired not by Broadway but by the people in Churchill. And as these two people are hired the additional staff will be developed in keeping with what is needed in Churchill.

Similar negotiations are going on at the present time in Thompson, in The Pas and here with the City of Winnipeg. And it's a very very simple thing, Mr. Speaker, for the Opposition to come along and say that there is no direction. But there is direction if you will just bother to look. But the Leader of the Opposition doesn't look. What he takes is the word of a few disgruntled people. And, Mr. Speaker, may I digress. One of the crosses that the Minister of Health and Social Development has to bear is his Legislative Assistant because I get very angry with him sometimes. I have argued with him lots of times and I get disgruntled lots of times. But one of the things in this world is that all of us say that we have to change, you know, things have to change. But what it means is not just you have to change but I have to change. And you know it's so simple for me to say you change but it's hard for me to say I have to change. And this is true of all of us. And in the health field, you know, there are many people that got their heels dug in so hard that they don't want to change, they want to change you, change everything around them but they want to do things the same. And it's true of people in the Department. We have in government and the former administration was successful in attracting

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(MR. BOYCE cont'd) some pretty terrific high calibre people to the Civil Service of the Province of Manitoba, and it's difficult for even these experienced people to change because they get used to doing things in a particular way. That here again in this area doubtless there are people in the Department, in the field who disagree with government direction and doubtless as we had demonstrated here in another area these disappointments, the frustrations of these people come to the attention of all members of the House.

But nevertheless if people will just stop and say now where are we heading for, what is it all about - in Health Services the Government has said on numerous occasions that what we have to do is not just treat the physiological or the biological needs of people in hospitals but we have to deal with people as a totality. You know, in one of the areas that I happen to be involved many of the problems which accrue that really they're so simple when you can isolate them. They have nothing else to do but with financial pressures. So many couples, Mr. Speaker, they come out and they go through the process and they fall in love and they get married and they have a couple of children, and they go out and they get themselves in hock. They get themselves in hock and then something happens, they are both working, maybe the woman gets pregnant and they're going to have a child and their income is decreased and the frustrations of love build up - or frustrations of life. I guess there are frustrations in love also. But nevertheless the fellahs sometimes get themselves in a circle, they start drinking too much, they don't make enough money, they get themselves in so deep financially that they start drinking more and it's a vicious thing. And really all you have to do is pull these people out for a couple of weeks, give them a place to sit down quietly, help them with their financial problems and they go out and you never hear from them again. This isn't a medical problem. It isn't a psychological problem really. It's a financial problem. And this is what just one small case of what the Minister is talking about, and if the Opposition would make the least effort at all to understand the direction . . . The Opposition would have us fly off in all directions. This government has said this is the direction. If the Opposition refuses to hear that then they will continue in their confusion. (It's nice to see the Leader of the Liberal Party in his place. I haven't had a good debate with the Leader of the Liberal Party for a long time.)

But, Mr. Speaker, in closing I would just repeat, repeat the fact that the government has a direction and that the Minister and the department and the people that are involved in the department, the people that are involved in the affiliated agencies, are carrying forth this policy. And doubtless we will have problems. But I would just question one point before I sit down. The Member for Birtle-Russell said that the government should control the hospitals more. The Leader of the Opposition intimated that the Manitoba Health Services Commission should report to the Legislature. Mr. Speaker, the Hospital Service Commission should report to the Legislature, and I hope I misunderstood him, but it seemed to me that he had said that the universities should report to the Legislature. If we follow this through, the Manitoba Hospital Services Commission should report to the Legislature, the universities should report to the Legislature, the school boards should report to the Legislature, everybody should report to the Legislature. The Member for Birtle-Russell, I'm afraid that I don't see - he said that you can't have it both ways. He wants the government not to be involved but yet he wants them completely involved.

When the Minister says that as for guidelines and negotiations, and he made his own case, that if these boards are in fact, not just theory, if they are in fact responsible then they have to accept that responsibility. If at the present time the Board of Directors of the Misericordia Hospital are the directors of that hospital and they have a staffing problem, then that problem is their problem. They may call on the instrumentalities of government or any other agency in the province to help them solve the problem. But if the Member for Birtle-Russell and the Leader of the Opposition carry their argument to its conclusion, then instead of us being able to carry out the policy as enunciated by the Minister, that we want to put these health districts under health boards which are controlled by the community and not by Broadway, not by the government, then we won't be able to do it.

It's interesting to note the inconsistencies of arguments sometimes. Perhaps I condemn myself with my own mouth in this regard. But some people come up with slogans, you know, - "self control, not state control". But yet they try to push governments into positions of more and more control.

The Leader of the Liberal Party, I'm sorry, if he did make a contribution in this debate

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(MR. BOYCE cont'd) I didn't hear what he had to say - and of course with this expression self control, not state control . . .

This government is more committed to a consistency in this area than anything I have heard from any group opposite. That in the delivery of health services, the total health services, this government has committed itself to moving as quickly as possible to putting in place regional control, health control units or clinical types or whatever you want to call these things. That it doesn't just include medical services, it includes medical services, optometric services, pharmacological services, social services - the whole thing should be under the auspices, the control of people in the community.

Because if we accept the arguments of the Member for Birtle-Russell, or the Leader of the Opposition - and we certainly will not be able to do this - that everything will have to be controlled from Broadway. So just, finally, Mr. Speaker, that for someone to stand and say the government has no direction, is fallacious. What is fallacious? --(Interjection)-- No not that one. But what is rather obvious is that the Leader of the Opposition especially refuses to listen to what is going on, to see what has taken place; and not only has the government a direction but has moved well along the road as enunciated here in this House for the last three years. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Resolution 57 to 63 -- Passed. Resolutions 64 to 68,

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$67,394,700 for Highways - Pass? --(Interjection)-- The Honourable . . .

MR. GREEN: . . . that there was agreement to go back to Resolution concerning Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services.

MR. SPEAKER: Very well.

MR. GREEN: . . . which has not been passed. --(Interjection)--

MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute. Let us get one thing straight. This last one that I read 64 to 68 did not pass? Very well. Resolution 37 to 43:

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,849,300 for Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services. The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. HENDERSON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's probably less to be said about this department than others, because actually it's been a department that has done so little. Actually --(Interjection)-- No, it has done very little. He's left it all to Mrs. Plumptre or else to the federal people down in Ottawa. Just like when we brought it up today again he spoke about people in Ottawa. And truly they are doing most of it and just some of the things that he could do he don't even do. But anyway, I suppose before he came in the House he had a better paying job and maybe to put him on as a Cabinet Minister helped him out considerably. So probably that's the way it's going.

However, in his department, it's a department which has several good parts to it - the Better Business Bureau and Rentalsman; Department of the Consumer's Bureau and Landlord and Tenant Act, are really pretty good Acts. And they're well administrated. Now, I'm not giving him the credit for this at all because I believe that they're run this way just by the people that's running them. My predecessors. But anyway I guess it has to have somebody at the head of it. But I easily think that this here Portfolio could have been handled by one of the other Cabinet Ministers and saved ourselves that amount of money, because I don't think he done very much.

