

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
10:00 o'clock, Monday, May 27, 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 my gallery where we have visiting us three members of the Polish Mountaineering Team heading for Alaska to climb Mount McKinley and Mount Logan. They are guests of the Honourable Member for Point Douglas. On behalf of all the honourable members of the Assembly I welcome you here today.

Presenting Petitions; Reading and Receiving Petitions; Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees. The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AMENDMENTS

MR. D. JAMES WALDING (St. Vital): I beg to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

MR. CLERK: Your Committee met on Wednesday, May 22, 1974, and on Friday, May 24, 1974. Due to the illness of Mr. JENKINS, Mr. WALDING was appointed as Chairman for the remainder of the session.

Your Committee heard representations with respect to the bills referred to it as follows:

No. 7 - An Act to amend The Civil Service Act:

Walter G. Ritchie - Counsel for The Manitoba Government Employees Association,

Garth Metcalfe - Executive Director, Manitoba Government Employees Association.

No. 20 - An Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act:

J. Veitch - Secretary-Manager, Manitoba Trucking Association.

No. 27 - The Lotteries Act:

Ed Teillet - on behalf of certain ticket selling agencies.

No. 36 - An Act to amend The Public Schools Act:

Norman Harvey - Manitoba Association of School Trustees.

No. 49 - The Child Welfare Act:

Bruce Fraser - Executive Director, Central Area, Children's Aid Society,

Paul Walsh - Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg,

Mr. Lebitka - Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg, Eastern Manitoba,

D. Lugtig - Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg,

Ken Emberley - Private Citizen.

Your Committee has considered Bills:

No. 16 - An Act to amend The County Courts Act,

No. 17 - An Act to amend The Attorney-General's Act,

No. 18 - An Act to amend The Highways Department Act,

No. 27 - The Lotteries Act,

No. 60 - The Social Services Administration Act,

No. 66 - An Act to amend The Limitation of Actions Act,

And has agreed to report the same without amendment.

No. 5 - An Act to amend The Garnishment Act,

No. 11 - An Act to amend The Insurance Act,

And has agreed to report the same with certain amendments.

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

MR. WALDING: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Gimli, that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministerial statements and tabling of reports. The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

HON. RUSSELL PAULLEY (Minister of Labour) (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have received reports from the Minimum Wage Board respecting the Board's review of the minimum wage for this province. One report, the majority report, recommended for employees 18 years of age and over a minimum of \$2.05 per hour from July 1st of this year . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister making a statement?

MR. PAULLEY: Yes.

MR. SPEAKER: Would he provide a copy for us?

MR. PAULLEY: Yes. I'm sorry.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. PAULLEY: One report, the majority report, recommended for employees 18 years of age and over a minimum wage of \$2.05 per hour from July 1st of this year, and \$2.15 an hour on January 1st of 1975. The other report recommended a rate of \$2.25 per hour effective July 1st of this year.

Taken together the reports highlighted three factors. The recent experience with inflation; the advisability of advance notice before increases go into effect; and the desire of board members and of some other groups who presented briefs that a formula be established for setting the minimum wage.

After reviewing both reports from the Minimum Wage Board the government has decided to provide for changes in the minimum wage as follows:

For employees 18 years of age and over, an increase to \$2.15 per hour from July 1st, 1974, and an increase to \$2.30 per hour from January 1st, 1975.

For employees under the age of 18 an increase to \$1.90 per hour from July 1st of this year, and an increase to \$2.05 per hour from January 1st, 1975, reserving the traditional 25 cent differential.

A study of the impact of this 10 percent increase in the minimum wage which went into effect on October 1st of 1972 has been under way for some time. This study is now completed and a draft final report was made available to the Minimum Wage Board to assist in its review. A summary of the study is now being made public and is attached to this statement and this will be followed by publication of the final report and accompanying statistical tables in a month or so.

So, Mr. Speaker, in addition to my statement attached to that statement are copies of the majority and minority Minimum Wage Board's and also a summary of the impact study. I might say for the benefit of members, Mr. Speaker, that they will note that there were certain other recommendations in the report which will be handled in due course and considered, but we felt it advisable at this time to indicate increases in the minimum wage.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK Q.C. (Leader Official Opposition) (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for the information furnished to the House. One recognizes the need for continuing upward revision of minimum wage with respect to the economy when all it has to do is walk into any of the grocery stores to purchase food, and one realizes that the costs have escalated, and are escalating almost every day. As a result in order to make people -- or to be able to provide that people at least are able to remain in the position they were before, that increases have to take place. I think it should be noted though, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is significant, that the increase of 25 cents which would take place by July 1st would amount to almost a 12 1/2 percent increase at this stage. The increase to \$2.30 which will be a 40 cent increase, it would amount to a 20 percent increase.

Mr. Speaker, I think that that begs the question of where we are going with respect to the nature of the inflation that is taking place in this province and this country, and as to how we are going to cope with the problem of the escalation of costs, and the expectation of increases that must occur, both in wages and in pricing.

Mr. Speaker, I have not had the opportunity to examine the impact study summary that is presented here. But in just scanning it the impression I have is that it would indicate that in most cases while there may be some adjustment with respect to greater productivity, generally speaking the increased costs are passed on to the consumer, so that any increases

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

(MR. SPIVAK Cont'd) that take place will be borne by the consumer, which means that the pace of the inflation must continue on. When one examines a 20 percent increase forecast, as an example, within a six month period, one recognizes that that increased cost will be paid for by the people in this province as a result of the pricing going up, not 10 percent, Mr. Speaker, but in some cases maybe even 20 percent, to be able to meet the costs that now have to be borne.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think that any government who has compassion and is concerned with the lot of the people in the province must make the adjustments necessary to be able to see that minimum standards are in fact provided; and I'm not questioning that. But, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this only brings to the limelight again the question that has to be asked as to where we really are going with respect to our economy and to our inflation, and whether the danger signs are really being ignored as to what has to be done, or the danger signs of what is taking place and the fact that governments are not at this point taking the action that essentially has to be done to try and curb, and curb the expectation of increases and rises in both wages and prices that everyone expects.

I regret very much, Mr. Speaker, that the impact study is not available to us today. I regret very much that it will be available a month from today when this session will be finished. I regret very much that we are not going to have the opportunity to deal with this in this House. Mr. Speaker, the problem of the cost of living and inflation is the most important issue facing all of us in this province and in this country. The Legislature has to address itself to this problem; the House of Commons must address itself to this problem; the politicians who are in the federal election are addressing themselves to this problem.

But I must say, Mr. Speaker, that something -- a comment has to be made with respect to the management of the affairs of this House, that an essential documentation, an essential study, which would assist consideration on our part of where we are going with respect to the nature of inflation, where judgments can be made as to the impact of the minimum wage and the increased costs, is not available to us, nor will it be available to us until after this session, and the kind of debate that should take place which would put this particular rise in the perspective of the total problem generally of inflation, is not going to be debated in this House, is not going to be available, and thus to a large extent this study and the influence it can have is to a certain extent minimized because it will not be part of the debate that should take place in this Legislature before we complete our business. --(Interjection)--

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

MR. I. H. ASPER (Leader of the Liberal Party) (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, like the Leader of the Conservative Party I think all of us have to reserve an in-depth comment for a later time, having just had put in front of us some very detailed reports that presumably are the basis on which the judgment was made to select the wage rates referred to in the Minister's statement. We thank the Minister for making the statement and for making the information available to us. Certainly we will study the material, and will look forward to receiving the impact study to which he's referred.

If I'd express an immediate reaction it would be the regret that for once - rather once again the government has opted for a declaration of what the minimum wage shall be rather than adapting it and tying it to the yardstick that we had proposed in earlier debate, that the minimum wage should not be a matter of negotiation or study and the kind of debate that we may have over it, but rather that the minimum wage should be something that floats with the times automatically rather than through political judgment, and of course that's a legitimate debate.

I thank the Minister I think on behalf of the community in Manitoba for giving this kind of advance notice of the impending wage increases so that those who pay the wages, the employers of Manitoba, will have adequate and ample time within which to adjust their administration and their wage record keeping.

I hope too that there will be, or that there has already been, in making this judgment, with which I can't quarrel - I don't think any reasonable Manitoban would quarrel with the rates established - but I hope the Minister has made some study and measured carefully the impact of these new wages on those borderline or marginal industries which are labour intensive and where a 12 percent increase in labour costs could have a dramatic impact on their ability to

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING REPORTS

(MR. ASPER Cont'd) continue to sell, and so on.

I am particularly concerned about rural industry which may or may not be working at, or about this kind of a wage level or near the minimum wage. Because the last thing we want to do with our minimum wage is harm the people whom we really intend to benefit, and harm them in the sense that the employers may find, some employers may find that they cannot continue operating because of world conditions, because of international competition, or what have you, at those rates. I'm sure the Minister is more than concerned about them and will take a hard look at those cases as people make submission to him, where there may be some adjustment in formula, a greater flexibility towards the minimum wage, where there is a social cause for permitting people to be employed at below the wage where because of their lack of productivity, or because they are partly handicapped, or because they're senior citizens, or what have you. I appeal to the Minister as I have for two years now, to look at the minimum wage as something that should be far more flexible, something that can change to permit people to work who might not have the productivity to warrant this kind of a fixed wage.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize that the setting of the minimum wage affects very few, relatively, workers because most of the people of Manitoba are working at above the minimum wage. But what it does do, Mr. Speaker, is it sets a base in the community on which all wage structures are based. So if the minimum wage is increased by three percent or five or ten or fifteen percent, then normally that will flow through to the top wages in wage contracts that are to be negotiated. I don't share the Leader of the Conservative Party's concern about a 12 percent wage increase, Mr. Speaker, for the minimum, or even the community generally, because after you take inflation at even eight percent or nine percent as we've had in the last years, you must have a 12 percent wage increase because after taxes, you will only have the eight percent roughly. Most of our people are in the 25 to 35 percent bracket, so I don't find this inflationary in that sense, but, Mr. Speaker, that is another debate. The question of how we combat inflation: we certainly do not combat inflation, Mr. Speaker, on the backs of low wage people. We do not combat inflation, Mr. Speaker, as the Conservative Party is bound to do in this country, by freezing supply, by freezing price, because that will stop production, and that will add to the fuels of inflation because there will be scarcities, and we all - fortunately I think the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party federally have both rejected that cosmetic nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, those are my observations. Generally the Liberal Party with that guarded concern about marginal industry welcomes the announcement, and will support the changes required, and encourage the Minister to take into account the things we've raised, such as tying the minimum wage to a formula, automatic, and also the review of those industries that may not be able to be competitive with this wage structure.

