

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA  
10:00 o'clock, Friday, April 18, 1975

Opening Prayer by Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: Before we proceed, I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery, where we have 20 students of Grade 11 standing of the Joseph Wolinsky School. These students are under the direction of Mr. Shiel. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Inkster, the Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management.

On behalf of all the honourable members, I welcome you here this morning.

Presenting Petitions; Reading and Receiving Petitions; Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees; Ministerial Statements or Tabling of Reports. The Honourable Minister of Education.

TABLING OF REPORTS

HON. BEN HANUSCHAK (Minister of Education)(Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the 1974-75 report for the Department of Colleges and Universities Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: Any other ministerial statements or tabling of reports? Notices of Motion. Introduction of Bills.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. IAN TURNBULL (Minister of Consumer, Corporate and Internal Services) (Osborne) introduced Bill No. 34, an Act to amend The Real Estate Brokers Act.

MR. GORDON E. JOHNSTON (Portage la Prairie) introduced Bill No. 36, an Act to Vest Title to Certain Land in the City of Portage la Prairie.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: Questions. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK, Q.C. (Leader of the Official Opposition)(River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. Some time ago I asked him a question in connection with the audit by the Provincial Auditor of the Provincial Employment Programs handled by the Department of Co-operative Development - I believe there's a million dollars that was being audited in a special audit. I wonder if he can indicate whether the Provincial Auditor has brought any of these matters to his attention.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. EDWARD SCHREYER (Premier)(Rossmere): Well, Mr. Speaker, from time to time certain matters are brought to my attention by the Provincial Auditor, and the usual procedure in those cases is to set a time to meet jointly with the Provincial Auditor and those with senior administrative responsibility for the subject matter in question, so as to explore ways and means of giving effect in a practical way to whatever the recommendations for remedial action might be.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Well, I wonder then if the First Minister can acknowledge that the Provincial Auditor has in fact submitted a report to him in connection with the PEP programs that were being audited.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, one aspect of auditing of Provincial Employment Programs, or PEP programs, that I do recall receiving comment on from the Auditor's office had to do with certain deficiencies in municipal auditing of employment projects that were receiving provincial funding, as a consequence of which the Provincial Employment office did communicate to the municipalities certain suggested improvements, certain moneys have been held back pending action that would meet the Auditor's requirements, and that is not finalized by any means but it is under way.

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder specifically if the First Minister is in a position to acknowledge to the House that the Provincial Auditor has submitted an audit for the PEP programs of approximately a million dollars that were handled by the Department of Co-operative Development.

MR. SCHREYER: I'll have to attempt to answer that early next week, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Attorney-General. The Provincial

## ORAL QUESTIONS

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) . . . Auditor in his report made reference to several matters dealing with the Department of Co-operative Development that were to be referred to the Attorney-General for possible action. Has the Attorney-General undertaken a review and has any action been undertaken?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. HOWARD PAWLEY (Attorney-General)(Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, there have been numerous meetings involving the Deputy Attorney-General, Mr. Pilkey, and Mr. Ziprick the Provincial Auditor, and other officials. The last information I have is that some of the review has been completed but other information is still requested from the Provincial Auditor in regard to other areas. I would like to hasten to say that insofar as a basis for any criminal investigation, that is not warranted on the basis of the material to date presented by the Provincial Auditor.

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder if the Attorney-General could indicate whether this would include, his statement would cover the investigation of the Co-operative Federation.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, my reference is to all items that were referred to by the Provincial Auditor in his report, which matters he had referred to the Department of the Attorney-General, which then led to meetings involving officials of my department plus the Provincial Auditor, and I believe the Federation, the Co-op Federation, was one of those items, so it would include that.

MR. SPIVAK: Possibly I can phrase the question in the way in which the Attorney-General could give us the information, and he may not have it immediately. He has indicated that part of the investigation has been completed and that there is no reason for the Attorney-General to take any action, but obviously part of it is not completed on that basis. I wonder if he can indicate to the House what part has been completed, in what areas in which no investigation will be required, and what is still pending further investigation.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Speaker, I could, I think, taking the question as notice, indicate which particular items there is presently a firm resolution of in respect to the department that no further criminal investigation is warranted, and what other items we are still awaiting some further information, I can undertake to specify that.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, I direct a question to the Minister of Mines, Resources and Environment. I wonder if he could indicate whether his Department of Environment looked at the feasibility of adding oxygen to the water in the case of the slug of de-oxygenated water that went through the Red River system, and if they looked at it, has he replied to the letter from the Winnipeg Pollution Probe in this connection?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines.