I'd like to say about the Landlord and Tenant Act and the operation of the Rentalsman, it's a very good Act. But actually in the application of that Act it's not as good as it reads because when you read it it always says that you've got protection and if not you can sue. Well, anybody that's been handling real estate or property they know that most of the time when the landlord gets beat the fellow hasn't got nothing and they don't even know where to find him, and if you have to go and sue to get money out of him, why you're just out of luck because there's no way you can hire a lawyer. In fact, in talking to the people that handle real estate they say that before the people had the Landlord and Tenant Act - and a very good Act it is, but people find ways of getting around everything - that the loss in that group ran about one percent of the revenue they took in. And now since we're getting so many ways for people to get around things that the loss on the revenue is five percent. Now, I hope tenants wouldn't think that I'm discriminating against the Landlord and Tenant Act. But the very fact of it is, that by giving some people opportunities to get out of paying that the good tenants have to pay more. That's

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(MR. HENDERSON cont'd) just what it means, because these people that manage apartments and the like, they have to raise the rent to take care of this extra cost. Possibly we have bad landlords the same as bad tenants. But in the application of the Act, you can't get anything out of the tenant if he's gone overnight and he's broke up everything. And the small deposit that he pays isn't enough to pay for the damage. There's just no way they can run him down. --(Interjection)-- The deposit definitely should be increased.

And another thing that's wrong about that Act is a lot of it's left - whenever anything comes up it's left to a judge or a lawyer to define some of the things, and one of the things they define is in giving notice. Supposing you had an apartment let to maybe five boys, that according to the way it's interpreted sometimes each and every one of them has to be served with a notice. And sometimes it's absolutely impossible to be able to find them all around. So you have several trips, you know, adding to expense trying to do these things. So I think possibly while consumer legislation is good we have to watch out that we don't really get too much of it because as far as I'm concerned it can add to the cost that good tenants pay.

On his department there you have Informational Services and it's really very good that these letters come out all the time telling us what the government are doing. It's really pretty much the NDP's information service. It's almost a propaganda sheet at times, and it isn't always correct. Just like the one I have here - there was going to be a meeting in which the Minister was going to be up at Churchill and express the views and the meeting was never held, the sheet went out and the meeting was never held, but there's never anything out about it saying that he wasn't even there. So it's all set up in favour of the government. It's certainly an informational sheet that acts as a propaganda sheet, that's the way I put it.

And then on their consumer bureau, I don't think the Minister and his department in Winnipeg must do very much because I was talking to a certain lady where she saw a sign up where ten pounds of sugar was for \$2.79, and she went in to purchase it and then she found out that she had to purchase \$10.00 worth of goods. Then after she got the \$10.00 worth of goods, she was including the \$2.79 to make the \$10.00 and then she found out she had to purchase \$10.00 and then the \$2.79, and she reported this to the Consumer Bureau. But do you think that they got in touch with her and went out to the store? No, they didn't. They referred the whole thing to Ottawa, you know, and then there's some clippings come along stating misleading advertising and so forth. But I mean just sending on the clippings from Ottawa that they're doing down there and not getting off your seat and doing a little bit is hardly fair when they have a Minister and a department which is supposed to be doing that for us.

A MEMBER: . . . and they advertise so much.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes, they're advertising what they're doing but when they get a complaint like this I think they should -- this lady went back later on and looked at the thing and sure down in the fine print it was there, that you had to purchase \$10.00 worth of goods and it was questionable then as to whether the other was in there, but you had to prove you were wrong. Well, no one person could do it. I'd think in a case like that that the Consumer Bureau should have went out and taken a picture of it because it could have been changed the next day, and followed it up further, so as people are aware. But we found that the Minister's doing . . . the only things he has been doing is when we mentioned something about the price of sugar he says, "do you think we should nationalize it" or something like this. Some bit of a smart remark and doesn't give too much knowledge out of it. It's the same with the antifreeze thing.

I think the Department of the Consumer Bureau should really get out once in awhile and do a little bit of the down to earth facts work and expose the facts; you know, just put the truth out on the table and then I don't think if any companies abusing it they don't want bad publicity and they'll probably do something about correcting it. I think that this is a place where the Consumer Bureau should act is when there's things happening like there was with antifreeze at one time in this province. It was happening with sugar in this province and then we had this here thing about Simplot. But actually what did the Minister do in connection with any of these things? I've been trying to follow it and he didn't do anything. I see the budget's increased quite a bit, but I don't know what he's doing. I think he's going to leave it all to Ottawa. I just feel that as far as the Minister in his own office is concerned, not knocking these other groups, the Better Business Bureau and the Rentalsman and these, but as far as his office is concerned he's doing so little that it's a waste of money.

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(MR. HENDERSON cont'd)

I think probably that's about all that I have to say on it. I think that the Minister had better get off his seat and do some work or else he should give up the portfolio and let somebody else take it with theirs because there isn't enough being done in that department to warrant the salary that's there. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Resolutions 37 to 43, pass? The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: Mr. Speaker, I just have a couple of points to bring to the Minister's attention. As far as the Consumer's Bureau is concerned, I believe they were doing a much better job a couple of years ago than what I've noticed last year, the kind of material that was coming out from the Consumer's Bureau. The thing that concerned me, there's a few stores around town, I understand, that when they sell a product and then the people want to return it, they say, well, there's a little notice somewhere around the corner that there's no refunds for any stuff that you return. Unless, Mr. Speaker, unless it's a sale, I could understand this could be the case and there's no recourse, but surely when you have a lot of youngsters today, the only time they can make a purchase or go shopping is perhaps on the weekend on a Saturday, and when they buy something it may be quite expensive, a coat for \$40.00 or \$50.00, and they take it back next weekend, next Saturday, because it's the first opportunity they've had a chance to take it back, they're not able to return it. And here they weren't quite sure, maybe it's not a proper fitting garment or something, and I think this is something that the Minister could check into, because I don't believe that this is fair.

I do not wish to take any time. In fact I could spend quite a bit of time in respect to Consumer and Corporate Affairs. I did on other occasions spend a considerable amount of time in many areas, on conditional sales and other areas, but my Leader will be speaking on this department so I will not take any time of the House with the exception that I wish to bring in respect to sales that are made, and I feel if it's not a sale and I feel that a garment is not a special sale or a discount sale, then surely the purchaser should be able to be able to return this article if it's never been used and touched. And I know some of the stores are -- they're saying "we have no control over this because the management is in Toronto and this is our instructions here." And this is an area that perhaps the Minister can check into.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's unfortunate and it's a matter of some regret that we will not have had an opportunity to go into some considerable detail in debate on the Estimates of the Department of Corporate and Consumer Affairs and are only able to deal with it very cursorily here in Concurrence Motion, because if this is anybody's year, this is the year of the consumer. This is the year in which the consumer has probably had the worst time of his life, certainly in the last 20 or 30 years since the end of the war, and I think it would have been highly appropriate and I regret that the government didn't schedule the debating time on Estimates a little differently, to allow us to spend some time on this subject.

I have a number of questions that I've been putting to the Minister in the House. Our party has been very concerned about consumer affairs in this year of escalation, cost rise, and there are two aspects to the Liberal Party position on this department. I suppose it's to say we have some good news and we have some bad news. The bad news? The bad news is the status of the consumer, the position to which the consumer has -- and that's most of the people of Manitoba who have uncontrollable expense, and I think that's what a consumer is, a person who has no choice but to consume, and this year has seen more attacks, more buffeting by that consumer and less action by government than any other year.

Mr. Speaker, we've had a gas price increase. That comes under -- never mind the absence of legislation, but that comes under the Minister of Consumer Affairs as far as I'm concerned. And the Hydro rate increase, which was 20 percent, that is something to which the Minister of Consumer Affairs should ordinarily address himself. And we've had price rises in basic commodities such as milk, eggs, bread, sugar, all of which we have questioned in the House and to almost without exception the Minister has, even in defensive response, has really said as much as any politician can say squarely, "I don't have any legislation. I don't have any power. I know; I should review, I should examine, I should investigate, but there's nothing I can do about it because we have no legislative power." And I would be saying to the Minister, and primarily to the Minister of Finance and the Minister's colleagues, that the legislation that began so progressively in 1969 in the area of consumer protection has dried up.