MR. SPEAKER: Any other Ministerial Statements or Tabling of Reports? Notices of Motion; Introduction of Bills. The Honourable Attorney-General.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. HOWARD PAWLEY Q. C. (Attorney-General) (Selkirk) introduced Bill No. 79, an Act to amend the Provincial Police Act; and Bill No. 80, an Act to amend The Real Property Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Public Works.

HON. RUSSELL J. D'JERN (Minister of Public Works) (Elmwood) introduced Bill No. 81, an Act to amend the Department of Public Works Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

HON. SIDNEY GREEN Q. C. (Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management) (Inkster) introduced Bill No. 82, The Principal Minerals Royalty Act (Approved by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor); and Bill No. 85, an Act to amend the Mineral Taxation Act. (Recommended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor).

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. PAWLEY introduced Bill No. 84, The Statute Law Amendment Act (1974).

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister in charge of Public Insurance Corporation.

HON. BILLIE URUSKI (Minister responsible for Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation) (St. George) introduced Bill No. 83, an Act to amend the Automobile Insurance Act.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways.

HON. PETER BURTONIAK (Minister of Highways) (Dauphin) introduced Bill No. 86, an Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act (4).

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources. A few days ago I asked him a question in connection with Lake Winnipeg and the licensing of whitefish and pickerel and new regulations that had been provided. He undertook to get the information and supply it to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

MR. GREEN: Yes, that's correct, Mr. Speaker. I don't yet have any new information. My information from the meeting is that the quotas are the same. There was a change, Mr. Speaker, in the license fee which was indicated to the fishermen and if there are any more changes I will be advising the honourable member. I don't yet have the information.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if just before we continue if I can get some House business settled. Tonight we are meeting in Law Amendments Committee at 8:00 o'clock, if that is satisfactory to finish the work that we started on Friday. Tomorrow I would like to have Municipal Affairs Committee and Agriculture Committee meet at 8:00 o'clock, if that is satisfactory, to have both committees meet to complete their work.

Thursday at 8:00 the Committee on Economic Development to complete the report of the Manitoba Development Corporation; the Communities Economic Development Fund. - The Manitoba Development Corporation would include Leaf Rapids as well, to go as far as we can with that material.

There is also to be scheduled a meeting of Committee on Privileges and Elections to hear the Ombudsman, but I don't have a date for that as yet.

Now if those dates are satisfactory it takes care of Monday night, Tuesday night and Thursday night.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the House Leader if he intends to call the Public Accounts Committee again this session.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Well yes, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly try to have Public Accounts Committee called. I'm dealing with the ones which sort of have been given priority to. We did undertake to have the Ombudsman for Privileges and Elections. I think that there will have to be time during the schedule to call Public Accounts Committee. The intention is to try and call it, yes.

ORAL QUESTIONS Cont'd

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

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. Has the Minister been advised that an elderly woman died this morning at Misericordia Hospital and her family has alleged that her death was contributed to by lack of acute care beds in the hospital?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. SAUL A. MILLER (Minister of Health and Social Development) (Seven Oaks): Mr. Speaker, I have heard about this incident. I have asked the Commission to make inquiries at the Misericordia Hospital. They have made preliminary inquiries. The elderly woman of 84, I believe it was, was moved from a nursing home to the Misericordia Hospital where she was in emergency and died in emergency.

MR. ASPER: Would the Minister indicate whether it's true that the emergency arose three days before her death, and for three days she lay on a stretcher because there was no acute care bed available for her?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I cannot corroborate that. That isn't what I heard.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, in view of the subject matter being raised again will the Minister confirm that he still intends to permit a 100-bed reduction in acute care beds at

ORAL QUESTIONS

(MR. ASPER Cont'd) Misericordia and other hospitals, as has been reported I think last week?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, what was reported last week was what occurs every spring, perhaps more so this year. Beds are closed because of summer scheduling of staff, both nursing, medical, and other staff. That wouldn't take place until June 1st anyway, so that this particular matter had nothing to do with it.

MR. ASPER: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the light of the event though where this morning somebody had died - or at least was not admitted to emergency treatment - will the Minister review. . .

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister state his point of order.

MR. MILLER: I just finished saying the woman died in the Emergency Ward.

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

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the Minister's point of order was about. My question is: In view of the fact that the person could not get for three days into an acute care bed, will he now review the decision which has been made to reduce the number of acute care beds starting in two weeks?

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, it's not mine to review. The hospitals run their own institutions. They go on a summer schedule as do other institutions.

MR. ASPER: To the same Minister. Is it not a fact that the hospitals are reducing the number of beds because of lack of budget, which is under his control?

MR. MILLER: I categorically deny that, and the hospitals deny it too. It's a summer schedule. I explained once before to the honourable member, this year there is a greater degree of shortage to the nurses because graduation, or the exams, the final exams, are being written in August although the graduation exercises are being held in June. The exams are being written in August, so there's that time lag. But every year hospital beds are closed down as staff, medical, nursing, and all professions, and the maintenance staff as well, take their summer holidays. It carries on I gather in the past in June, July and part of August.

MR. ASPER: Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister. It relates to an answer he gave in the House several months ago when we first raised the subject. He indicated at that time that he was having a study made, and that he expected it to be received, on the subject of the availability of acute care beds in Winnipeg particularly, and later he indicated that he had received . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. ASPER: I wonder if the Minister will not make available that internal study that he made so that the honourable members of this House will have before them the same information as to availability of emergency beds as the Minister has.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the study that I referred to was an internal study of the Manitoba Health Services Commission on all beds in the Province of Manitoba. The study has been completed, has been for some time. It's for their purposes. I will not table it in the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the First Minister. I would like to ask the First Minister why he has told the public through his press release on Friday that the Wuskwatim Dam on the Churchill diversion was not scheduled until later in the sequence by the former government when in fact it was the next scheduled structure?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. EDWARD SCHREYER (Premier) (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I didn't make reference to whether it was next or later; I made reference to the fact that there was no indication that it would be built immediately after the going into operation of the diversion, which pretence was attempted to be made.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, can I ask the First Minister why he has told the public that the diversion capacity and design in the former scheme was 55,000 cfs when in fact it was 34,000?

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, that is ridiculous.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, might I ask the First Minister why he has applied for licence for 30,000 cfs when in fact the capacity under the present scheme is going to be 45,000?

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, the licence is for 30,000, and may I say with respect to the previous question, 55,000 cubic feet per second that is the information that has been consistently provided by Manitoba Hydro relative to the high level flooding diversion, and that has been confirmed in figures given just last week with respect to the flows under the two diversion schemes and water levels under the two diversion schemes.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister table the reference material giving the figures under the capacity of the present diversion. I mean particularly the report of the study group, the Environmental Study Group, that has a report on flows and discharges under the present plan?

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, whatever data material is available certainly can be provided.

MR. CRAIK: I ask the First Minister if this can be made available this week.

MR. SCHREYER: Certainly, Mr. Speaker. That's precisely what we shall attempt to do.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

HON. L.R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable the Minister of Labour. Is the Minister satisfied that there will be no loss of jobs in many Manitoba industries as a consequence of the increase in the minimum wage?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can't guarantee that when people are paid a more reasonable wage than they were receiving before that there may not be some loss of jobs. I'm surprised at the attitude of my honourable friend to indicate accordingly; but directly that's within the realm of possibility. It's also, had there not been an adjustment in the minimum wage, it would have been more fruitful for people to continue to be on welfare.

MR. SHERMAN: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the industrials covered in the impact studies survey, did the Minister receive assurances from those industries covered in that survey that the increase in the wage proposed would not result in a serious dislocation or a serious reduction in terms of the employees involved?

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I haven't had an opportunity of studying the first preliminary impact study report. There is a summary that I only received myself this morning. I thought it would be helpful to the members of the Assembly, and it could quite conceivably be, say for instance, in the hotel industry that there may be some hardships, and that they may lose some of their waitresses and waiters, and the likes of that.

MR. SHERMAN: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister and his Department developing a contingency employment plan to deal with that kind of a situation?

MR. PAULLEY: The only answer I can give to that, that I don't know exactly what my honourable friend has in his mind about contingency employment but it has been drawn to our attention on numerous occasions that there are certain industries that are not attracting people into employment because of the miserable low wages that they are paying.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID R. BLAKE (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable the Minister of Mines, Natural Resources and Environmental Management. Could he inform the House if any permits will be issued this year for spraying for cankerworms, either aerial spraying or other spraying in the province?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, it's not a question of permits. There was an application to the Clean Environment Commission by the City of Winnipeg which was granted in accordance with certain terms. I do not believe that aerial spraying was included, but there was spraying of cankerworms included.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. BOB BANMAN (La Verendrye): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Honourable the Minister of Highways. Could the Minister confirm that the provincial roads in Manitoba because of bad spring break-up conditions and other factors are in one of the worst conditions they've ever been?

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways.

MR. BURTNIAK: Mr. Speaker, I don't think I'm in a position to confirm that. I think the honourable member must take into consideration the weather conditions, and similar conditions have existed in the past. I don't think that the situation is any worse now than it's ever been based on the weather.

MR. BANMAN: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the problems encountered by many of the provincial roads now, is the government intending to provide any additional moneys for additional crews and maintenance for these provincial roads?

MR. BURTNIAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, when we receive the full and final report once things get back to normal, I think that at that time we'll make that decision.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if you'd now proceed to the . . . adjourned debates on second readings.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

Bill No. 58. The Honourable Member for Gladstone. (Stand)

Bill No. 65. The Honourable Member for Gladstone. (Stand)

Bill No. 67. (Stand)

Bill No. 69. (Stand)

Bill No. 70. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

BILL NO. 70

HON. SAMUEL USKIW (Minister of Agriculture) (Lac du Bonnet) presented Bill No. 70, the Animal Diseases Act, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, this particular bill is a redraft of the old Act with a much broader scope, which in effect means that we are tidying up a lot of things for housekeeping reasons, but we are bringing into the new bill some very important new features.

One has to recall the incident of a few months ago where we had seizures of livestock in this province, in two or three areas of the province, wherein those seizures were undertaken under the Criminal Code of Canada. It was rather tragic to find that we had to have a situation develop to that stage before some form of public intervention could take place. So that the intent here, Mr. Speaker, in one of the major changes in this Act is to allow the province, or give the province through the Director of Veterinary Services the authority to intercede at a time when it is still possible to salvage a situation; in other words, to introduce a preventative system as opposed to a system of penalty and action after the fact. We are not happy with the application of control by way of the Criminal Code itself. We think that if proper warning and notice is given to provincial authorities that we could be of some assistance to people that find themselves in trouble, either inadvertently, and that is always a possibility, and in fact a probability - and also in cases where people are negligent, where we would have the authority to remind them of their responsibilities with respect to the care of animals. So one of the important changes in this bill will be to allow the Director of Veterinary Services to intercede at a time most appropriate in order to restore the health of animals wherein it is reported that there are case problems where there's a risk of malnutrition, deprivation, and so on. Some responsibilities will be placed upon people who are involved in the handling of animals, whether it be in the transportation field, or whether it be in the stockyards, the auction yards throughout the province, and of course any dealer who would be required pursuant to this Act to report any incidents which would require the intervention of the province.