HON. SIDNEY GREEN, Q.C. (Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management)(Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the letter from Pollution Probe was handed to me as I walked into the House. I believe that the honourable member and the Member for Fort Rouge received copies before I received it. The CKY received a copy before I received it because they phoned me this morning prior to 10:00 o'clock, so I believe that the people at Pollution Probe are more interested in getting published slanderous material about the engineers in our department than they are interested in an answer to the question. However, I have received their letter. I'm sure that if past experience is taken as a precedent, it will be described by the media as an insulting letter. I did not cry to the International Joint Commission. I did not cry for compensation or retribution. I was assured by the people in the department that they considered every possible means of dealing with this problem and that they were helpless. If Pollution Probe, whose previous advice has not proved to date to be more reliable than the advice of the engineers in the department who were also the engineers when the Honourable Member for Riel was the Minister, if by some stretch of the imagination they have shown that we did not think of something, then we will have to accept responsibility, but I have full confidence that that is not the case. However, I have to examine it. I have a letter and, regardless of what I think of it, I have a letter.

MR. CRAIK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Minister would inquire . . . The specific point in question is whether the adding of oxygen to the water could have solved the problem. Would he inquire specifically on that?

## ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. GREEN: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. I have a letter and I will send a reply to the letter, and I hope that the reply will not be characterized as insulting, because the letter almost begs a response in kind.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. LLOYD AXWORTHY (Fort Rouge): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the same Minister again, aside from the tone of the letter, could the Minister indicate whether in fact there was a jurisdictional dispute or confusion between the two levels of government, and is this indicative of a more general problem of the monitoring and assessment of boundary waters between the two jurisdictions?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, this is the first I've heard of such a dispute. When I read the report of this letter to the House, it would appear that all of the parties are involved in working under a global agency, the International Joint Commission, with our people represented, with our people doing monitoring, so I'm not aware of any dispute, and if there was one I will certainly try to get to the bottom of it. But this is the first that I have been told that there is a dispute.

MR. AXWORTHY: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister indicate to the House whether there is a clear working guideline presently available which gauges or monitors the procedures that the two governments on this side of the river use for assessing boundary water problems. Is there something that he could provide the House with to show what in fact is exactly supposed to take place?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I am certain that that is the case; and as evidenced by this case, there was no problem in the monitor that was immediately determined. And, Mr. Speaker, I would be horrified if I found that either government, either the Federal Government or the Provincial Government, both involved in the area of environment, did not take immediate remedial action without worrying about who had jurisdiction, if that action was possible. I am sure that the Federal Government would have taken action if it was possible, regardless of who had jurisdiction, if that action was available.

MR. AXWORTHY: A final supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister indicate exactly how long it was between the monitoring of the slug crossing the boundary at Emerson, and the time in which he was informed directly by his officials, and the time at which they, the Minister of Environment in Ottawa, was also informed by his officials.