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(MR. ASPER cont'd)

There have been some exceptions. We have moved in the field of agricultural purchases, through farm machinery warranties, stock piling, and that I also regard as -- never mind what the Minister brings in the bill, but it is the function of the Minister of Consumer Affairs to make sure that the buying public of whatever commodity is given a fair deal, is not unduly, harshly treated and gets what he thinks he's paying for, or gets what he's entitled to believe he's paying for.

I believe that legislation's required to strengthen this department. Especially in the forecastable future of the next two or three years, we are going to see more assaults on the consumer. Some of those price rises that we'll face will be inevitable because they'll deal with imported commodities or with commodities over which we have no right to legislate, with products that are manufactured outside of this province and so on. Some will be those which the government can move on -- rent particularly, cost of land. Again that comes under in my view of this Minister's potential, in both personal terms as to what his abilities are and what the portfolio offers, these are things that we want to make sure he has the position to move and to deal with in price review, in price examination, in price change. Now, Mr. Speaker, even the government auto insurance went up this year and will go up again next year; and the Minister of Consumer Affairs, even though he's dealing with his own colleagues, should examine those price rises and report to this House.

Some positive results have occurred and an excellent beginning was made back in 1969 and '70, when the department was established, when the legislation was brought in. The Rentalsman, the amendments to the Landlord and Tenant Act, those are progressive; those are changes which have resulted in fairer play for unprotected--hitherto tenants, who now have a better bargaining position vis-a-vis the landlord. The establishment of the Consumer's Bureau has been effective. And my point is that what's been done was modern and ahead of its time in 1969 and '70. But today, through lack of furthering the consumer position for the past three years, we are not ahead any longer; we are not the most avant garde; we are not the most progressive any longer; we are about where the rest of the country was, and we were leading. Manitoba had a very front and centre position in the development of consumer laws. And I would ask that this Minister be given more support presumably as he may require with his colleagues, in developing legislation that will allow us to continue the advances that were made.

Changes are required in the Act; changes to give the Minister the power to review, to study and to publicly denounce, if necessary, and perhaps even go further and freeze an unwarranted profiteering price rise or an unwarranted consumer abuse that perhaps his Commission or his study group would discover. And Ottawa's moving in that direction, and I would say that certainly the Liberal Party would support any initiative by the Minister to follow the Ottawa lead that's been established in the past couple of years in price rise.

Consumer education has not yet been introduced into the schools. Mr. Speaker, we won't need consumer legislation to the extent that I'm speaking thereof if we get a generation trained as to what being a consumer is all about. How to buy. How to price. How to shop. What are your rights? While there is nominal consumer education in the schools, it is only that -- nominal. And I think, Mr. Speaker, the Minister might deal with his colleague the Minister of Education in the injection of more courses or more required training in subjects of unconscionable transactions, usury. Again, I've spoken on it just a few weeks ago in the Department of Education Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, specifically, we asked and we hoped that the Government of Manitoba and the Consumer Affairs Minister would be responsible, I think, for taking the initiative, again regardless of what department it comes under in law, the home-buyer's warranty. Now when we ask the Minister questions about this in the House he indicates that, "Well, Ottawa is doing something about that." Now, Mr. Speaker, Ottawa may or may not do something about it, but constitutionally, property and civil rights under the British North America Act are in the province. The province should not wait for Ottawa, or for Ottawa and Ontario to agree on something, but, as it hasn't in other affairs, should have initiated the home-buyer's warranty system. Mr. Speaker, there are too many examples, and you can go to any law office in this city or to any real estate office in this city, and they'll tell you tales of how the consumer is being astonished, surprised, and in effect taken advantage of. Not necessarily deliberately,

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) but he suffers as a result of buying real estate and finding that it is not structurally sound, it is not engineeringly sound, or it requires a repair order that they didn't know they could have forced upon them by a civic official or a provincial official. And there's only one way, and that is through an insurance scheme of some sort to get home-buyer's warranty built into every purchase contract, not just for new houses. Mr. Speaker, the shock, the astonishment and the anguish that home-buyers often suffer because there is no guarantee that three weeks after you make the purchase the inspector of electrical works won't come down and say, "You've got to re-wire your basement because there are exposed wires." And the consumer doesn't know.

That's one example, Mr. Speaker. There are many more. The Sale of Goods Act in Manitoba, which is so old, which was based on the Old English Sale of Goods Law where it was caveat emptor (buyer beware)-- well, Mr. Speaker, we've had a revolution since then. It's called the consumer revolution. It's not caveat emptor any longer, buyer beware, it's "Let the seller take care that he does not abuse the consumer," and our Sale of Goods Act, which doesn't come under his department but ought to, should be revised to make the standard built-in warranty on sale of goods a 20th century thing, not a 16th century thing as it presently is. When one buys something, Mr. Speaker, he should know that he is buying with the applied warranty, that it shall be fit for the purposes for which it's intended, and if it isn't, then it is the seller's responsibility to disclose that it isn't, otherwise it's his liability. Now that is where we have to go, Mr. Speaker.

We have a special problem on consumers' affairs in the North. Mr. Speaker, again, it doesn't necessarily come under the Consumers Affairs Department but, if it doesn't, where does it come? When we have sky-rocketing costs of living in the North, product costs not necessarily being investigated as whether there's any rationale between the fact that a product in Thompson or Snow Lake or Wabowden or Mafeking or Sherridon will cost 30 or 40 or 50 or 60 percent more than the comparable product in Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, it isn't for the Department of Northern Affairs, it is for the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and if his legislation requires change, let it be changed.

Finally in this area, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the Minister could and should at this session - because of what we know is coming - introduce a Prices Review Board. We'll argue, we'll argue in this House as to what powers that review board should have. But, Mr. Speaker, I would rather argue with the Minister because I have a fundamental confidence in his approach to the subject; I would rather quibble about technique with him, rather than have him stand in this House in response to the questions on gasoline, eggs, sugar, in effect shrugging and saying, "I have no power. Yes I will investigate it. I will use moral suasion. I will try to persuade the cement company to roll back the price, because that's his only weapon." Mr. Speaker, legislation of some sort which I will gladly, I think, in a very positive debate, argue as to how far we can go with this and because I'm not arguing for price control; I'm arguing for the power to control the price where there is an unwarranted profiteering or where there is a subject where the public is being taken advantage of, and there are cases and the Minister knows there are, that that has to be done; but, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that in a Prices Review Board - and I'm not talking about a bureaucratic maze that spins its wheels like some other commissions that have been established by other levels of government, but to examine price increase, to report to the Minister and to indicate whether the price increase is warranted, and if it is justified, fine, and if it is not, to at least allow the Minister the discretion, the power, to take such action as he deems fit, as is coming, as Ottawa will be doing.

Mr. Speaker, we can do it on a profiteering bill, on a provincial profiteering bill if necessary. That may be the approach. There was a quarrel in the Federal House three or four weeks ago whether the Federal Government's bill on excess profits would be a right approach to profiteering. Mr. Speaker, I happened to support it because it was a flexible kind of a bill. The party to which the Honourable Minister belonged thought it was too weak. Well, that's fine. In this province he is the government. He has not introduced anything even as weak as what the NDP federally said the Liberals were doing federally, introducing a weak profiteering bill. Here in this province, constitutionally, the Minister has the power to introduce a real profiteering bill - a real excess profits tax bill. We have the constitutional authority. So let's see whether the Federal NDP was posturing or let's see whether it was pandering to public opinion or whether it's really serious, because in this House it has the majority, it

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) can pass that law; and given reasonableness it will have some degree of support so that we can at least establish a machinery for rolling back taxing or arresting in some manner excess prices where they are unwarranted, where there is gouging, where there's inventory hoarding and the holding back of goods from market to force price up. We have that power constitutionally. We don't have monopoly power. We don't have the power to attack anti-trust, but Ottawa has that power and the Attorney-General of Manitoba can appeal to Ottawa for prosecution under the Combines Act when they are satisfied such offences exist. I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister is committed to his portfolio and he has the know-how, but he doesn't have the legislation. And so we indicate to him that we perhaps prod his colleagues into moving and preferably moving at this Session so that the changes in price that may occur over the next six months or nine months before we meet again can be dealt with if they're unwarranted.