The director of course upon having been given notification of problems of this nature would have the authority under these amendments to bring about either a corrective measure on the site or removal of animals, and would have the authority to restore those animals to a reasonable health standard or would have the authority to cause those animals to be destroyed. So in essence what we are doing here is adding a term which was not contained in the old Act, and that is, that we want to provide for deficient contingencies as well as strictly under the

BILL 70

(MR. USKIW Cont'd) contagious diseases section as before. So disease will be redefined to include the deficiencies as well.

The public yards, and we have many of these in the province, will be licensed and inspected, and it is our hope, Mr. Speaker, that we will clean up the marketing system of sick animals, or from the marketing of sick animals, in that people would not be able to use the auction yards as a means of disposing of their problem by unloading their problem onto some unbeknown or unbeware person. The auction yards may be required to have a resident inspector, or veterinary inspector of the area check the animals that are going to be offered for sale from time to time, and that it is our hope through that methodology that we would prevent as much as possible the culling of animals through the auction yard system, other than for slaughter purposes, and they would have to be tagged for that purpose if they are found to be wanting in one way or another; and in particular if they are sold for breeding purposes we would want to have some check in that area. Particularly it's important, Mr. Speaker, because many people that are new entries into the livestock industry find that they have to learn the hard way through experience that all animals that are offered in many of these yards are not animals that should be retained for propagation or for further development

. . . .
A MEMBER: That's very true.

MR. USKIW: . . . and the Member for Lakeside would know what I am talking about obviously. So it's a measure of prevention that I would hope with good administration will result in a much healthier animal industry across the province.

There's also provision, although we have the authority now under some cumbersome approach, there is a provision here for a more systematic way of handling the veterinary drugs through the establishment of a central drug purchasing agency, and of course the licensing of people who will be charged with the dispensing of these drugs. The various clinics that are being set up through the province will have a major role to play in the provision of these services to the farm community.

There is also a provision for compensation wherein animals have to be destroyed, wherein the Minister may authorize compensation at his discretion rather than on the present system where there has to be an appeal final before there is some consideration given to offer compensation, and which results in some delay in the disposal of animals that bear contagious diseases and in fact result in some risk to neighbouring people in neighbouring communities. So the intent there is to bring about a much earlier satisfaction to the community in the control of diseases, and so that we have the least doubt as to whether or not there is a standard of animal care, preventative in nature that would protect innocent parties from -- whether it be negligence or inadvertence of people in the neighbourhood.

Those are the major changes, Mr. Speaker, and the rest of the items, the changes, are merely housekeeping in nature, and I commend the Legislation to members opposite.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Pembina, that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, can we now proceed back to the Concurrence Motions.

CONCURRENCE

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We were on Consumer and Corporate and Internal Services. The Honourable Member for Fort Garry was on his feet. He has 25 minutes left.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask the consideration of the House Leader for the fact that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is not here and will not, perhaps will not be here because of meetings in the west coast. As a consequence of that I was hopeful that we could defer further consideration of that motion until he returned.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the honourable member wishing the Minister to hear his remarks. But the Minister has already spoken in the debate and cannot speak again in order to answer anything. The subject matter under consideration is one which is being . . . and also it's being monitored by another Minister on his behalf. In view of the

CONCURRENCE

(MR. GREEN Cont'd) fact that he can't answer the honourable member's questions I don't see any purpose in deferring the consideration of his --(Interjection)-- of the deference motion.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks fairly rapidly then.

When we rose on Friday afternoon I was responding to the Minister's presentation to the CRTC on the question of cable television and other aspects of broadcasting in Manitoba. I had made some comment on the presentation in the House, on the remarks in the House of the Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party, and I was talking about the approach and the thrust of the government in the broadcasting in Manitoba as I read it from the Minister's discussion paper presented to the CRTC. I believe I was critical to a certain degree of some of the things the Leader of the Liberal Party had said in support of the government's position. I reiterate that criticism; at the same time I would stress that we too in the Conservative caucus have the considerable interest in and respect for the degree to which the government has applied itself to the broadcasting question and attempted to come up with some answers. We're not at all certain however, Sir, that some of the things proposed are based on solid fact or are leading in a desirable direction.

One of my major concerns is in the area of cable broadcasting and in the attitudes that the Minister and his colleagues in the government apparently take towards cable broadcasting. Their arguments would seem to be based on the assumption that cable companies in Manitoba are making exorbitant profits, and that those profits should be taken away from the cable companies and redirected to the support of broadcasting generally.

The Minister asked me during my remarks whether I was not familiar with the situation in Kamloops, British Columbia where a cable operator there was returning a fixed amount of his revenues to the general broadcasting operations of the province through a government fee, I believe of 50 cents per householder. I am familiar with that situation, but as I said to the Minister at the time, Mr. Speaker, that is a unique situation and is in no way analogous to the Winnipeg and southern Manitoba broadcasting markets. The situation in Kamloops is that it is an isolated market far removed from access to other avenues of broadcasting, or varieties or choices of the type available in various other parts of western Canada, and I don't think that that can be suggested in discussion as a parallel to the Manitoba market in any way, shape or form.

Furthermore, that's a fixed and a limited charge which is probably not difficult for the cable operator in that market to live with. That particular operator enjoys a market which, as I've suggested, is not divided among a wide number of broadcasters. Here in Manitoba the situation is quite different. The market is, Sir, by a substantial number of broadcasters and the opportunity for individual profits is substantially reduced in comparison to the situation prevailing in that other part of the country.

In any event I don't think the cable broadcasters here would have a serious objection to some kind of a charge, some kind of limited charge, or fee, being imposed upon their operations as a means of raising revenue to support broadcasting generally; but any kind of open-ended approach which suggests that they are making exorbitant profits, and that those profits should be taken away and diverted is one which they understandably fear and object to in strenuous terms, Mr. Speaker. We share that strenuous objection on their behalf; we don't feel that that kind of an approach is justified or desirable. We think it can only lead to a further strangulation of industry in the province, a further strangulation of private initiative and enterprise in the province, and in fact possibly to an intrusion into the broadcasting field by the state, by the government, that is not desirable in our view. The state as such, that is the national state, has ample opportunity to operate in the broadcasting sphere through the publicly owned broadcasting corporation with which Canadians have been familiar and by which they have been served for many decades of broadcasting. It's not a desirable in our view, Sir, for the state, either at the national or the provincial level to intrude further into that highly sensitive field. There are opportunities through the private outlets for provincial governments and municipal governments to deliver their messages and to make use of the broadcasting facilities without putting themselves in a position where they have so much control over hardware in the broadcasting field that they can subtly and overtly influence broadcasting content.

CONCURRENCE

(MR. SHERMAN Cont'd)

The basic flaw in the argument advanced by the Minister lies in his assumption that there are these fantastic profits to be tapped. The truth of the matter is that the cable broadcasters in Manitoba have only recently moved into a black ink operating position. They've been operating at a loss for some substantial time while going through the period of building up the businesses that they launched here. Now that they are moving into a position where there is some return, some revenue, some profit, and a modest one, accruing from their operations, the government suddenly seems to cast greedy eyes upon that return and to say, we want that for ourselves.

What has happened here is that cable operators, cable broadcasters, have done the footwork and have done the necessary labour to build broadcasting and business operations in the face of substantial competition and substantial difficulty. They have taken the risks, they have taken the losses, they have shown the red ink positions; they have finally by dint of their entrepreneurial efforts and their energies and their willingness to take risks, moved their businesses to a position that could be described as having turned the corner. Apparently they now are in a profit position. That might not last forever, but on the basis of the market and the basis of industry returns in recent months, it appears that they have moved into a profit position.

Well what's so scandalous about that, Mr. Speaker? Why shouldn't they have moved into a scandalous position? They started out in business to move into a profit position. They like all other businesses, like everybody else who enters a business or launches himself in the market place in an enterprise, expects to take some losses for awhile but does so with the courage and with the conviction that out of it will come an enterprise worthwhile to the market and to himself, so he goes through those initial years of difficulty. This is precisely what has happened in the case of the cable broadcasters here. Now however, as I say, that they have moved into a profit position, that's too much for this government. This government now wants to grab onto those profits itself and to turn them and divert them to support of what is loosely described as broadcasting operations generally in the province.

Well, broadcasting operations generally in the province have been served for the most part by private broadcasters and where private broadcasters have not done the job, have not been able to do the job, or have not been inclined to do the job, the publicly owned national broadcasting system, the CBC, both through its TV and radio networks has served Manitobans, and that, Sir, would seem to be a reasonable kind of division of the market and one that with some gaps, due to costs and due to geographical difficulties, with some gaps has nonetheless served Manitobans well up to this point. I'm not suggesting that there aren't broadcasting services desirable and deserved in parts of the province that are remote; I'm not suggesting that all is good and all is conscientious in the field of broadcasting, but I do suggest that between the two phases of operation, between the CBC and the private operators surely there is enough there of expertise, and enough there of enterprise, to put a mix together that will ultimately be able to serve all Manitobans well in broadcasting terms.

The reason why some Manitobans have not been served as well as others lies obviously in the geographic make-up of our province. One doesn't have to go into lengthy detail on that point. I think it's obvious to all of us that there are pockets and corners of our province which for reasons of cost have been hard to reach and it's only recently that some forms of technology in broadcasting have been developed to make reaching those points possible, so the process was always going to be a slow and a gradual and a costly one. But to suggest by implication that the private cable broadcasters, or the private broadcasters of any hue, or of any enterprise, are making the kinds of profits that should be grabbed by the government and diverted to a broadcasting system here in the province that would substantially be owned by the Provincial Government through one of its agencies, I think is a distortion, Sir, of the situation, is an unfair suggestion, and in fact a dangerous one.

I think that the question that has to be answered before we can move, realistically and sensibly on this proposal is, what is the financial position of the cable companies, and what is the priority need in the broadcasting field in Manitoba, northern and southern? If it can be demonstrated that there are avenues of broadcasting that are returning so much money that it's unjustifiable and unreasonable, then I would agree that conversation should be held to determine what can be done with those revenues to fill the gaps in broadcasting that exist. But merely to

CONCURRENCE

(MR. SHERMAN Cont'd) operate on an assumption, and merely to operate on what may be nothing more than pure greed and pure desire to latch onto another man's profits, is not operating responsibly, and is not operating helpfully insofar as Manitobans and their broadcasting are concerned. The cable companies say they have not accumulated great profits; the cable companies as I've suggested say they have now perhaps turned the corner but that business still is a highly competitive situation for them here in Manitoba, and that is true.