MR. GREEN: I gave that information to the House. The monitoring occurred on a Thursday, I was advised by the Minister of Co-operatives on Monday evening about ice without oxygen in it - this was after the Department was home - I was advised of it by my own Deputy Minister on Tuesday morning. I do not know when the Minister at Ottawa was advised, but if that is important to the honourable member I will try and find that out.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. MORRIS MCGREGOR (Virden): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Having intended to direct this to the Minister in charge of Transportation, in his absence I will direct it to the First Minister, and I realize the limited notice. With reference to the announcement by Ottawa setting up a Commission of Inquiry re rail line abandonment, the question being; Is it the intention of the Manitoba Government to be represented at any Manitoba hearings and to present a brief outlining the provincial position?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a matter of seconds, with your permission, to thank the Honourable Member for Virden for the very unusual courtesy that he always displays of giving notice to a question. He is perhaps unique in this House and therefore it deserves our . . . (Applause) And to give him a very definitive answer, Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes, the Province of Manitoba will be represented, and my recollection is that Manitoba will be represented by Mr. Reg Forbes, who has been for quite some number of years with the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. He will be our representative in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L. R. (BUD) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Honourable the Minister of Labour. I would like to ask him whether he can advise the House whether the University of Manitoba Faculty Association has requested a conciliation officer from his department in its current dispute with the University of Manitoba, and if in fact such an officer has been appointed.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. RUSSELL PAULLEY (Minister of Labour)(Transcona): I'm sorry, I cannot say precisely that the letter has reached my desk. I am aware of the request that was supposedly coming to me. If it is on my desk, then a conciliation officer will be appointed immediately. As I stand on my feet now, Mr. Speaker, I believe it did come yesterday and I did appoint Mr. Moe Eyolfson of the conciliation section to meet with the parties concerned.

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

MR. GEORGE MINAKER (St. James): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, My question is to the Minister responsible for Mines and Resources. It pertains to the slug of bad water that has passed through the city in recent days. I wonder, could the Minister advise the House if samples have been taken of this particular water and it's being analyzed to find out what the contents were?

MR. GREEN: I'm virtually certain that samples have been taken. That is, the water was monitored, and I am awaiting further results as to what the investigations disclose, but I am making now an assumption. I'll check it out.

MR. MINAKER: A supplementary question. I wonder if the Minister would check with his department to see if there is a possibility that rather than the waste material being molasses that it was not sugar beet waste, because it's our understanding that there was a large amount of sugar beets that spoiled in the Fargo area, and we were wondering if possibly this might be the cause of the pollution.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the first time I was asked this question there were various suspicions and I said that I didn't want to discuss suspicions because it's unfair if we get inaccurate information. All I can do is confirm to the honourable member that that was one of the suspicions.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. SHERMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Honourable the Minister of Education, Colleges and Universities Affairs. I wonder if he can confirm, as has been publicly suggested, that there will be a resumption of talks this weekend between the University of Manitoba and the striking support workers, with a view to examining the suggestion of implementing final offer selection in the dispute.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, when the honourable member asks whether there will be a resumption of dialogue between the two parties, it carries with it an implication that discussion has broken off, and I am not aware of any termination of negotiation between the two parties. So if there is no termination of negotiation between the two parties, then how could there be a resumption?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could ask a supplementary which will take the form of a rephrased primary question then. Can the Minister advise whether the two parties will be meeting this weekend, as has been publicly suggested, to examine the final offer selection procedure?

MR. HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the fact that negotiations are continuing, but I wish to advise the honourable member that in the process of setting their meeting dates, neither party consults with me or gives me notice of a date that may have been set for such a meeting.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. Can the Minister indicate to the House whether the Construction Review Committee, which he established last summer to review matters in the construction industry between labour and management, has been meeting in the last month and what progress that they have made in resolving some of the issues between the two sides.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I believe that question could be asked under the estimates. There's a lot of time on that if it's a year old. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well I'll rephrase it, Mr. Speaker. The committee is a year old, but could the Minister indicate whether in fact the committee has met with him in the last month to resolve the outstanding disputes presently encountered between labour and management in the industry?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. PAULLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the happier type of incidents that I'm being confronted with these days. Originally, there was a request made for repealing the Construction Wages Act. I personally did not agree with the general proposition and asked members of management and labour if they would get together and work together if I established a committee to review the whole matter. I'm very pleased to announce, Mr. Speaker, to the House, that the committee has been meeting, meeting regularly, that it appears that there is getting to be a consensus, that with certain improvements the Act may be amended, and the last request they got, Mr. Speaker, from the committee, was to the effect that they would like me to defer introducing any legislation at this particular session of the Assembly in order to give them more time to carry on the work that they feel will bear fruit.

MR. AXWORTHY: I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister. In view of the announcement by the Minister of the harmonious discussion, can the Minister indicate whether such harmony is also apparent in the negotiations and discussions on wage settlements in the industry, and can he give us a report as to the state of progress in those discussions?