Mr. Speaker, I again state that what I'm suggesting is the antithesis of the Conservative position of wage and price control, because as far as we're concerned our analysis satisfies us, Mr. Speaker, that whenever you do the cosmetic, whenever you attack consumer price escalations by saying we'll freeze, we'll freeze the price of goods and of course we'll also freeze wages, well, Mr. Speaker, something very funny happens, as honourable colleagues opposite know - I'm afraid the Conservative Party hasn't yet realized it - but when that happens what gets controlled is wage, and price never gets controlled. The people of Manitoba who are old enough to remember the Wartime Prices and Trade Board when we did have price and wage controls, they'll recognize and recall that price was not controlled but wage was, and that a bureaucratic army of civil servants grew up making an empire and a career out of regulating prices and wages. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't have to lecture honourable friends on the government side because I know they have rejected any foolish, I think hypocritical solutions to price and wage control, but I do think that the Minister needs that additional legislation and I believe his Federal colleagues would agree with him, would agree with that policy, and I don't think there would be that much of an argument if he were to introduce it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the other side of the coin the Minister is also responsible for communications, and again I have to express the regret of our party that we did not get to his department because this was a remarkable year in communications, probably the most in maybe a decade in Manitoba, 13 years I think, because for the first time in a long, long time the Canadian Radio and Television Commission, the body responsible for all communication through broadcasting, held hearings in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, last week. And so for the first time the public of Manitoba could -- and of course the major issues were considered there: The establishment of a third television station. The improvement of cable stations. The petition of a new ethnic broadcasting station in multi-cultural terms for Manitoba and so on. --(Interjection)-- Mr. Speaker, the sparrow is flying, I think.

The Government of Manitoba responded well. The Government of Manitoba and the Minister deserves the congratulations and the support of this House. I try to make it a point on behalf of our party, when there is agreement between ourselves and government, that it is not left unrecorded. Because the Minister did something that was outstanding and has only been done in one other province in Canada to my knowledge - I'm speaking of the Province of Quebec and I don't side with the Quebec position - but the Minister took the time and the trouble to examine communications in this province and to prepare a magnificently researched, an outstanding piece of work, which we have not even had the opportunity to debate and which I regret, entitled - and I guess he's calling it the Brown Paper. Mr. Speaker, it's Discussion Paper, Perspectives on Communications, what I'm referring to, what he tabled in the House on I think the 13th, I believe it was, or the 14th.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Manitoba took some initiative and prepared a document which should be required reading for all members of this House. It was a moderate document which stated the history of broadcasting in communication within our province as seen through the eyes of the Province of Manitoba, and whether or not one agrees with the conclusions the Minister reached or the techniques whereby he will want to implement those conclusions, I think the quality of the work and the thrust at his objective is commendable and should receive the full support of the House. And I regret that we won't have the opportunity to argue with him or debate with him or dialogue with him at this Session as to the techniques that he chose to improve broadcasting in Manitoba, because there there would be room for

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) debate: Whether one should regulate the cable companies or take them over. Whether one should require as a condition of licensing for new broadcasting units that they travel with their signal throughout all of the province. Whether it should be owned by the Manitoba Telephone System, whether it should be owned by the State. Whether it should be a State concession in partnership with private industry. Those are matters on which we can debate, Mr. Speaker. But the thrust of what the Minister said to the CRTC and what he said to this House when he tabled his White Paper, his Brown Paper, was valid and that is this, Mr. Speaker.

There is a very very serious issue in his area of communications. That issue is this: that advertising revenues, money, is being drained out of this province, out of this country into the United States by border broadcasting where income taxes are lost to this province, where jobs are lost to this province, and everybody alludes to being powerless to help it. And we've had this problem in Manitoba, we've had this problem in Ontario, in Toronto; where only 13 percent of the people are watching Canadian TV, the revenue is going to the U. S. The same problem exists in Vancouver and, Mr. Speaker, no government, federal or provincial, has taken a position on what to do about it. And as a result, Canadian broadcasting suffers. Manitoba communication is the victim of that problem.

In another area, Mr. Speaker, we have millions of dollars of expenditure, something like 30 million for Canada and probably a couple of million dollars for Manitoba - I think it would be about two, two and a quarter million - every year being paid on the Cable systems which contribute nothing to the broadcasting community of Canada or of Manitoba, the communication. And, Mr. Speaker, I admit to being a Canadian and I admit to being a Manitoban, and I believe that we Manitobans have something to say to each other and the only way we can say it to each other from Churchill to Winnipeg is through the communication system, the broadcasting system. So, Mr. Speaker, when the Minister proposed that there be instituted - and not five years from now, but now - a system of extended broadcasting in Manitoba, the potential is mind-boggling, the objective is worthy. It will do more to unite this province, to give this province a sense of pride, and that is why it is a matter of regret that we haven't had a chance to hear the Minister further and to argue with him as to the implementation techniques.

We want to see established in Manitoba a broadcasting industry. We want the jobs in Manitoba and we want the tax revenues in Manitoba. And we want the quality and the content of that broadcasting to reflect our character and our values and our point of view. And that's what the Minister, I think, was saying in his white paper and that is why we support the philosophy. Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know the technique that the Minister would adopt to implement his plan but I think we could have worked it out. I think we could have come to some consensus. But because there is no consensus, because we will get no debate, there is a question mark in the minds of the broadcasting community as to what's going to happen, and, Mr. Speaker, that's not a healthy situation. I don't believe - and it will be well-known - I don't believe in government takeovers of industry. I do believe in government regulation of those industries or those businesses which are vital to our well-being, our social, cultural health. That's why I say that in this case, what I've often said before in this House, I don't believe that newspapers should be owned by non-residents. To that extent, I suppose, in that limited sense I'm a Canadian nationalist. I similarly don't believe that the bulk of our broadcasting and our communication should be in such a manner as militates against the development of jobs in the writing, in the broadcasting, in the musical areas, the artistic areas in Manitoba.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I saw great promise in the position that the Minister has taken. I understand there's more to come, that he has more research, that he will table it at a subsequent time. I only ask that he not be inhibited by the constitutional argument that we don't have constitutional power over broadcasting. I admit we don't. Primacy in this field is federal, but we do have the power to regulate, Mr. Speaker. We do have the -- well, we do have the power to regulate in the sense of cable. It must go on our telephone poles. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a massive bargaining position. I believe in the extension -- I'm a torn person on this subject because I don't believe in censorship. I don't believe that we should block out or jam out broadcasts whether they're books or whether they're magazines or whether they're cable television, broadcast from the United States or any other country, and so I'm torn, I'm caught by that commitment to anti-censorship.