The Manitoba broadcasting markets in the south are served a wide variety of operators and outlets, Mr. Speaker, and therefore it serves no purpose to compare this particular market to another one a thousand miles away. In fact it's an operative rule, a classic rule, of broadcasting that one should not, at the risk of making a very serious error, one should not try to translate a broadcasting formula from one market to another because there are so many unknowns and there are so many minor differences, differences of refinement but differences of importance that exist on all levels, cultural, social, economic, in broadcasting markets that it simply is a trap, Sir, to try to translate one broadcasting formula from one market place to another market place. So that we can't take the argument that because something is working in the eastern townships of Quebec, that it should be applied here. The problems that have to be met in broadcasting here in Manitoba have to be judged in the Manitoba context, and the Manitoba context at the moment is one of rather intensive competition between broadcasting outlets.

Mr. Speaker, finally I would raise the question as to the degree of acceptance of the kinds of local and regional programs proposed by the Minister and referred to in the presentation to the CRTC. I think I was starting to make the point, or attempting to make the point when my time ran out on Friday, that one of the oversights in the government's presentation, the government Brown Paper, seems to me to be the viewer, Sir. I think the discussion paper developed by the Minister and his colleagues reflects an intensive amount of research and work. At that level I agree with the Honourable Leader of the Liberal Party that the Minister and his colleagues have dedicated themselves to looking into the broadcasting field to familiarizing themselves with many of its nuances, and to coming up with some provocative ideas for discussion, but I think one major oversight is the viewer, or the listener.

I don't think that the Paper recognizes the existence of the television viewer or the radio listener in Manitoba. What it recognizes is a very sensitive and very important medium, and it recognizes the hardware and the institutions through which that medium can be used, and it recognizes the value to a government of proper application of that hardware, but it doesn't take into account in my view, Sir, the individual Manitoba viewer and listener who really is the person who should be considered in the foremost in any such presentation, and any such argument. Broadcasting after all should be developed to serve the listener and the viewer, to entertain and inform in the best sense of those words, not to stereotype, or not to propagandize, or not to regulate, and I don't read in that government discussion paper any recognition of the concept of the individual, and the concept of individual preference, and the concept of individual choice; far from it. I read by implication a kind of paternalistic attitude on the part of the government towards viewers and listeners.

When one is talking about assuming control of all the hardware through which cable broadcasting is carried out; when one is talking about diverting profits of cable companies to underwrite broadcasting operations in the province generally; when one is talking about developing local and regional programs, and all that talk is coming from a government Minister and a government department, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one is talking really about an imposed and fairly thoroughly regulated kind of broadcasting, and certainly at a very minimum it's a paternalistic kind of message. It's a paternalistic attitude, and this I think is probably the most serious shortcoming in the discussion paper. Much as we may deplore it, if we look over the viewing and listening preferences of Canadians and Manitobans, we recognize very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that there are certain things that people want to see and listen to on television and radio, and certain things that just bore them to death; certain things that they don't want to see and listen to, and we may think it's highly desirable to feed them this kind of intellectual or pseudo-intellectual content, but if they don't want it then that exercise is wasted, and I don't see any recognition in the discussion paper of the plain, ordinary every-day viewing preferences of the plain, ordinary every-day citizen. This is probably the aspect of the discussion paper that disturbs me most, Mr. Speaker.

(MR. SHERMAN cont'd)

In conclusion I would just emphasize that it reads to me like a very highly government-oriented document which details a government's plans and a government's ideas for itself. It does not read like a document that is calculated to serve the individual viewer or to serve the individual listener better. So those would be our objections, and we are heartened by the fact that the Minister has said that he wants to enter into full scale wide discussion of this paper. We hope that's the case. We hope that he doesn't move from the discussion paper into actual policy and actual legislation without giving all sectors of society a chance to comment on it and discuss with him what is more desirable, or what is less desirable than those policies proposed in the Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. LLOYD AXWORTHY (Fort Rouge) Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I would like just to address comments on two particular areas of the Minister's responsibilities.

First is one that has received some discussion so far, and welcome discussion, and that is in the area of communications. Again I would add my compliments to the government for providing us at least with a starting base for discussion in the field of communication because I think it is an area of increasing importance to the way we live, and one which I believe there should be increasing provincial responsibility for the guidelines set for the operation of communications systems. For one I welcome the introduction of the discussion paper and felt that it has opened certainly the central question, or two central questions at least, concerning the operation of cable systems. The first is the whole issue of the monopoly position of the cable operators, and what does one do about a monopoly. I think that that is a pretty time-tested issue, certainly over the last 50 years, and the requirement to provide some basic regulation of any monopoly situation, and that is in effect what we have at the present moment, and I would only want to underline a certain theme that was addressed in the Paper but I don't think was addressed strong enough. That is one where I believe if we are going to have a proper management of the potential of cable systems, that I simply believe that having them regulated by the CRTC as a broadcasting media is far too limiting a notion of the application of cable. Certainly those who have done research into the concept of a wired city see the use of cable, not simply as a broadcasting medium, but as a medium for a range of consumer services, shopping services, forms of communication services for government, etc., and that this whole kind of potential, much of which has yet to be explored, is something that would require a much closer application, an agency of government that is closer to the ground so that the implementation of cable for the variety of purposes that are available requires something closer at hand than a CRTC board sitting in Ottawa. And I would like to see us first address the question to what degree should the cable system itself be considered a public utility as opposed to a broadcasting system and thereby come more under provincial regulation and concern, because I think that would be a proper address to the position of that peculiar technology that we have.

But there is one curious thing, Mr. Speaker. When reading the paper, I went through it and it was almost as if there was an effort by the researchers and writers of that paper to project themselves, it seemed to me, so far into the future that they forgot many of the immediate problems facing broadcasting and communications in the province now. It's almost as if their sights were set for the forest and therefore they ignored the trees. Because there are a number, I think very specific problems related to communication in the province that should have been raised in that paper if it was to deal with the whole area of broadcasting, which weren't raised at all.

To begin with, I would point out the serious omission in the Province of Manitoba of any form of educational television performance whatsoever. I think probably we should hang our heads in shame in this province when we realize that we have had in fact access to cable in the broadcasting medium for educational television and that the province have done absolutely nothing over the past several years. And I can only recall about a year ago when I had the opportunity to view a number of the educational television programs being produced in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, where the provinces in each of those jurisdictions had set up separate corporations to produce educational television programs for children, and it was some of the most exciting and worthwhile and substantial communication work I have ever seen done. In fact I suppose my judgment is not necessarily to be taken, but the fact that one of those programs was nominated for an Academy Award this year is probably a fair indication

(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd). . . of the calibre of the work.

It comes now to the point that children in Manitoba are no different from children everywhere else and they are watching up to five and six hours of television per day, and most of that television is of the commercial sponsor variety which is shoot-'em-up or kind of silly cartoons type of thing; none of it really is designed for the peculiar requirements of children at a very impressionable age. As well, the schools themselves are kind of compelled to take canned work or the odd piece that comes by way of the CBC, because there is no basic production source in the Province of Manitoba producing first-class, high calibre educational television programs for children in this province. And it strikes me as a serious omission because, even without kind of moving into the expected profits of the cable companies, the fact is that the Manitoba Telephone System right now charges a rental of upwards of a couple of hundred thousand dollars in the Province of Manitoba for the use of its line, and that money simply goes into the general revenues of the MTS, I suppose, to provide for more advertising for Princess telephones or whatever they want to use it for, as opposed to having that money which is being used and which is in a sense kind of clear profit for the MTS, and rather than diverting it into what would be a very socially useful purpose such as the provision of good, educational TV programs for use in our schools and for use in the cable system's broadcast into the homes, we are doing absolutely nothing.

It would strike me that we might have been able, in that paper, to have had a more serious discussion of the potential, not of five or ten years down the road, but what can be done right now to improve broadcasting and communications in the province, and there is one area where certainly the application of funds presently derived by the province would have had a much more productive and constructive use if we had been able to set up a specific centre for the development of educational television in the province using many of the programs developed in other provinces but having a particular reference to our own community and making them available both in the cable system, because there is a channel in the present cable system available for educational purposes which is totally unused, as well as to make it available into the schools. And I gather schools certainly in the Winnipeg district and now beginning in some of the rural areas, are all plugged into cable system and therefore it would be available for use of television in the schools presently.

I would think that the next step beyond that would be to use the similar kinds of resources for the development of major adult educational programs in the province. I listened to the Minister of Education talk about the Task Force Report on Secondary Education, and they said that probably the most important field of development in education in the next ten or fifteen years will be in the sort of adult education field, the people who are not able to go to school full-time but want to improve their position through education. And again, this requires the matching up or the marriage between the communication network and the education network. Again I see very little indication in this province that we're making any movement in that direction to provide a good, serious, electronic adult education program. And again I would only point out to the, - I guess the one Minister left on the front bench, the success of the University of the Air programs in Great Britain where, since it was initiated about three years ago, I believe, close to 300,000 or 400,000 people in Great Britain of adult age or working age or involved in various capacities, are now sort of being able through the medium of cable and so on to get a continuous program of adult education to the point where they're able - I think they've graduated their first class this year simply through the University of the Air program.

So here again is another resource which is not in the future but is here now, which could be put to immediate use if there was just the, you know, the slightest bit of initiation on the part of the government to set up an adult or an educational television centre to produce programming and so on. And I realize that there was some attempt through the FOCUS program to begin moving in that field, but I gather that there has been a certain hiatus created because of the political leanings or unleanings of one of the members responsible. But that is really not a sufficient program and I don't think it really approaches it in the way-- because I think the Member for Fort Garry was quite right when he said there is no area that is more sensitive to political manipulation than broadcasting and therefore it has to be assured of its independence. And I think if we would follow the model that has been set in Ontario, where they set up in fact an independent corporation funded through the public purse to develop educational programs, that would be the proper direction to follow. As I point out, I don't see

(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd). . . it's necessarily adding any more cost to taxpayers because in fact we are already deriving substantial revenue through the cable systems and that could be properly diverted into, I would hope, educational purposes as opposed to simply whatever the sort of ending up in the Consolidated Fund of the Manitoba Telephone System.