MR. PAULLEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe for the first time in the history of the province that the attitude and atmosphere prevailing between management and labour insofar as the general construction industry is concerned, it's reasonably good. There are many outstanding areas belonging to labour-management relationships that are pretty well being resolved. There is the question of the monetary return to the workers that is, as usual, a matter of concern. I'm happy here, in this case too, to say that following the signing of the multi-trade agreement two years ago, at the request - maybe I can say at my own request, but agreed upon by the parties to the collective agreement, it was decided that there would be an endeavour to have ongoing communications between the two sides all through the period of the collective agreement, rather than just meet each other across the table as they had been doing in the past, almost as complete strangers. In saying this, Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that there may not be real turmoil in the construction industry, but as of this minute it looks more favourable than it has.

MR. AXWORTHY: I have a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, to the same Minister. In view of the announcement and indication by this government that they are in favour of some form of guidelines in wages and prices, has the Minister, or the First Minister in fact, held any kind of formal discussions with labour and management in the construction industry to discuss what might be a reasonable set of guidelines to look forward to?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. Again I repeat, as I did at the beginning, this can be taken up much more equitably under the Estimates. The Honourable Minister of Co-operative Development.

HON. HARVEY BOSTROM (Minister of Co-operative Development)(Rupert's Land): Mr. Speaker, I have an answer for the Honourable Member for Roblin who asked a question about the polar bears in Manitoba and the protection afforded to them by the province. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to him, the polar bears are protected by law in Manitoba. They are also protected by an active program of the Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management in the Churchill area. The fact is that conservation officers and RCMP at a cost of \$50,000 or more annually, have in the past number of years maintained a round-the-clock vigil in Churchill in October and November in an effort to protect the community without a wholesale slaughter of bears. And this is done by live trapping of bears that get into the townsite to threaten people, and they are transported miles away to where they would not be a threat. The bears are marked with paint in this process so that they could be identified if they return, and only if the bears return to persistently endanger people in the townsite are they disposed of.

I might point out that the problem in this case was created in part by a faulty garbage disposal process in the community, and a new incinerator has been built and, once fully operational, will do away with the need for an open area garbage dump. And once the garbage now in the open area dump is destroyed or covered, the polar bears should no longer concentrate in the immediate Churchill area. It's important to remember, however, that the polar bears traditionally have migrated past the community, and there probably will still be a certain amount of protection needed to insure that the community is not endangered.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that this information is also concurred in by the Honourable Member for Churchill, who has a firsthand knowledge of the situation.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

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

MR. BOB BANMAN (LaVerendrye): Mr. Speaker, I'd like leave of the House to make a non-political statement.

MR. SPEAKER: Is it agreed? (Agreed) The honourable member.

STATEMENT - SPORTS

MR. BANMAN: This time of the year is the hockey season and I would like to pay tribute to the Steinbach Millers who left no doubt this last weekend that they are the best Junior B team in the Province of Manitoba. They skated to three victories to claim the provincial championships. I'd like to point out that the team was formed last fall by players from Ste. Anne, Lorette, St. Malo, Randolph, Kleefeld, Grunthal and Steinbach areas. It's the first time ever that Steinbach has won a Junior Hockey Championship with the victories this last weekend over Dauphin, Portage la Prairie and Pembina Valley. (Applause)

ORDERS OF THE DAY - GOVERNMENT BILLS

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

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Would you please proceed with the debates on second reading in the order in which they appear on the Order Paper.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 13 proposed by the Honourable Attorney-General. The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. ARNOLD BROWN (Rhineland): Stand, Mr. Speaker? (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 15. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Stand, Mr. Speaker? (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 16. The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: I beg to let it stand, Mr. Speaker. (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 17. The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: May I have this matter stand, Mr. Speaker? (Agreed)

BILL NO. 20 - THE HERITAGE MANITOBA ACT

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 20. The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I adjourned this on behalf of the Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to make a few comments on this particular bill. It is a repeat, really, of a bill that was introduced last year and left on the Order Paper which we didn't attend to, and I regretted that very much, Mr. Speaker, because I think within the provisions of this amendment of The Heritage Manitoba Act may lie the possibilities of achieving some very worthwhile and notable kinds of activities which could be of quite major importance in this city. The presentation of the Act itself was fairly limited and innocuous, I think in its description, but as I look at the idea of establishing the Heritage Foundation there contains within it, as it appears to me, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity for the first time to begin reclaiming and rescuing large numbers of older homes and structures in this city which have been rapidly vanishing over the past several years to the wrecker's ball and the dismantling, as we make way for what is sometimes fondly called "progress" in our society.

Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg is not an old city. We are just slightly over a hundred years old and therefore we don't have many of the same kind of veritable traditions and longstanding kind of cultural history that many other areas do. But at the same time, there are parts of the city which were constructed 70 or 80 years ago, which at that time, I suppose because there weren't onerous taxations by provincial governments or other kinds of liabilities, individuals and architects and so on were able to provide some very magnificent and very worthy structures, and I have the pleasure, because again of the nature of my riding, to have many of them within its boundaries.

But one of the great sadnesses to me, Mr. Speaker, is that over the past several years I have noticed with regret that many of them have been brought up, destroyed, and been replaced by brand new, spanking apartment blocks which, while they have a use, don't have quite

## BILL 20

(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd) . . . the same kind of character or vitality or even distinctiveness that many of these buildings supply. And I can think of perhaps no sadder example of this than in the last year where one of the most magnificent old mansions that existed on Wellington Crescent was dismantled, piece by piece, and moved to Calgary for the I suppose enjoyment of the people of the city. And it seemed to be just a God-awful shame that one of the finest older buildings, which had within it many valuable characteristics and had many internal interior fixtures which are just no longer found in our buildings, was removed.

I think that only illustrates to my mind, Mr. Speaker, a fairly wide-scale problem, because when I look at the possibilities of this Act, I don't see it simply being used as a way of preserving some house which may have had a former Premier or Chief Justice or something like that living in it, I see it having the possibility of trying to provide some financial assistance for purchasing and repairing and updating many older homes and office buildings in this area which, while they may have not been resided in by some historical notable person, they still themselves are very much part of the tradition of this city. And I suppose one thing we should learn in this country is that we are much too prone to cut off our traditions and to erase the artifacts and characteristics of the past. I suppose if it was simply a matter of sheer efficiency or utility that we worked on, that would make some sense, but what we do when we go around sort of knocking down old office buildings and old houses and destroying these kinds of structures is that we also cut out some of the interesting parts of our city; that again, if I can beg the indulgence of the House for a moment, to say that in my own riding and areas like River and Stradbroke and Wellington Crescent and Grosvenor - the street that I happen to live on - there are many fine old buildings which actually, if they were removed to simply be replaced by more high rise buildings, much of the character of that neighbourhood would be lost.

I think, Mr. Speaker, there have been enough people in this House over the last several years who have bemoaned the loss of neighbourhood and loss of community, the loss of character, to point out what an important fact it can be, the maintenance and preservation of many of these older buildings. But I can again think of another example, where again one of the fine older apartment blocks in the Fort Rouge area was scheduled for demolition this year, and only through the very active mobilization of the tenants was it able to be saved, for at least a few years, from being demolished, and at the same time it still provides very good accommodation for large numbers of people. And I would remind members of this House of what I think is one of the most interesting aspects of Great Britain, and that is the operation of a national trust.

The national trust in Great Britain buys up a great variety of older homes, allows people to continue living in them simply because they think it's important to preserve them, not that they're going to turn them into museums or displays, but simply that the existence of an older place which retains a style and a grace and an elegance which oftentimes we have lost in our own design, is important to have. And I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that while the Minister of Tourism and Recreation did not say so, I would hope that he would be able to see within . . . Certainly the legal provisions of this Act allow him to do it, but I hope that he would be able to establish a policy that would offer that opportunity for people in the city who are concerned about preserving older buildings and older neighbourhoods, to take advantage of this Act. And it comes down to one fundamental question, of course, Mr. Speaker, and that is: how much money is going to be devoted to those purposes? And as we noticed in this Act, there is nothing at all which says exactly how much is going to be provided.