But I think there's a solution, Mr. Speaker, and I saw in the Minister's paper a

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(MR. ASPER cont'd) beginning of the solution, and that was you cannot preclude that, but what you can do is use the massive appeal of that mass market to generate funds which will permit the broadcasting of the Canadian point of view throughout the province and finance the cost in that manner. And there was a novel, there was a worthwhile approach. And so, Mr. Speaker, while I can't definitively commit my party to vote in favour of legislation that may automatically flow from the paper the Minister has put forward, I can say this, that it is a very promising piece of policy. There's a good beginning and I would ask that the Minister find some technique for giving us more opportunity to debate it in the near future, perhaps even at this Session. And, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister were to call for a select committee of the Legislature to sit during this Session or in-between sessions, I would certainly go along with that kind of a suggestion and would be very happy to participate in those deliberations, because I believe the Minister has put his finger for the first time in any province on an approach to a very thorny problem that looks like it may work, and for that I commend the Minister and ask that he be as aggressive as possible with his colleagues in bringing this to our attention in more forceable ways. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Resolution . . . The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of the Opposition for their constructive criticism. I would like to thank especially the Leader of the Liberal Party for covering one aspect of my portfolio that is likely the largest and one that is certainly exciting in this day and age, and that is the Communications Branch. May I deal with it first and the comments made by the Leader of the Liberal Party?

I should point out for those members opposite who may not realize this, that the Communications Branch and the Manitoba Telephone System have, between them, about 4,500 employees whereas the Consumer Affairs part of the portfolio with the Public Utilities Board and other areas that I am responsible for, has something just over 200 people, so that gives a relative scale of the magnitude of these two parts of the portfolio.

Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Liberal Party was clued in, if I may use that term, to the communications problems that are facing the nation as well as province over the next few decades. Simply put, these problems are whether or not Canadian broadcasting will continue to be viable over the next 20 or 30 years. And I am one of those, and I think likely he as a member of the Liberal party is also, a person who feels that broadcasting and the existence of the nation are likely tied together; they go hand in hand. And in my opinion, Sir, any move by the Federal Government or the Provincial Government that can protect Canadian broadcasting will contribute to the continuation of the country as a nation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I have brought before the CRTC and before the members of this Legislature a discussion paper, and I would like to emphasize, Sir, that it is a discussion paper; and that is, a paper put out with ideas in it which I would hope would have the widest coverage and the widest and most penetrating discussion. And I see the Member for Fort Garry now making notes and hopefully he will enter this debate and the discussion on this discussion paper.

The first proposal in the discussion paper, Sir, was one which involved the Manitoba Telephone System in entering into what is called a full lease arrangement with the cable companies. Now, Mr. Speaker, I will elaborate in a few minutes on terms of a contract that now exists between the MTS and the Cable companies, but that was the first proposal in the discussion paper, a full lease arrangement.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the paper proposed that when the current partial contract with the cable operators expired that they would move to this renegotiated full lease position. Now that full lease contract, Sir, means a contract in which the cable company will lease all of the hardware from the Telephone System, and it has nothing to do of course with what goes into the message. We are not interested, I am not interested, the Government is not interested, MTS is not interested, in anything to do with the content. We are only concerned with the hardware.

The second proposal in the discussion paper, Mr. Speaker, related to the diversion of what we have termed surplus profits from the cable companies to broadcasting, and it's this aspect of the policy that is designed to protect Canadian broadcasting and, as I said, contribute to I hope the continuance of the country as a nation.

The diversion of the money from the cable operators to the broadcasting sector is not something that the Manitoba Government or the Manitoba Telephone System can now do. It is

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) the responsibility of the CRTC, the Canadian Radio Television Commission, and the discussion paper proposes that the CRTC, although it does not now have the jurisdictional authority under this legislation, seek that authority and divert those moneys from cable companies to broadcasting. And I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that when I'm talking of broadcasting I'm not talking of the CBC, I am talking of CTV, I am talking of any third TV operation who might be licensed in this province, and I'm talking also about radio. Now to us it is simply a matter of finding revenues which will enable Canadian broadcasting in this province to be viable and to extend its service throughout the province.

Those, Sir, are the two major thrusts of that discussion paper. The contractual relationships between MTS and the Cable companies, I would now like to elaborate on.

The existing contracts, Mr. Speaker, between MTS and the two Winnipeg cable operators are of the partial agreement type. Now they were signed, that agreement was signed with the two cable companies in this city in 1967, and it was then the policy of the MTS, directed I gather by the then-Conservative administration, to enter into that kind of partial agreement. At that time, I'm informed, the Manitoba Telephone System and the Government of Manitoba were concerned that the Cable Television Companies would attempt to use what was going to be their monopoly position to import United States television signals into this province and that they would use their monopoly position in doing that as a base from which to get into the business of providing other telecommunication service. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to labour members of the House, especially those who haven't even dwelt on communications, with the technology that's involved here. But simply, in 1967 the MTS had this concern, and the government of the day had this concern, that the monopoly of the cable companies could be used to establish what would amount to a switched coaxial cable network in this city. So we have the partial contract where the MTS maintained the ownership of the coaxial cable and had certain options built into the contract for a continuance and ownership of the amplifiers which go along the coaxial cable. We have that now, and what the discussion paper suggests is hardly more than what already exists in contractual form.

In addition, Sir, the contract limited the cable operators, the two of them, to use of those channels on the cable which were required for television and FM signals only. All other channels on the cable were reserved to the Manitoba Telephone System. So if anyone is under the illusion that the cable companies now own hardware and the discussion paper is proposing that MTS reassume ownership of something that the cable companies now have, then I would just like to point out that that is not now the case. We have under contract most of the hardware already in existence.

Now, I want to summarize for members just what that contract contains in addition to the general distinction that I have drawn between the full lease and the partial lease. I point out that MTS has full ownership of the cable.

The second point, Mr. Speaker, is that MTS has the option to assume at any time, on 30 days' notice and payment of \$1.00, ownership of all multi-taps, splitters and dividers and other devices that are on the existing cable.

The third point, Mr. Speaker, is that MTS has the option at any time to replace amplifiers and amplifier housing on the cable. Now, if the MTS exercise that option, ownership of the new amplifiers would rest with Manitoba Telephone System. That presently is in the contract existing between MTS and the cable companies.

The fourth point, Mr. Speaker, is that on termination of the contract in 1979, MTS has the right to ask the customer, that is the cable company, to remove their wires or house drops.

Fifthly, Mr. Speaker, all repair and maintenance of cable facilities is to be performed solely by the Telephone System on a call-out basis. A similar condition applies to multi-taps and the splitters and the dividers and the amplifiers, if options two and three that I have mentioned about are ever exercised. But there is provision made for temporary emergency repair by the cable company.

The sixth point in summary of the contract now in existence, Mr. Speaker, is that MTS has the option to deal with any duly licensed cable operator for future lease of cable television channels.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that it can be clearly seen that the existing contract with the cable companies does now provide the Telephone System with fairly extensive rights over the existing hardware that's in place.

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd)

Now, while this contract provided the necessary and immediate protection for the common carrier that the then Conservative Government thought necessary, a number of problems have become apparent relating to the system design, that is the layout of the coaxial cable in the city, and also problems have arisen regarding the duplication of maintenance services. There is some problem now with both of these. The duplication of maintenance perhaps is the most easy to understand. If someone's Cable TV goes off the air in their home, there's always a problem tracking down where the problem lies; whether it lies with the cable company's facility, namely the house-drop, or whether it lies with the amplifier, or whether it lies with the MTS services that are provided.