In that same respect, Mr. Speaker, I think a more serious look should be given to the expansion and increased development of community television through the cable system. Here again is another form of new use of the cable system. It's a technology that provides for the ordinary citizen in effect to have his own media, to use it for his own communication purposes; not to have his taste or needs dictated by professional broadcasters, but to be able to reflect his concerns, his or her concerns, in the community through the use of community television. And while there is Channel 9 operating presently, I don't think it has anywhere scratched the surface of its potentiality in really reaching out and becoming a full medium of exchange between citizens. Again, that just takes some resources, the ability to provide for full coverage of local school board meetings or council meetings or local athletic programs, that right now the cable, the community cable system in Winnipeg, is entirely a studio-dominated system because that is all that the cable operators at this time are prepared to pay for or provide facilities for, and I give them credit for that. I think that they have carried their end of the responsibility as far as they should, that they have provided camera work and some staff to provide for community use. But I think a community system that's locked into a studio is not really a community cable system. It doesn't really reach into the community and provide for, again, all the potentials, and I won't take up the time of this House to recite the kind of uses that a community system that had proper resources could apply itself to in providing for a grass roots exchange of ideas and information.

I would just point out one example, that the technology is now available, and I believe could even be applied to the City of Winnipeg, where in fact certain parts of that cable system could be locked away from the other parts so that if it was necessary, let's say in the Fort Garry area of Winnipeg, to discuss whether they want to have a change in the local school system, there could be a two-way discussion between citizens and school board members through that cable system. And the kind of development that occurred would mean that rather than people having to kind of put their clothes on in the middle of February and go down to a meeting, that meeting could be open, there could be an exchange, and therefore there could be a much wider dissemination of information and knowledge about public affairs, and people could no longer simply be recipients of messages, but could also be givers of messages back. And again, that potential of the cable system has not been explored and it makes me somewhat upset again when I simply say that we are charging rent for the cable companies, again, as I say - well, I think about \$250,000 a year and I could be wrong on those figures - and MTS is not really putting that to proper use. It's not really putting that to the use of expanding and developing and enhancing the cable community operation so that it would have a much better use, a much more effective use, than simply being locked into a studio operation.

So it's those kind of concerns, Mr. Speaker, which I feel weren't properly addressed in the discussion paper of the Minister, because perhaps they weren't in the terms of reference that he was trying to examine, that they were simply more concerned with things in the immediate potential as opposed to the future potential that he was addressing himself to.

Before I leave the topic of communication, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to address one issue which might be of some interest to the First Minister, because I've heard him on occasion over the past three or four years express some strong concern about the whimsical nature of our mass media in the province, and at times they do tend to express points of view which couldn't be considered to be totally fair, and again I wonder why the government hasn't taken some lead in setting up a press council in the province so that there would be the opportunity for, particularly, private citizens who feel themselves being maligned or misused or abused by the media, to have some opportunity to express their concerns and through a press council, again similar to the one that's set up in Ontario which is composed of journalists and media people, to at least have some forum where they can take their grievance. I think that again the power of the media is something that as politicians we are certainly aware, and I don't mean a press council for politicians.

I think we're properly able to defend ourselves, or should be able to defend ourselves, and certainly have at least a forum or an opportunity to explain a case if we feel that there hasn't been a fair representation. But there are many private citizens who do not have that

CONCURRENCE

(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd). . . opportunity, and with the tremendous power and weight of the hot line shows and the radio programs and the newspaper columns, and the impact that they have upon people's lives, you know, one person's name being used in the wrong way on a hot line show can be highly destructive and highly tragic to that individual. It can hurt his business, his reputation, and probably most of all his own sense of self respect, and very often individuals do not have the opportunity for recourse. I would have hoped that there would have been perhaps more leadership from members of the journalistic and media themselves for the setting up of such an operation, but in the absence of that, I think it is incumbent upon at least the First Minister to take some initiation, and by this I don't mean to set up a government-appointed press council, I simply mean to set up the charter by which a press council, again using the model of Ontario, would be composed of people in the media themselves, those who in a sense become a judge and jury of peers. So that at least there is a place for the private citizen to go if he feels - he, she - feels that they have been misrepresented or maligned or abused, because I don't in any way underestimate the tremendous power of communications. It used to be that, I suppose in a simpler time, in a less complex society, individuals could defend themselves because they could deal on the basis of personal relationships, they would have face to face contacts. But in this day and age, when so much of our medium of information goes through mass media, goes through journalism, then we are sort of in a sense captives to it, and if people are not given proper rights in respect to it, then they could find themselves being injured seriously and I think that there have been cases in the past, and certainly could be cases in the future, where that would be the instance, and I would simply hope that some discussion might be held. Perhaps it would be simply a matter of the First Minister meeting with members of the different media establishments in the province to discuss the potential of a press council; what kind of use it might have; the application it would have and how it could be properly registered; and a charter be given; so that again that protection would be there. So I just wanted to take this opportunity while discussing the question of communications to say that it is not always simply on the side of government regulation, I think that the media itself owes some obligations to people and I think the press council is a proper move forward. And I would think, again, I don't have the full information but I do think that the Ontario Press Council has had some impact in that respect, at least provide the initial form.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, if I may, I'd just like to switch emphasis for a moment to talk about one other aspect of the Minister's portfolio, which again I believe has not been properly dealt with us in the consumer area. Governments, I guess in the last five or six years, have become much more conscious of their responsibilities to consumers; that we are always paying a good deal of lip service to the rights of consumers but it's only been really in the last three or four years that on both the federal and provincial level that Departments of Consumer Affairs have emerged and laws enacted to provide protection. So that I would say that there is probably some excuse to be presented in the consumer field, that it is still a very new field, a very adolescent one in many respects, and we're still learning. But there is one obvious lack, I believe, that consumers now have in this province as in other provinces, and that is the absence of any kind of consumer advocacy system. And by that I simply mean that many of the decisions that affect consumers are taken in the vehicles of regulatory agencies.

We could point to our own province, for example, to something like the Milk Board. And I've looked at that with some interest and find out that when a discussion, for example, emerges as to the raise in the price of milk of different kinds, there is always a well-documented and sensible information research presented by producers; there's always a good representation presented by the middleman, by the dairies. There's always one voice that seems to be absent and that is a similarly well-documented, well-researched point of view from the consumer, and it doesn't mean to say that the private consumer organizations themselves aren't interested, they simply don't have the wherewithal to delve into what is a very complicated field of economics and legal regulation and so forth; that again, the consumer finds himself handicapped by not being able to appear on equal footing with other members of the negotiation. And one of the serious problems that we have is to make sure that there is equal or an equitable representation of the consumer voice. And that means that it is not simply equity by legal standing, but equity in terms of the actual impact that is being able to be made. As we say, we can talk about giving a person rights, but rights are of no use unless a person can exercise them, unless there is the means to exercise them. We can say "you know, we're going to give you the freedom of speech", but if we garrote your throat you can't exercise it. Well in effect we

(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd). . . have given consumers the right to appear before the varieties of boards and agencies and regulatory commissions, but if they don't have the ability or capacity to properly develop the research and information to compete, in effect, with the industry or trade association who have the resources to bring it, then they in fact are being denied their rights.

I would like to see one of the areas of the Department of Consumer Affairs begin to move into the establishment of a consumer advocacy system, where they provide either through their own resources or through providing the wherewithal to the consumer associations, the ability to get the proper legal and economic and social, Sir, capacity to present their case in legitimate form, so that that kind of case is on an equal footing, and that there is really a consumer advocacy system. Perhaps it might be run through the legal offices of the Attorney-General setting up. It might be done simply by providing a central office, that we have a few researchers available to provide that kind of resource to consumer groups. But we'd make sure that in the variety of fields where the consumer must make his voice heard, they are able then to make sure that what they are saying has behind it the kind of research and information that's required. And I would simply point out, I suppose one of the heroes of our age - and we have very few heroes in this age - but one of the heroes is a person like Ralph Nader, who has done it privately. It is only through, in a sense, force of circumstance that he has been able to speak for the consumer. But if you look at what and how Ralph Nader operates, the fact is that he has literally, you know, hundreds of sort of young and eager and aggressive lawyers and researchers and social scientists backing him up, when he speaks on car safety, and when he speaks on wine use, or when he speaks on pesticides, or when he speaks on poison, you know, of meats and so on, that is not simply something of a lone individual walking into the hearing as some kind of Don Quixote. He has behind him the immense resources of literally 50, 75, hundreds of people who have done the background investigation for him. And fortunately, in the United States, he has been able to get financial backing to support that. And also because he is such a, I suppose, a superior individual, he's been able to command resources.

But we lack that kind of individual. We don't have a Ralph Nader, unfortunately, sort of crusading in Canada. And neither do we in a sense even have the tax laws to enable all Ralph Naders to operate, because we don't give them the same kind of opportunity to set up a foundation under our tax laws as he has. So we just can't accumulate the kind of endowment that he uses to base up his own operations. But it is that kind of individual, that kind of advocacy that is required to make sure that consumer right is protected. And again, I would hope or see that the provincial Department of Consumer Affairs, on a much smaller scale, might think seriously of looking at how it can either in its own respect or provide support for the establishment of a consumer advocacy system in the province to ensure the consumer's voice is adequately heard, not simply given the right to be heard, as is presently the case.

Mr. Speaker, those are the comments I wanted to raise concerning the Minister's particular responsibilities. I realize that we covered two or three areas and I apologize for that. I would have been happier, I suppose, if we had had the opportunity of the other Estimates to deal with them one by one, but I would hope that at some point some of these ideas may register and he may sort of take notice of some of these comments.

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CONCURRENCE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I rise only for a few moments to follow the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge and to place before the House consistent -- well, not necessarily consistent, but further to the presentation that he made, certain ideas that I think should be considered, I would hope would be considered by the government, with respect to the Consumer Affairs Department and the line of reasoning of the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

First, and not necessarily in any detail but just by way of a presentation, dealing with the problem with respect to the media itself doing essentially some policing of its own - if I understand him correctly - of its own members with respect to the problems of communication where there may be errors and where in fact there may be some hardship caused as a result of wrong information being supplied or incorrect reporting, I think I'd like to put back in the context of something else that is required, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's something which we have addressed ourselves to in this House but have not resolved, and one responsibility that a Minister of Consumer Affairs must assume to be part of his responsibility. And that, Mr. Speaker - and for some, when I say this, it may appear farfetched but it is not - and that is the necessity of having a Professional Societies Act, an Act which would provide a model, a model for professional groups in which the kind of policing that the honourable member has suggested could take place so that professional societies were in a position, and were under an obligation, to do the investigation within their own professional group, of claims made by people who believe that they have not been handled correctly or they have suffered as a result of an act or an omission on the part of a professional group. And if we, Mr. Speaker, had been in a position to resolve that - and we haven't; we had professional society committee meetings for several years - if we had been in a position, Mr. Speaker, to have had this legislation, I think we could have had the kind of model when we dealt with what would be the Ombudsman's feature within their own professional group, to be able to provide an example that could be followed in the particular situation that the Honourable Member from Fort Rouge has mentioned with respect to the question of communication by the media.