Now I would suspect that perhaps the Minister is playing a very cagey game of Cabinet politics and he wants the Act first and hopes the money will follow later. So I would suggest that if this Act is going to live up to its possibilities and its potential, then we should really insist in this House that the government provide a respectable sum of money so that this Act is not simply used to preserve a few little gimcracks and curios along the way, but in fact becomes a major item in helping to preserve many parts of our city, and I suspect there are parts throughout the province where it could equally be applied.

And so, Mr. Speaker, the thrust of my remarks is to suggest that what appears to be a fairly innocent and limited kind of initiative by this government, to my mind's eye has much richer possibilities, and possibilities which I would hope would be exploited and developed. Because right now in the Province of Manitoba there really is no way, under present legislation - federal, provincial or municipal - that one can gain some loan or assistance to purchase older homes and save them from the demolition crew, and I would hope that one of the aspects of

## BILL 20

(MR. AXWORTHY cont'd) . . . this bill would be that the Minister would take into countenance the kind of potential that he is presenting to us and be able to convince his Cabinet colleagues that it deserves a respectable amount of funds - I wouldn't want to suggest an amount - so that if there was, and I'll use a hypothetical figure, let us say a million dollars for sake of argument, that that money then would be available to a community organization, to a neighbourhood association, even to tenants themselves, or even to the Foundation itself, so they could purchase that building, renovate it, bring it up to standards so it might have another 20 years', 30, or 50 years' life to it, and therefore provide for a protection against the ravages of modern day society which is really to operate like everything is a Kleenex box and everything is disposable and as soon as we've used it we throw it away.

I would hope that the Minister would take into account some of the words I'm trying to say because I think that if the government used this Act as it's legally entitled to do, it could become a very major and very useful form of preservation, maintenance, and even enlargement and continuation of the development of important parts of our city for the enjoyment of many people in it.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable the Minister of Urban Affairs, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply, with the Honourable Member for Logan in the Chair.

SUPPLY - CONSUMER, CORPORATE AND INTERNAL SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN: I refer honourable members to their Estimate books, Page 15, Resolution 36(a)(1). The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. CRAIK: Well, Mr. Chairman, at the close of our debate here yesterday evening on the Consumer Bureau, we had quite a lengthy discussion on the problems in the rental area and particularly in apartment buildings, and having listened to the debate that took place, and having some familiarity in attempting to watch the scene as it moves in this particular area, I simply wanted to say to the Minister that I wished him well in the coming year because I have a feeling that we're more or less sitting on a very potentially eruptive situation brought about by a number of things. One is that the starts, the building starts in the apartment business right now are very low for a number of reasons. One is the interest rates are still quite high, and secondly, the construction trades being up for negotiation this year are creating a certain uncertainty about what future costs are going to be, and if you add to it now the sort of move towards entire electrical buildings for electric heat, again because of the uncertainty - well, you can't put in natural gas now; there's no new connections for the next two years and it means that those who are building new buildings are really in the position of pretty well coming around to deciding, despite the higher costs of operating, they should put in electric heat at the present time - if you add these together, the costs of the new buildings in 1975 are going to be very substantially higher than they were prior to this date, probably a bigger jump in '75 than there's been in any other year up-to-date.

Now, even the incentives provided by the Federal Government in their budget allowing a fast write-off I guess on the first year or something of construction, hasn't brought in enough private capital to really get the thing moving again. The incentive there just doesn't seem to be great enough, and I'm sure that the Minister's department is well aware of the fact that we have a problem right now because of the very low vacancy rate, running around the 2 percent mark, which in effect, you know, removes all competition from the apartment purchase or apartment rental business. So I simply want to add to the contributions that have been made you know, I think the Member for Fort Rouge sort of pointed out the dilemma, and the Minister appropriately identified it. It was almost like the Member for Fort Rouge was advocating rent controls and the Minister asked him, "Are you advocating rent controls?" He says, "No, I'm not advocating rent controls." "Well, what are you advocating?" "Well, I'm advocating a comprehensive program to make sure that everything happens properly." And that's the dilemma that the Minister's in.