Now, for the reasons that I've mentioned, namely, the problems arising from system design and the duplication of maintenance, for those reasons we are proposing that a full lease agreement be adopted when the contract expires in 1979. But, as I think I pointed out to members, a changeover to a full lease in fact represents nothing more than exercising the options that were written into the contract by the Provincial Government in 1967. Now outside of Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker, the full lease arrangement will have a very important extra effect and one that I think many local newspaper operators and many local businessmen in rural and northern areas will appreciate, because the full lease arrangement whereby MTS will have control of not only the coaxial cable and the amplifiers that it now can have, but also the house drops, that full lease arrangement will open up the possibility of cable television operation to local businessmen or to community-based groups that would not otherwise have a chance to become a cable television operator. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the full lease provision will enhance, encourage competition in the provision of cable services in the rural areas. And I think that that point is one that I would expect would commend itself to local businessmen, local groups in rural and northern areas who wish to become involved in cable television. What the full lease says, Mr. Speaker, is "reduce the necessity for capital outlay" for these small operations in rural and northern areas.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to point out that under the full lease arrangement with the cable television companies there would be no subsidy from cable television to telephone users, nor would there be any subsidy from telephone to cable television. In other words, Sir, there would be no attempt by the Telephone Company to extend cable operations by draining off revenues that accrue to the System by the provision of telephone services. And I think that that, too, is a point that should be borne in mind. We have been accused of doing both, and the fact is that we're doing neither of those things, or would do neither of those things.

The pricing for cable would be on a strict cost-recovery basis and that cost recovery would be based on the long run, instrumental cost for the provision of the hardware for cable operation.

Now, I think, Sir, that those remarks are really all I wish to devote at the moment to cable television. We have some other data, of course, which I see the Leader of the Liberal Party is anxious for me to say more. We have other information which I hope I will have the opportunity at a future date to release. The proposals that we have made have been, as he's indicated, thoroughly researched. We have cost figures which I think can be sustained under criticism. And of course if anyone wants to argue about the projections that we have used, and they are based on an economic-checked model and on figures we've got from the industry, then I say simply that the cable company, if they'd only make their books available to accountants that we could retain, then we will arrive at a true picture. I understand that the eastern lobbyist who was here speaking for the cable companies has already committed them to opening their books to our review. But we think that cable operations are in a position of earning really excessive profits and in the other area of Consumer Affairs where I am being criticized for not looking more closely at excess profits, I'm saying that this is one area where we intend to, we would like to, and if the cable companies will make their books available we'd be very happy to go over them to see if our projections are indeed accurate.

Now if I could turn, Mr. Speaker, from the discussion paper on broadcast and cable to the other area that I'm concerned with, namely, Consumer Affairs, I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I am flattered by the thrust of the comments made by members opposite simply because they have suggested that many of those things that are not now under my purview, that do not now exist in the form of statute under my portfolio, be moved into my area of

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd). . . . responsibility. I am exceedingly flattered and would like to thank members opposite for suggesting that. The Leader of the Liberal Party in particular has mentioned that such things as the price of natural gas is something that I should move the government into. I don't know in what way exactly he's suggesting that that be done other than through the Public Utilities Board. He has suggested that farm machinery and the parts of should come under my purview even though they are expressly excluded by the Consumer Protection Act, and he has suggested that the Sale of Goods Act also fall within my departmental responsibility. And the Member for Pembina as well, Sir, although he was much more general in his remarks, did indicate that my portfolio should be expanded so that I can do a variety of things so that I can bring the government into the market place, intervene presumably in establishing prices or regulating prices. He suggests in a general way that the Department of Consumer Affairs should bring the government into the regulation of such things, I believe he mentioned, as antifreeze and the supply of antifreeze; that it should in short, Mr. Speaker, become involved in the whole range of market activities in this province. Mr. Speaker, I cannot accept that I, as an individual seeking only to be part of a government, and not the total government, I must say that I cannot accept the lodging of all those statutory responsibilities in the Department of Consumer Affairs.

However, Mr. Speaker, those areas that the government and the Department of Consumer Affairs feel are necessary . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina, on a point of order.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes. As a point of privilege. I didn't say that he should regulate prices for us. I never said that at all. And I would be the last to say it, that's for sure.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Member for Pembina has now clarified his statement. I thought that in a general way he was saying that the Department of Consumer Affairs had not got enough, even though we had done everything we could under the legislation now existing, and that in fact we should inject ourselves into many many price-setting mechanisms for commodities that people buy. Now, if that is not his intention and if he doesn't want us to do here what his national leader is suggesting on the national scene, then, Sir, I am very happy that he has raised this matter of privilege and clarified his remarks for me.

I was going to say, Mr. Speaker, that the direction of many of the questions posed by members of the Opposition over these last few months certainly led me to expect that they did want me to get into the regulation of sugar prices, because the Member for Roblin queried me about sugar prices some months ago; that they did want me to get into the regulation for the storage of antifreeze, because the Member for Pembina asked me questions about antifreeze some months ago; that they did want me to get into the regulation of other commodities for sale in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want, as I said, to become or to involve the government in the regulation of all of the market mechanisms that now exist. But, there will be, I would expect, some malpractices in the marketplace, or there will be some examples of profiteering which the government would perhaps single out as the areas requiring either legislation or regulation in addition to that which now exists. If that occurs, Mr. Speaker, if this government determines that there are areas where there is excessive profit taken, then I would look to the support of those members who have now today said that we are not doing enough in this area. And so if there is a time when such legislation is introduced, I would expect that they vote for it. And if there is a time when regulations are introduced that will enable the government to regulate pricing mechanisms or trade practices, then I would hope that they would support those rules as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina have another point of order.

MR. HENDERSON: Yes. I think it's a point of privilege. I specifically did not refer to regulations. I said he should expose the facts; let the people know that business people didn't want bad publicity, and if they were doing something wrong it would be drawn to the public's attention. I never spoke for regulation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. TURNBULL: I'm glad the Member for Pembina said that. I hadn't realized I was referring specifically to him, but to members opposite who had indicated over the months that they thought there were malpractices in the marketplace. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, they certainly

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) cannot deny that he did say that I am not doing enough, and certainly having sat in the backbench for four years I'm very keen to do as much as I possibly can and if I do recommend that the government get into certain areas, then again I would seek his support. I don't think that that is a matter of his privilege, but surely, Sir, we could expect support from the members of the Conservative Party because their national leader has certainly indicated that he would go much further in the regulation of market practices, trade practices, than the Province of Manitoba.

I particularly, Mr. Speaker, want to point out to members of the Opposition that I will be looking at the possibility of trade practices legislation in this next fiscal year; trade practices legislation similar to that which has been recently introduced in Ontario and in British Columbia. Trade practices legislation, Mr. Speaker, which would enable say, for example, a commission operating under this Act, or this proposed legislation, to regulate on an ongoing basis malpractices that may come to view in the marketplace. Such legislation as I say has been introduced in two other provinces and it has I think considerable merit, and although I've just received copies of that legislation I will be examining it in detail and I do hope that in this province we might be able to come up with that kind of mechanism for reviewing pricing in the marketplace, for reviewing trade practices in the marketplace, for reviewing deceptive practices in the marketplace, for reviewing excess profits in the marketplace. I think, Mr. Speaker, that certainly if we got into the examination and regulation of excess profits we could count on the support of the Liberal Party, because I gather that today he has committed himself to provincial legislation which would regulate excess profits.

Mr. Speaker, I think that I could review briefly, as I didn't have the opportunity to do so earlier during the estimates review, some of the activities of the Department of Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services. It's a rather wide-ranging portfolio, Mr. Speaker. It has, as the Member for Pembina pointed out, two very major acts which involve the staff of the Bureau in a great deal of work, namely the Consumer Protection Act and the Landlord and Tenant Act.