But, Mr. Speaker, we do not have a Professional Societies Act. We have talked about it in this House. The members opposite have not been in a position to be able to deal effectively with this matter and it has not been presented. And there is a responsibility I think on the part of the Minister of Consumers Affairs, as the person who is supposed to represent the consumers in this province, to being more forthright and more demanding of his caucus and his cabinet to see that this legislation comes forward. And we wait, as we have for about three or four years, the actions of the government.

Mr. Speaker, the second thing had to do with the question of the consumer and his protection, and relates to the discussion that took place on Friday and a discussion that took place as well when the suggestion was made by myself in the resolution, that there be a Prices Review Board for Manitoba. I think, if I'm correct, the Honourable Member for St. Matthews said that was one of the stupid suggestions, and yet curiously enough, the Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs in his own way is essentially talking about the same thing. And I would think that, Mr. Speaker, one very significant component part, which the Honourable Member from Fort Rouge talked about with respect to the consumer's ability to be able to deal effectively with those regulatory bodies that are really involved and controlled by government which affect pricing and costs, could be protected through a Prices Review Board that would be really independent. Because, Mr. Speaker, the regulations, or the bodies that are set up that are supposedly independent but realistically are to a certain extent involved with government because government employees are the main members or the chairman, put the government in an impossible position because in effect at one point it is really the decision-making body in deciding whether increases can take place, and the consumer's protection or ability to be able to feel that he is protected and to be able to challenge, becomes very difficult, again because he does not have the research capability.

A Prices Review Board in this respect, I believe, could probably correct part of this. And a Prices Review Board is necessary in this province, Mr. Speaker. Last month we had the highest rate of increase in the cost of living for Canada, in Winnipeg. And, you know, there's no question of the Honourable Minister of Labour adjusting the minimum wage today, and he adjusted the minimum wage today because we did have the highest cost of living increase in Canada last month. And a Prices Review Board has many other factors. I'm not going to

CONCURRENCE

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) deal with them; I've already dealt with them in the House. But I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that would be one way of achieving the consumer protection that's required and would take away from the consumer advocacy system that the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge has discussed.

But now I'd like to deal with the last item on the consumer advocacy system. Mr. Speaker, I consider that the 57 members in this Legislature should be 57 Ralph Naders. You see, Mr. Speaker, I consider that the protection of the consumers is to take place by the members of the Legislature who are to be the people to deal and to be able to research and to be able to present accurately the information protecting the public. But it's very obvious, Mr. Speaker, the members, because they represent the cross section of the community in this province, do not necessarily have the training that he has; they certainly don't have the resources that he has; and they are not in a position, realistically, to do the kind of work that he has been fortunately able to do in the consumer field as a result of the initial effort he put forward and the moneys that have flowed to him as a result of that.

But it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that we have to recognize that we in the Legislature have that kind of responsibility, but the resources to do that are not available. The Legislature does not provide it. That is to say the legislation doesn't provide it; the honourable members do not have the resources unless they are fortunate to be in a situation of independence where they can put that money in, to be able to hire the people to do the follow-through that's required. So, Mr. Speaker, if we talk in terms of a consumer advocacy system in a minimum form in the Minister of Consumers Affairs portfolio, and we are going to appropriate money for that, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the money would be better appropriated given to the members in this House to be able to be spent, to be able to study, review, examine the matters that are brought to their attention and to be able to present them accurately in this House.

Mr. Speaker, the 57 members of this Legislature, including the Members of the Cabinet, receive a variety of requests from the public, and I dare say, Mr. Speaker, they would touch in the main almost every aspect of consumer involvement, and they would bring to the government and to the members of this Legislature's attention the problem areas. The difficulty that the members have is that they can only deal with certain items that are either within their knowledge or before the public at that time, and they do not have the time nor do they have the resources to be able to hire the researchers to do the work. But, Mr. Speaker, if they did have, they could follow through on that; and if those resources were available, they in fact could deal with the problems that their constituents and others in Manitoba have brought to their attention as a result of either personal contact or by way of letter or by way of a phone call.

So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of consumer protection, the consumer advocacy system has a certain appeal and attraction, but realistically one of the things that has to be done first is that the Legislature has to be put in a position to be able to deal with the whole range of problems, and that cannot and will not happen until tremendous new resources are provided so that the political parties and the members are capable of hiring the kind of personnel and staff to be able to devote the time and the research, to be able to bring forward into this Legislature the kinds of information that I think could be available and which in fact could influence legislation, draw to the attention of government the matters of concern, and draw to the attention of the public the areas of concern as a result of investigation which presents accurate facts.

The government is in a position to do that. The Ministers are in a position to do that. They have staff, substantial staff; they have research staff, and they can provide that information. But they're caught up, Mr. Speaker, in the day-to-day operation of government which is all-consuming, and the kind of research, the kind of persistence in which a member of the caucus who's not a Member of the Cabinet or a Member of the Opposition could undertake on a particular item, provided he's capable of following it through and he has the resources to do that, is not really available to the government Cabinet, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say that if we were going to talk in the future, as we are, about consumer protection and about a Minister of Consumer Affairs Department, and about the introduction of a consumer advocacy system to protect the consumer, one of the things we have to recognize is the greatest protection of the consumer is this Legislature and the members who are representing the consumers. And they are not capable, they are not capable, with the

CONCURRENCE

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) resources that are given, of being able to deal with any of the problems of significance to the consumer. The time that's required, the study that's required, can be handled by one or more and can be presented, presented in a superficial way. They cannot do what Ralph Nader did - they don't have the resources. Ralph Nader has, when we talk about it, has probably the equivalent of research people of one of the major departments of government, and budgets that compare favourably with some of the departments of government. I'm not suggesting that we have to have those resources, but Mr. Speaker, until government recognizes that those resources have to be made available so that the members of the Legislature are in a position to deal in the kind of depth that they should in terms of consumer protection, in bringing to the attention of government and to the attention of the people those matters of concern, we will have missed, I think, the greatest opportunity, as I suggest, for consumer protection, which should come right in this Legislature from informed people prepared to follow through and present positions, and be in a position to deal with the matters.

Mr. Speaker, almost all of what we do in this House when we deal in consumer matters is superficial. Even the pronouncements of government are superficial because we find that when we deal, Mr. Speaker, and ask questions, we have limited information because it's been brought up through the line in the normal way. It would be in the interest of the protection of the consumer and in the public interest, therefore, to have the kind of resources available so that that consumer protection and that consumer advocacy system was available. That in the main, Mr. Speaker, would accomplish a great deal of what the Honourable Member from Fort Rouge had suggested.

MR. SPEAKER: Resolutions 37 to 43. Pass. Shall we go back to Agriculture?

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Resolutions 7 to 19. The Honourable Member for Lakeside was on his feet. The honourable member has 30 minutes.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, my intention would be to deal, oh, perhaps somewhat less harshly with the Minister of Agriculture than I had set out to do when last I had occasion to speak on the Concurrence motions before us. I suppose to some extent that's tempered by the general dreary outlook that Manitoba agriculture faces, and indeed not just a dreary outlook, but a very serious and critical outlook that we face, that somehow it has dampened my desire to add to the farmers' difficulties and to the Department of Agriculture's difficulties by being overly critical about the handling of affairs by this particular Minister. But, Mr. Speaker, in regretfully concurring with the motion before us, I must make a few points, and really let me do this by way of attempting to explain to members opposite, who I'm sure, who I'm sure have their serious moments of doubt as to what has happened to their popular Minister of Agriculture.

Sir, I say "popular Minister of Agriculture" because there was a time when the Honourable Minister of Agriculture was accepted with a degree of enthusiasm throughout Manitoba, and I hasten to say that that is a situation that befalls most Ministers of Agriculture of any party if the general agricultural scene is rosy. And I say this without detracting anything from good Ministers of Agriculture. But to be a successful and to be a popular Minister of Agriculture, it helps when you can sell your grain, as it helped a certain Mr. Alvin Hamilton a few years ago. It helps when the prices are right and there's profitability in farming. And all these things conspired for this Minister of Agriculture, to some degree, when he took office in 1969.

There was a final - it took some time - a breakthrough in some of the logjams of grain. There was an improvement, increased improvement in the general area of livestock. And so in his initial years the farming population of this province was prepared to some extent to accept the direction and leadership of this Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, to be fair to the Minister of Agriculture and to this government, there were also certain very acceptable programs that this Minister and this Government introduced to the Manitoba farming population. To name but a few, I think there's no question, certainly I think the response from the Opposition in this Chamber has indicated the general acceptability of some of the legislation programs that have been put forward by this Minister. I refer specifically to the Veterinary Clinic program that has been pursued with some vigor by this government, by this Minister, which has generally found a fairly high level of acceptability by the livestock producers and farmers generally in the province of Manitoba. I think his expansion of the assistance in the

CONCURRENCE

(MR. ENNS cont'd) water and sewage program throughout rural Manitoba, by the same token finds a general degree of acceptability.

Mr. Speaker, having thrown out these few bouquets to the Honourable Minister and just generally indicating to members opposite, you know, what is kind of the foundation that a Minister of Agriculture requires to have acceptability to the farmers, the question then has to be asked: Why and what happened to this Minister of Agriculture, and this Ministry of Agriculture? I'm sure serious party strategists of the New Democratic Party are asking themselves that question. I'm sure backbenchers are asking themselves that question, particularly those such as the Member for Ste. Rose, and there are a few that come from rural parts of Manitoba are asking themselves that question with some trepidation as to where this Minister of Agriculture is leading this government to, because as if, you know, as if in concert with the downpour of rain, the way the skies and the heavens have opened up with an abnormal and inordinate amount of moisture, so also has the roof kind of fallen in on the Minister of Agriculture. He finds himself at odds with not just "a" farm group but with virtually all farm groups.

He's fighting with the hog producers, he's fighting with every rancher in this province, who are prepared to stand up in arms at the hundred percent, nay, Mr. Speaker, over 100 percent increase in their lease arrangements. That's just since this Minister took this Crown land leases away from the Honourable House Leader, the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources. He has the total artificial insemination industry in an uproar and 99.9 percent, to quote the Ivory Snow commercial, against him. He mixes up, Mr. Speaker, when he chooses to ask the farmers their advice and when he chooses not to, and that of course, that's where the kernel lies, why this Minister of Agriculture is having the difficulties that he has. --(Interjection)-- Certainly.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: The honourable member alluded to the increase in the rental rates of Crown land. I simply want to ask him whether he does not recognize that the price of livestock alone contributed very substantially to that increase by way of the old formula.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I made the remark earlier in this House, I think the old formula was an excellent formula, one that most branches, most livestock producers accepted, and I'm prepared to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister would not receive one letter, wouldn't receive any flak at all, there wouldn't be 400 or 500 angry ranchers gathering in Rorketon in the constituency of the Member for Ste. Rose, nor 200 or 300 in Inwood or other farming or ranch areas of this province, if that price increase was related to the actual price increase as was based on the six-months average of fat cattle sold at the St. Boniface Stockyards. Yes, a proportion of it was, and I suggest that the Minister check his own statistics, which he's well aware of. That proportion of increase then could have been perhaps in the order of 20 or 25 percent, but not, Sir, not 106 percent as is the case. But, Mr. Speaker, I allowed the question and I don't want to be diverted from the particular few remarks that I want to make.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that any Minister of Agriculture, in my judgment, is there to serve the farmer, is there to serve the agricultural community, and by and large -- and here, you know, I suppose this points out the ideological difference between past Ministers of Agriculture and this Minister of Agriculture. This Minister of Agriculture not only does, but has stood up in this House and underlined the fact that he will continue to do so, to force, to insist that his particular outlook or his party's position on aspects of agriculture will be those that will be made into policy.