You know, the Member for Fort Rouge to a certain extent is talking on both sides of the



## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. CRAIK cont'd) . . . equation here, because I'm sure you walk a pretty narrow path in all of this. The rent controls in Vancouver, as they're well understood, have been probably in effect for a long enough period of time, at least, to get a good working experience, and the problem is there that new construction has fallen off so badly that the housing crisis have escalated it rather than assist it. And there seems to be no overall solution. The longer the rent controls are in application, the greater the problems get, and at some point the basic problem is that new construction is so substantially higher in cost now that it's just impossible in 1975 to build and rent at even current rates, anywhere near current rates, and I'm sure that is not just an idle sort of a position taken by people in the industry. Construction costs are up. Interest costs are still high. I'm talking about 11 percent, and looking at somebody doing it on a private basis and the fact that utility costs, people are forced now into electric heat pretty well - lack of natural gas supply, that, to start with, is higher and it's escalating in cost - it's a pretty bad picture. And I think that the Minister probably is walking a pretty narrow path here in trying to sort out this, but I have a very deep-rooted feeling that within a year's time this whole thing is going to be in deep trouble, mainly because of the lack of starts, and those that are started, the very high cost of the construction and operation in 1975 is going to set a level of rents substantially higher than what has been the going rate.

We've had relative stability in the last four or five years and it's just starting to move, and the new construction now is going to be so much higher than the average that the average is probably going to start coming up to that upper price, and that's when the trouble's going to start. How it's going to be handled, I don't know; I have no solutions. But I suggest that you just try and apply as much logic and fortitude as possible in working through that period, but I am sure that there is going to be difficulty. The problem when you get into the controls is you have to go all the way, and then you go all the way, then a few years later down the line you have the realization that your housing starts are so far behind, you've got a real problem. You can't get out of the controls because they are so far off new construction costs by that time that you're in a never-ending tailspin, so I think the only thing you can do is attempt to stay out of it as long as possible, and see if your planning . . . I see you have an item here for Planning and Research. Under this item maybe you can ask them to come up with a solution that nobody else has at the present time.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Before we proceed, I wonder if I could direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery where we have 90 students of Grade 7 standing of the Robert Andrews School under the direction of teachers Mr. Bob Keating, Mr. Ken Pajac, Mr. Heinz Kampen. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Rossmere, the First Minister. On behalf of all the honourable members of the Assembly, I bid you welcome this morning.

SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS (Cont'd)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. J. WALLY McKENZIE (Roblin): Mr. Chairman, I have a few questions I'd like to ask the Honourable Minister as we deal with this section of his estimates. It's, I think, evident now, and I'm sure the Honourable Minister is familiar with the program which the Federal Government has indicated that they are going to impose a credit card system on all Canada, and we likely will not be able to use the monetary system that we have been so familiar with in this country for our last hundred years of history, and I haven't got any great reservations about it one way or the other because basically I don't understand how we could run this country or how, you and I, Mr. Minister, could look after our everyday needs with a credit card system. But I would like the Honourable Minister to comment if in fact he has any information about this proposed plan that's supposed to become part of our way of life, and if in fact he's got any suggestions as to how we should become involved and when we should alert our people to take a serious look, because this is a strange turnaround in the monetary system.

I'm sure the Honourable Minister is familiar, as I, that the credit card system hasn't worked that well. If you talk with some of the banking institutions today, you'll find that they've run into very serious problems with their credit card system. The unpaid accounts of credit cards, I understand it's a staggering figure if one was to be able to put it all together and find

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . out the losses that can accumulate from that type of a control. So I wonder if, you know, with a credit card, how I would get a packet of soda biscuits in a grocery store with a credit card, and then turn around and take my shirt to the laundry to get it cleaned, and carry on without money. But I understand the federal program and what I've read and studied about it, it's apparently being studied and seriously considered as part of our new way of life in the very near future in Canada. So if the Minister hasn't got any comments, I hope that he would take a look at it and prepare a study for us in this province so we have some idea of what's taking place in the federal scene.

Mr. Chairman, I'm also interested in this three-man Board of Inquiry which the Honourable Minister established in conjunction with the Minister of Agriculture, and I think Mr. Wood at the university was, I think, the Chairman, and a Mrs. Pruden, a housewife, and Mr. Usick, a past president of the Farmers Union, set up by the Minister to, I believe they were to investigate all phases of marketing, they were to investigate the pricing of livestock in our province, and meat products as they appear at the retail level. And I know some of the comments of the Honourable Minister at the time this group was set up were very interesting, and I agreed with him as of the need, because some producers felt that they were not getting a fair markup or return for their product and yet the price of the goods that they were selling, that they saw it on the shelves at the retail level, were not changing or fluctuating with the unstable marketplace.