There are a number of other acts that the Bureau is responsible for and I would like now to, as I think many members did who spoke, especially the Member for Pembina, commend the staff of the Bureau for their work. I have every reason to believe, in fact I have been told this by members of the business community, that the staff of the Bureau are co-operative and yet vigilant in the protection of the rights of the consumer. I know that many tenants have expressed to me that their rights have been protected by the acts of the people in the office of the Rentalsman, and I think that that is all to the good.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I should single out John Mason, the Associate Deputy Minister of the Bureau, for the work and the support that he has given me since I took this portfolio last July. It has been a difficult task for him, Sir, dealing with a new Minister, because I have tended to move the Bureau somewhat away from the existing legislation into fields of investigation of pricing practices and some trade practices that I don't think they had examined previously.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a very high level of activity in all branches of my department, and I could cite figures, numbers of phone calls and investigations made, but will hopefully satisfy members by pointing out that they have risen astronomically in the last year despite what they seemed to indicate earlier. I think that the number of investigations that have been undertaken, and satisfactorily settled despite the fact that the Bureau does not have in many areas legislative authority and power to compel businesses to act in a way which would recognize consumers' rights. The Bureau has through persuasion been able to secure the protection of consumers.

Mr. Speaker, another area that I am responsible for is the Public Utilities Board, which is another departmental responsibility that members opposite passed over in their discussion. The Public Utilities Board has also been extremely active in the last fiscal year despite the uncertainties that have affected the securities capital markets throughout much of the past year. For example, the activities of the Securities Commission, which is in the Public Utilities Board, has remained at a high level.

I think that I could commend as well the Chairman of the Public Utilities Board for the work that he has been engaged in in the last while. I think members recognize that with the squeeze that's been put on natural gas distribution in this country by the Alberta Government

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(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) there have been a number of hearings that the Public Utilities Board has had to get into relative to natural gas prices. I think that generally they have managed to have those hearings and come to a fair and reasonable price for the distribution of natural gas to residences and commercial operations.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Associate Deputy Minister of Communications, who was primarily responsible for the research and the writing of the discussion paper over the last 18 months or so. His name of course as most members know is Ken Goldstein and I think that he too has, along with Mr. Peden and Mr. Mason, have given me excellent support in the few months that I have been in this portfolio. I do look forward to a long, happy, and fruitful relationship with each of these gentlemen.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would close my remarks. I do hope that we can have, particularly on the matter of communications policy and the discussion paper, a sensible and rational discussion of those proposals. Certainly they have been researched and I think that there are members of this House who either have an interest or an expertise, or a past expertise in this area, and I frankly and very honestly look forward to their measured and intelligent contribution to the discussion of broadcast and cable policy.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry. The Honourable Member for Radisson.

SUBSTITUTIONS - LAW AMENDMENTS COMMITTEE

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, if I may I'd like to make a substitution on the Law Amendments Committee. Substitute Toupin for Miller, and Malinowski for Turnbull, on the Law Amendments Committee.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that agreed? So ordered. The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

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MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister. I wonder if he might expand in answer to a question. Does he plan any legislation to require vendors of goods, retail goods, to maintain certain stockpiles of replacement parts for goods having been sold, in the same way as the Honourable the Minister of Finance is suggesting have already been . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Again I have to remind members that questions in respect to debate are for clarification only not for opening up a further area of debate. If the honourable member will confine himself to that, I'll entertain it.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, Trade Practices Commission that the Minister referred to, that he proposes to bring in, would one of the powers of the Trade Practices Commission be to require certain minimum stockpiling of replacement parts in the light of many residents of Manitoba complaining that in the backwash from the sewers last weekend heat and water heating equipment has remained out to this moment due to a lack of replacement parts for equipment they bought from retail outlets.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Speaker, that question is pretty wide-ranging. One, with the Trade Practices Commission, that I am suggesting might be studied by the Department. I would have to look at the legislation that now exists in the other two provinces that I mentioned and see more clearly what they are doing. With regard to maintenance of inventory, yes, I think that's a very good idea. It's very similar I gather to that which now exists under the Farm Machinery Act. But if he is suggesting that inventory be maintained at a level to cope with the kind of emergency that the city has experienced in the last while, then I would think that that would be an unreasonable burden to put on businesses.

MR. ASPER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On the same subject, under the Trade Practices Commission, would the Minister consider including fair trade laws as are, I guess, practiced primarily in Chicago, rather Illinois, and California, which restrict vertical integrations of companies where monopolistic practices may develop by acquisitions by one company of another company? Now that's Combines Legislation in provincial style.

MR. TURNBULL: We are getting now more and more into the area of policy. That's certainly in an area of great concern to me and if it can be worked into any legislation that I might convince my colleagues to accept, then I certainly would be willing to have it written into the legislation.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry. Order please. I am allowing a lot of latitude, I am lenient, but I think the honourable gentleman is using debate now as a question period and I don't think that this is the proper time for it. If he has specific questions I'm certain he can find another time for it; he's opening up new areas of debate. The last question was very much a new area. He mentioned the name of a certain thing that was mentioned in a debate but had no relevance to what the Minister spoke. If anyone was listening to the Minister's remarks I was, and I'm certain of that. The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Yes, Mr. Speaker. But first on a point of order. I presume that as long as the Minister's time hasn't expired and he's willing to answer questions, provided they do stay within the material . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member's going to lose the time he's got, 30 seconds.

MR. ASPER: 30 seconds? Is it the Minister's position as stated in his remarks relative to extension of broadcasting throughout the entire province, that he believes that by 1979 one way or the other we could expect a microwave system as referred to in the Brown Paper that would take all broadcasting to most, almost all regions of Manitoba. Is that planned? Does the Minister intend to take action to cause that to occur?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. TURNBULL: I'm very happy to deal with that question, but the noise around my chair prevented me from hearing it all.--(Interjection)--If he wants to try again I'll . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member's time is up. Now it has to be by unanimous consent.--(Interjection)--The Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for having phrased it badly in any event. The Minister suggests in his Brown Paper an objective, which there can be no quarrel with anywhere in Manitoba, and that is, that he proposes to cause broadcasting of the three, the two, and the new television channels, plus all the cable channels that will be permitted, plus perhaps educational or instructional TV, to all regions of Manitoba through a very elaborate system, which is an exciting system, the microwave system that's referred to in the Brown Paper. Now my question is: In view of the fact that the contracts expire, which the government is presently committed through MTS in 1979 could . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member's opening up new ground. The honourable minister did not mention all of that in his remarks. The honourable member is mixing up what he read in the report.

MR. ASPER: . . . 1979 the current contract expires, and that opens up possibilities that he described as very exciting, and with which I concur. I simply ask him is it government policy then to project to '79 or '80 that he will put in place some sort of a microwave system, regardless of how it's financed, that could accomplish that objective, and would?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. TURNBULL: Well, Mr. Speaker, the best way to answer that question of course is to say that the telephone system through its revenues is continually expanding the microwave grid in this province, that the extension of that grid is predicated first of all on the provision of telephone service. Secondly, on the provision of other services, such as cable broadcast signals, which would be Canadian in content, and if there can be a contract reached between a broadcaster and MTS, then the necessary antenna will be put on the microwave towers. Now, and the same kind of argument applies to the provision of American signals to get cable into some local communities; if there can be a contract reached then the signal will be provided. But first of all we're talking about the provision of broadcasting Canadian signals to local communities.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L. R. (BUD) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too was very interested in the discussion paper prepared by the Minister and colleagues in his department and the government generally, presented earlier this month to the CRTC, and like him I look forward to a discussion and an examination of the points and proposals raised therein. I must say though that I was intrigued by the perspective taken by the Leader of the Liberal Party, who I feel on the basis of his assessment of the government position, to date at any rate, is expecting a development that in my view can lead only to a degree of mediocrity in some areas of broadcasting in Manitoba that doesn't exist at the present time. I found it

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(MR. SHERMAN cont'd) rather a full-throated cry from the Leader of the Liberal Party for mediocrity in broadcasting. I find that rather a difficult perspective to understand about it, particularly when he is purported to be headed for some of the major board rooms in the broadcasting industry in this country; for someone who is--(Interjection)--for someone who is being primed for the chief executive office of either Global Television or CanWest Broadcasting after his political career is concluded, I find his performance incredible, Mr. Speaker. I must say that I would expect his future colleagues at either Global or CanWest to be rather disturbed when they read his remarks, or hear the remarks that he made today, because he seems to have little appreciation for the economics of private broadcasting, and for the mathematical difficulties of putting successful private broadcasting enterprises together on the basis of what he seemed to imply in his remarks today.