Mr. Speaker, I can find no better place to underline that statement than his attitude with respect to his ongoing fight with the pork producers in this province, where the Minister has been quoted not only once, either through interviews with the media, but also in this Chamber where he has said that he doesn't give a tinker's damn whether a thousand farmers or all farmers are against it; any changes that they want to bring about in their marketing procedures still have to cross his desk. I'm paraphrasing his remarks but the intent was clear. He said that he wasn't prepared to concede or to interest himself in reshaping a marketing structure which may or may not be doing a job but is obviously causing a great deal of concern among those people who are being controlled. Among those people who are being controlled, he has threatened the pork producers about what will happen if they should by chance make the

CONCURRENCE

(MR. ENNS cont'd) mistake in voting in the wrong members, or the wrong kind of people onto this board. He has said that "in the final analysis my wishes will prevail. Any suggested amendments to the marketing scheme involving pork has to cross my desk." That's what the Minister has said and he nods his head in agreement.

Well, Sir, that in a nutshell essentially, you know, is the cause and the difficulty for the Minister's difficulty, because that has been his approach to virtually all matters in Agriculture. Now he has surrounded himself by people that undoubtedly he feels are competent, but, Sir, the measure, or the criteria of advice that he's received has not been subject to the kind of general support and then finally the general, you know, formulation of policy by the farm groups themselves. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what has happened, he has alienated himself from so many individual groups.

You know, one really should not expect to see this happening during a period of time when agricultural prices are at an all-time high, when there is every reason for a reasonably optimistic and rosy outlook in agriculture, to have the kind of hollering and screaming that was going on by the milk producers on a recent radio show; to have the pork producers threatening, begging the honourable minister to allow them to have some kind of a vote as to how they should market their hogs; to have individual ranchers and farmers hold separate meetings, and actually talk about withholding of taxes, withholding of leases. They are reluctant to do this because with the combination that this minister has in terms of policy of taking over the land, they know full well that this minister, this minister is equipped as no other minister was equipped, that the moment that a farmer may, from a point of protest, decide to withhold his lease money, it will simply be taken over by the Credit Corporation or by the Department, who is actively pursuing a course of becoming as quickly as possible the largest single landowner of agricultural lands in this province.

Mr. Speaker, you go down the list of people that he has alienated within the farm community by his insistence on doing it his way. He has justified the use of taxpayers' money to present a particular point of view that he and his party colleagues have, with respect to the marketing of certain grain crops, referring to the rapeseed vote, and he has made no apologies about it. I must admit this, Mr. Speaker, that he is very open and candid about disposition. He sees there's nothing wrong with using that rapeseed growers' money, tax money, to promote a scheme which, as the vote turned out to be, a majority of the rapeseed growers were against. He has also shown himself completely adept at using his position, his department, to hold all kinds of meaningless votes and polls such as we had on the marketing of feed grains, coarse grains, just recently, which totally confused the grain growers of this province and had no bearing, could have no bearing on the end result insofar as this is a matter of federal policy, a matter of federal policy which has been decided upon and will, I suspect, be accepted by the members. --(Interjection)-- Certainly, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, now that the new policy is partially in effect, I should like to ask the Member for Lakeside whether he agrees with the reduction in prices of domestic feed grains in Canada, which is already taking place, pursuant to the new policies?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, the honourable minister tries to trap me into a situation where, you know, I'm going to be put on the public record as having been in favour of the reduced price to a farmer grower. Well, Sir, you know, this is of course the vacuum that my friends opposite work in. The fact of the matter is that it all hinges on the one mainspring in agriculture, that famous "the price of wheat". The fact of the matter is that the price of wheat, if Canada were to sell any wheat, we had to reduce our wheat and it was reduced dramatically by one dollar a week ago, by the Wheat Board, which he so holly defends in this Chamber, and of course it was necessary, it was necessary to drop the price of wheat because we were not selling wheat any more, and, Sir, Mr. Speaker, despite what my honourable friend opposite wants to talk to me about supply and management and all its intricacies, the fact of the matter is that as wheat goes, so goes most everything else in agriculture, and to do it otherwise begs disaster. To do it otherwise begs disaster, and my friends will shortly find out and are finding out, you know, in many other programs in that sense.

Well Sir, Mr. Speaker, all I'm suggesting, you know, and I think the Minister's own performance in the House in the last few months has suggested that my remarks really aren't

CONCURRENCE

(MR. ENNS cont'd) that far off centre. You know, the Minister used to be pretty confident, pretty cocky - if I can use that phrase, Mr. Speaker; I believe it's not unparliamentary - he was one minister that you could always count on having that extra little slider put into when you asked a reasonably innocent question. That chip on his shoulder was pretty big and it was, I suppose, begging to be knocked off. Well, I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, as much as I might like to, you know, might like that privilege of having knocked that chip off his shoulder to some extent, that has not happened. That has not happened. What has happened is that the farmers of the province of Manitoba are successfully bringing this Minister down to size, humbling this Minister somewhat, and telling him in no uncertain terms, whether it is the women of the Women's Institute, whether it is those who are concerned about the 4-H and their Home Economics program, whether it is the ranchers, whether it is the hog producers, whether it is the milk producers, whether it is the grain producers, whether it is the A. I. technicians, and their associations, they're telling this Minister just to what extent they're prepared to be pushed around by a wilful and stubborn government.

Mr. Speaker, after all, the farmer, you know, and with some justification and with some pride, is one of the last remaining bastions of independence, and he exercises it. And this government and the leaders of this government must ask themselves, you know -- they seem to see a massive effort being put forward by this government and this Minister of Agriculture. They have certainly devoted and dedicated considerable sums of money in these estimates to the field of agriculture, and, Mr. Speaker, it's not gaining them any results. It didn't gain them any results in 1972. Mr. Speaker, just on the face of it there should have been some questioning on the part of members opposite that the propositions being put forward by this Minister were by and large not acceptable to the farmers of Manitoba. The fact of the matter that this side of the House is so heavily populated by those who can count among their supporters farmers, people of all walks of rural Manitoba, should be some indication to this government that the farmers are not about to be pushed around in the wilful way this Minister has been trying to do so.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Minister has, in my judgment, pursued this kind of a course even to the point where it has seriously, in a very real way, degraded and brought down the morale in the department. His arbitrary manner in dealing with senior staff appointments, I must say, Sir, although I don't like to speak about staff, are among the reasons why the farmers of Manitoba are incensed with this Minister. Senior members of the Department of Agriculture who have through experience, who have earned the respect no matter which government they served, have been shunted aside, have been put into cubby holes, and people have been pulled out of nowhere, been pulled out of nowhere and put into senior positions of responsibility. Mr. Speaker, you know, I suspect - and I have to become very personal in this sense - that the biggest blunder and mistake of course this Minister made, was in his appointment of his Deputy Minister.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. ENNS: It would be my hope that that Deputy Minister would still remain the Deputy Minister of Agriculture by the time we go to the people the next time, but I rather suspect, like some of those other Whiz Kids that this government has imported - Ouellette or what - I forget some of those names -- but who came -- and Carr and a few others -- who came on the scene and drifted, you know, drifted on so fast, because smarter heads on that side recognized that their kind of overnight intrusion into responsible policy-making and administration simply wasn't going to be accepted in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that this Minister in his -- (Interjection) -- I've submitted to several questions; I am finishing in a few minutes. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that this Minister will be - and I can rely on that - will be stubborn and pigheaded enough about the matter that I speak of that we can count on the fact of having, you know, a highly unpopular Deputy Minister of Agriculture continue to rub the wounds within the agricultural community to the extent that he is, and, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister thinks he is not then he knows even less of the current agricultural scene, and to that extent, Sir, I suppose I should, you know, leave well enough alone. It will insure, Mr. Speaker, it will insure that in terms of rural support the Progressive Conservative Party, you know, has no concern. That support is there. It is growing constantly and will be complete by the time next election rolls along.

And to that extent, you know, I must say the current Minister's performance is one

CONCURRENCE

(MR. ENNS cont'd) that I suppose should give me some joy, but it doesn't, Mr. Speaker, because three, four years hence is a long time. It's a long time for the Manitoba farmers to be pushed around. It's a long time for Manitoba farmers not to have a voice in how their business should be run. And, Mr. Speaker, I say that advisedly. This Minister is very selective as to when he thinks the farmers should have a voice. You know, all of a sudden it becomes a matter of party policy that producers should have a vote, a referendum, before they enter into any agreement. But on the other occasion, such as when the introduction of a Milk Marketing Board overnight, or when it was thought expedient to go into compulsory hog marketing, then no vote is called for. If, on the other hand, a commodity group like the Cattlemen's Association wants a check-off, a beef check-off, which the Minister doesn't completely agree with, then we have a vote. Then we have a vote. Farmers don't know, Mr. Speaker, when this Minister is prepared to deal with them democratically and when not. They are finding out, Mr. Speaker, very quickly, when this Minister is prepared to deal with them autocratically, and that, Sir, is the condemnation that has to be put on this Minister. That, Sir, is why this Minister's policies are not going to succeed. That, Sir, is why this Minister's and this government's policies in the agricultural field are causing a tremendous amount of concern.

Mr. Speaker, I, with a great deal of regret, have to concur in the passing of the resolution before us.

MR. USKIW: Will the member now submit to a question, Mr. Speaker?

MR. ENNS: Certainly.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the member raised some doubts as to the ability of my new Deputy Minister. I simply would like to put the question to him: Why did the previous government, as well as this one, entertain the services of that individual as a consultant on many occasions through Hedlin and Menzies?