The government is headed for a firm control over cable broadcasting in this province, if the discussion paper is to be accepted and believed. I think that the main intent, the main thrust of the proposals having to do with cable point in that direction. The Leader of the Liberal Party seems to endorse and support the positions taken by the government in that area, so that's why I say, Sir, that I find his endorsement, his position rather unbelievable in the light of the kinds of reports that have been circulating about his possible future in private broadcasting.

I expect this kind of an approach from the government where broadcasting is concerned. I really didn't expect it from the Liberal Party, but now it seems Sir, that there is only one--there's only one element in this House to carry the fight for private broadcasters and private enterprises in the broadcasting field, and we in the Conservative caucus and the Conservative Party will have to do it alone without our colleagues to the left; and I mean that both philosophically and geographically.

Mr. Speaker, the cable companies, the cable companies are an obvious attractive target for the government at the present time, but I don't know to what degree they are a legitimate target; I don't know to what degree they are as ripe for plucking as the Minister seems to feel they are. The Minister and his associates seem to feel, seem to have assumed, that cable companies in this province have been piling up exorbitant profits and that some control has got to be exercised over them in that respect, and that those huge profits must be funnelled into supporting the broadcasting industry in Manitoba in general. Well, I don't know to what extent the facts bear that out, Mr. Speaker. I know that there have been some fairly, fairly declamatory statements made by some spokesmen for the cable television industry on that subject. I know that a spokesman for the industry from eastern Canada has been fairly firm and fairly emphatic in denying that there are these types of profits accruing, and I don't know to what extent his story is correct, and to what extent the Minister's version is correct. I know that people involved here--(Interjection)--I know that people involved here in the cable TV industry feel that it's a gross distortion of the situation to suggest that there are these huge profits being accumulated by their companies, that in fact the economics of their operation don't exceed the reasonable profit margin to any degree, Sir. I think the question that has to be resolved for all Manitobans is, who's got the right story? Whose version is right? Is the Minister right when he says the cable companies are gouging, in effect gouging the Canadian public, or are the cable companies correct when they plead that they're struggling to make an honest living, and they're just getting by? I think before any kind of revolutionary intrusions into the field--(Interjection)--are proposed - well, even by the CRTC. It doesn't make any difference to me whether the suggestion comes from the CRTC or from the Honourable Minister responsible for communications, if it's a bad suggestion the CRTC is just as capable of making bad proposals as the Minister is.--(Interjection)--Well, I think that we need the answers, Mr. Speaker, to that initial question: Are the cable companies making huge profits? They say they're not. I would hope that the Minister is serious when he says he's going to encourage full-blown discussion on this subject.--(Interjection)--

MR. TURNBULL: I would like to thank the Member for Fort Garry for yielding to a question. I was wanting to ask him if he realized that a cable company in Kamloops has voluntarily given over to broadcasting operations in that city a cut from the rental that they charge for cable. In other words, the cable company has given, I think it's 50 cents per subscriber --(Interjection)--to the broadcaster in that area. Therefore I would think that what we are suggesting is not only practical but it's now being done, and was voluntarily done, by a cable operator in Kamloops.

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MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, let me say in answer to the Minister's question, yes, I am aware of that. I don't think though that the situations are necessarily parallel. The market to which he's referring is in no way analogous to the market, the Winnipeg market or the Manitoba market. The proposal as it's sketched, in its present form anyway, in the government's discussion paper does not set any particular--does not set any particular limits, any particular minimum, or any particular maximum. I think if the Minister is talking about a specific, you know, a specific kind of a levy, and it's arrived at after a reasonable and conscientious examination with the cable companies of their financial position, then that's one thing; but if it's a policy that's being proposed because of a belief, an understanding and impression--an impression on the part of the Minister and the government that the cable companies are making excessive profits, then I don't think that's a sound basis for such a policy. What I am saying is, I hope the Minister - and I believe that I can take him at face value when he says that he is going to encourage discussion on this subject, and I would hope that the cable companies will be fully co-operative in disclosing the facts about their operations that have to be disclosed.

But, Sir, leaving that point for a moment, let me say that one of my basic concerns about the government position in the discussion paper up to this point is that I don't get the feeling out of it that the government is considering the viewer. I don't get the feeling out of it that the government is recognizing the fact that television viewers, no matter what their particular IQ is, or what their particular level of program appreciation is, I don't get the feeling that the government is taking the viewer into account. There are some people in Manitoba, because of our geography, who are deprived of the entertainment value of television and broadcasting, and those gaps in the service should be filled in, and any efforts in that direction we heartily endorse.

But I think that when the Minister says that he's not interested in the message, not interested in the content, he's only interested in the hardware, that that is an illusion, and that's an illusionary kind of a statement; because if the Minister is interested in the hardware and through the exercise of the options that already exist that hardware can be placed in a position of control that really rests in the government's hands, then in the end by implication, and in practise there can be control over the content. There can be control over the content.

The Minister has said that he envisions various kinds of cable programs at the local level and at the regional level. The Leader of the Liberal Party has said the same thing. Well, I think the question is entitled to be raised: who does the Minister think is going to watch these particular local cable programs? Where is the expertise in program creation going to come from? The sad fact of the matter--well perhaps it's not a sad fact--the cynical fact of the matter, Mr. Speaker, is that Canadians--and that includes Manitobans--demonstrate their viewing preferences every day of the week in this country, and the program fare that is offered by cable companies, as deplorable as much of it may seem to be to the Minister and to me, that program fare is desired by a majority of viewers. That program fare is desired by a majority of viewers. The Minister is saying that that isn't going to change, the message and the content isn't going to change. Well, I think we have a right to ask that he prove that. I think we have a right to ask that it be demonstrated that that kind of thing isn't going to change? Or if it's going to change, it's going to change in areas that really matter, such as in the areas of obnoxious and offensive commercials. If the Minister is talking about some kind of examination of some of the commercials that appear on television, which I'm sure all of us find objectionable and offensive, then I think he'd find support here for that kind of approach to improvement in broadcasting. But if he's talking, if he's talking ultimately about creating a mechanical and a technical arrangement where local programs will replace the kinds of programs that are available on cable now, then I think he's doing viewers generally a disservice. Every week, every month, in this country, and as recently as at the CRTC hearings just concluded here there were markets, there were viewer markets asking for cable service, asking for the kind of viewing opportunities in television that other markets get and that they're deprived of. That underlines the kinds of choices that Canadian TV viewers make, and I think that has to be taken into account.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it at 5:30?

MR. SPEAKER: Very well. The Honourable House Leader.

SUBSTITUTION - LAW AMENDMENTS COMMITTEE

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like leave of the House to substitute the Minister of Northern Affairs for the Minister in charge of--or to whom Autopac reports on tonight's committee, the committee on Law Amendments.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that agreed? (Agreed) So ordered. The House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10:00 a. m. Monday.

Committee on Law Amendments meets tonight at 8:00.