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, no doubt in the terms of the particular qualifications of the individual involved, one of the reasons that governments should seek a very wide field of consultants, including hydro or other matters, is because you have a wide range of answers coming back to you. It's a question then of knocking heads together and coming out with hopefully the best approach, the best policy. You know, to suggest that -- in fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister's question affords me an opportunity that I really welcome. It indicates that under the reactionary leadership of past Conservative administrations, we had room for Red Willy Janssen to consult with us, and we accepted, and his part of the input along with any other, you know, experts in Agriculture's advice; that by and large that was part of the reason why generally, generally the policies put forward in those days found and still obviously continue to find the kind of broad support within the rural community.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. BLAKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to add a few remarks also in the concurrence to the Estimates on Agriculture, and I was taken the other day with a local paper, I picked out an ad "We're Helping Them Stay" sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, extolling the virtues of the stay option and what they were doing for young men to remain on farms in Manitoba; and right beside it in large headlines was "Outlook for livestock is Bleak". And I thought it was rather odd that they should be together on the same page, because I think those of us on this side of the House certainly commend any action that's taken to encourage or to help young men stay in farming and stay in the rural areas, and I'm not criticizing it from that point of view, but I think many of the attempts that they're making are falling far short of the objectives that the Minister is hoping for, or trying to accomplish.

I think the points covered by the Honourable Member for Lakeside were many of the points that I wanted to touch on so I will only reiterate for the sake of reinforcing the concerns of the rural people. With the costs of the hog barns and the price of pork today, I'm sure that the young men that were encouraged to go into agriculture and to diversify under the so-called stay option are wondering now if they have really been hoodwinked or whether it was a good move that they made. I know one particular constituent of mine has returned to the home farm in the past year or so, and spent considerable money converting the old barn into a hog operation. A week or two ago he delivered a load of market hogs to the marketplace in Brandon and was sent home with his hogs because they weren't able to take them at the market and he hadn't made an appointment to deliver his hogs. Consequently, a day or two later there was a good 200 lb. market hog lying, toes up, in his pen, and represents a loss of possibly \$100.00 to that

CONCURRENCE

(MR. BLAKE cont'd) young farmer. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, how discouraged he was when he spoke to me and said: "Is this why I have returned to the farm, to have things like this happen to me when I'm working harder than I ever did before trying to make farming work?"

These are the things, Mr. Speaker, that are concerning the rural people and these are the things that the Minister of Agriculture seems to be unaware of. I don't think there is any particular segment of the farm economy that he has touched his hand to in the past while that has not erupted in a major controversy, and I refer to the hog market, the milk producers. The milk producers and the fluid milk shippers and the industrial shippers were getting together to work out an arrangement; they realized the problems that existed. They were getting along very nicely and I'm sure would have phased one operation into the other over a period of two or three years in a smooth and businesslike fashion, without the controversy that has erupted when the Minister got involved or some of his deputies or other senior people got involved.

The Member for Lakeside mentioned the feed grain poll and the rapeseed poll and the leased land, so I will not dwell on that at any length.

The Farm Machinery Act has been a complete disaster and a hardship on the farmers of Manitoba, and it's not getting any better in spite of the amendments that the Minister has made, and I'm sure he's well aware of the inequities in that Act, and rather than helping the farmers it's proving to be a hardship on them.

The home economists and the 4-H movement has been jeopardized also, and he's well aware of the feelings of the Women's Auxiliary. I think that program has been reinstated and hopefully it's going to be a lasting one, and he has promised that the 4-H movement, the assistance will be enlarged, assistance being provided to them; they will be providing more and more leadership, and we hope that those appointed to those particular posts will be appointed for their leadership ability and their ability to work with the youth of our rural areas and not for any other consideration. I think all of this, Mr. Speaker, indicates a loss of confidence in the Department of Agriculture and it's serious, because the agricultural economy is so important to us in Manitoba and certainly to the rural areas.

I want to possibly make my main remarks on the situation concerning the A. I. breeders throughout Manitoba and the A. I. technicians, where there is a major confrontation and a controversy flaming now to the point where there's probably a court case involved with American breeders in an effort to keep them out of Manitoba and enforce the monopoly clause of the Act that the Minister and his senior people seem so bent on doing. This was one of the main objections that this party had, was one simple little portion of the Act that indicated the right to be the sole distribution agency for semen. It seemed to be a small matter, but the Minister and his senior people were adamant on it and that was not going to be changed in any way, and I think he is beginning to find that people aren't just going to be pushed around and have some of the rights that they have enjoyed for so long taken away from them. There is no question that the senior people appointed to the Animal Industry Branch have been controversial, and I think the last three appointments to that department have brought a great many of the troubles that the Minister is facing now down upon his head. I refer to the Animal Industry, in particular, where he knows full well much of the woes connected with the A. I. users has stemmed from, and I think this particular party has done irreparable harm to the relationship with the dairy people and with the A. I. users throughout the province. The Minister is certainly well aware of the feelings these people have to him, and people I am sure that he respects, that have been in the industry for years and years, have made untold representations to him. They've been to his office, they've called his Deputy and they're continually ignored. And I don't think these people are prepared to be ignored much longer, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the point of licensing the technicians throughout the province, those of us on this side have no particular objections to some regulations and some licensing. We think certain portions of it are a good thing, but when the licensing of the individuals to carry on and ply their trade throughout the province is withheld from them, and this has been brought before the Minister many times and he assured us they were not being withheld until a week or so ago when he admitted that they were and they were the subject of internal discussion, and we find now, Mr. Speaker, that the internal discussions are confined to a movement to have the technicians submit to a questionnaire, which I feel is an interrogation, they're being asked to admit

CONCURRENCE

(MR. BLAKE cont'd) if they're supporting the Manitoba Animal Breeders Co-op one hundred percent; if they are not, we don't know whether their licences are going to be withheld and of course they cannot practise in Manitoba without a licence.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can't see anything wrong with allowing several of the other sales agencies who have trucks on the road in Manitoba providing a competitive feature which assures the farmer of getting the best possible service, the best possible semen at the best price. The Manitoba Animal Breeders have their truck on the road that is costing us, I don't know, probably \$100,000 a year or something of that nature. I can't see anything wrong with letting the other operators provide their trucks at their own expense. But the Minister seems concerned with having that feature of competition eliminated.

Now when the concerned users made their representations to the Minister, they were listened to politely and no action was taken whatsoever. I think the Minister at least owes them some explanation of why he is carrying on in this particular fashion and continuing to coerce and harass the A. I. technicians in refusing to allow them to operate in the highly efficient manner in which most of them have operated throughout the province, and they're held in very, very high regard by the dairy people and those beef breeders that are using possibly some exotic breeds. It is obvious to all of those in the industry, Mr. Speaker, that the people involved in the senior positions in the Animal Industry Branch have completely lost sight of the reason for that branch existing, and that is, to improve and benefit the livestock raisers of Manitoba. They have completely lost sight of this and are carrying out a personal vendetta against those that have opposed them over the years, and that includes some technicians and some people in the dairy industry. And the Minister is certainly well aware, there were some 300 people appeared at a meeting in Portage la Prairie a year ago that represented the beef and cattle industry from all over Manitoba. The Minister was not there but I am sure he has been informed fully of the reactions of those at that meeting, and how he can continue to ignore this and refuse to admit that this is being detrimental to the livestock industry in Manitoba -- and there have been one or two people who I would consider, Mr. Speaker, to be expert in the field of A. I. in Manitoba and other areas; that have been called in to work under contract, and they find that they are hamstrung and there's conflicting views, and they have just simply refused to work with the Animal Industry Branch. I feel these are the people that could make a substantial contribution and could certainly heal the wounds that have been opened, and get these various groups together and make this particular program work. Instead of breeding 50,000 cattle by A. I. in the province, I would say in five years they would probably be breeding 100,000. But under this present setup, the people that are trying to control this particular Animal Breeders Co-op and the Semen Distribution Centre are raising nothing but conflict and distrust and mistrust in the animal industry, and I know there are many dairy and beef people that are going to go out of business as a result of the treatment and the harassment that they have received. There are many areas now that are without the services of an A. I. technician for this particular reason, and I would say to the minister that if he's going to allow this to be carried on where these technicians are being forced to come to Winnipeg at one of the busiest seasons of their particular year, they can't afford to take time off and come to Winnipeg. There are many things that will wait but I'm sure the cows won't wait, Mr. Speaker. And this is a particular harvest time for them and they're being asked to come and spend an afternoon here filling in a questionnaire and asking them why they will not deal exclusively with the provincial government agency. I say, Mr. Speaker, if these people are not given licence and allowed to operate, and according to the Act they're operating illegally, now . . .

A MEMBER: Right. They could be fined . . . and could be put in jail.

MR. BLAKE: That's right. And the minister must be aware of this and I would like him to suggest what he might be prepared to do. I think it's imperative that he remove some of those people that are causing the conflict. If not, I would suggest that in the interests of farming and the agricultural scene in Manitoba, that if the minister is not prepared to remove these people, that possibly he should maybe remove himself from the particular portfolio that seems to be in such utter disarray and causing the farming community such disillusionment at the present time.

In order, Mr. Speaker, I might close with a poem that was sent to me from one constituent of mine, a Wilfred L. Coutts of Minnedosa, and it was written in March, 1974. And I think it shows an extreme talent from this fine gentleman and pioneer citizen of Minnedosa,

CONCURRENCE

(MR. BLAKE cont'd) Mr. Speaker, that I admire so well. And it's titled, "The Aging Farmer":

The farmer works so faithfully, a true industrious soul,
 Faith and devotion to his task are virtues we extol,
 Depending on the elements he's hand in hand with God,
 His heart was filled with trust when first his plowshare turned the sod,
 With highest hopes he tills the soil and sows the best of seed,
 He dreams of golden harvest and a hungry world to feed.
 He's thankful for the harvest time but sometimes all is lost,
 Distress and disappointments come with hail and rust and frost.
 And now approaching 80 years, arthritic pains are burning,
 He can no longer do his work, he's lost his power of earning.
 He still retains his humble home well sheltered by the trees,
 He rents his land to neighbour Jack and hopes to live at ease.
 A widow rented out her farm; before the court she stands,
 Accused of speculating when she cannot work her land.
 They find Provincial Government have climbed upon their backs,
 Another burden they must bear, the mineral acreage tax.
 Food prices have been soaring high and times are getting harder,
 He tends a spacious garden plot, replenishes the larder.
 We hear about five dollar wheat, it certainly sounds charming,
 Invest your money, my good friend, and try your luck at farming.

Mr. Speaker, I thought that might be a good note to end on, and thank you for your consideration. (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY (Radisson): Mr. Speaker . . . (Applause)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. It can be overdone, gentlemen. (Laughter)

--(Interjection)--

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Right. Right on. I beg leave to make some changes on the Standing Committees. (Laughter)

A MEMBER: Yes, every day.

STANDING COMMITTEES - SUBSTITUTIONS

MR. SHAFRANSKY: On Law Amendments, change Uruski for McBryde. On Municipal Affairs, Schreyer for Uruski.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Resolution -- the Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. JAMES R. FERGUSON (Gladstone): Let me call it 12:30, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Very well. The hour being 12:30, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 this afternoon.