I believe in another comment there of the Honourable Minister, he said that it appeared unlikely - and I think I'm quoting his remarks - "It appears highly unlikely that the Federal Government will take any action so we'll just have to do the job ourselves." I think that was the comment of the Honourable Minister at the time. So I'm wondering now if he has that report for us, or if, in fact, it's not going to be public information, that he would be kind enough to fill us members in the Opposition in of what the findings were, is there an interim report ready for us in the Legislature so we can understand what the Minister has done, and his Commission, because I think that the subject matter is one that deserves the attention of the department, and I look forward to the Minister's comment regarding this matter which is of great concern to the people of my constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: Mr. Chairman, I join the debate briefly to ask a few questions and perhaps make a number of suggestions. One thing that I'm concerned about is that there is no statutory requirement for the department that the Minister is responsible for to make an annual report, and I think something's lacking here; there should be an annual report that can for example, an annual report should contain a listing of any investigations that have gone on, and whether or not there has been a legal action taken. There should be a section devoted to investigations of violations of warranties and guarantees, and what the results were. Any violations that have been found serious enough to be taken to court, they should be recorded. The number of cases that were taken to court, and the number of cases that were won by the department on behalf of the consumers. As the information percolates throughout the province it's an education in itself to the people that you are trying to offer protection to.

Right now, excepting for some pamphlets that from time to time appear, and I don't know just how they appear, whether they arrive in the mail on a regular basis to everyone in the province, or they're handed out to people who go into the office. There's not that much publicity going out informing people of their rights, and I know the Minister is aware of this problem, possibly the budget's got a lot to do with it. But the very fact that he put out an annual report and the annual report was sent to all the news media, perhaps to the high schools, would make it possible for the information to get out throughout the province. So I make this suggestion.

Also I think that the annual report should contain an informational section, where what attempts have been made, how many pieces of literature have been put out, how many visits to high schools by officers of the department to explain rights to the young people. Many high school students now are adults and have to bear responsibility when they sign a contract to buy a car on time or some other large type of item. So I think a report would be useful in that regard. It would help to make better known to the people in the province what their rights are and what the pitfalls are in credit purchasing, and so on.

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. G. JOHNSTON cont'd)

One new turn of events in Manitoba that has bothered me, which is what one might call invasion of privacy. I see a firm has started up with a lie detector and they will take on investigation of employees for private firms and other organizations. It seems to me that this is fairly serious that a person who is seeking a promotion or a job with a company has to submit to a detector test which can be misinterpreted by the operator, thereby causing a blot on the employee or the prospective employee's record for some time to come. For an example, an employee can be asked, if he's being considered for promotion, will he stay with the firm for the rest of his working career? Well this is a pretty difficult question to answer for an ambitious young person who may want, later in his career, to go to work for himself or move to another part of the country, and because he's honest, or even if he's dishonest and tries to cover it up, he is being penalized for having had a thought in his head that he couldn't help having in the first place. So I think that should be examined to see whether or not it's an unfair imposition on people who are forced because they want promotion to submit to a lie detector test.

Also I'd like the Minister to answer - and I've been looking through the various Acts to see what the legal maximum rate of interest is for loans or purchases on time under \$1,500. We hear so much about interest rates these days, all the way from 25 percent and down. It might be helpful if the Minister could tell us what is the legal rate of purchase, or a direct loan, under \$1,500. Perhaps he could also spell it out what it is over \$1,500, too. I don't know if the province even has an Act controlling usury in the province or not. I believe some years ago there was some legislation that limited an interest rate. Perhaps he could develop that, what is the latest state of affairs with regard to interest rates on time purchase and on loans.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 36(a) The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. GEORGE HENDERSON (Pembina): Mr. Chairman, I had some questions but I think it would be much better if he answered these questions from the gentleman first if you prefer it that way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: I thank the Member for Pembina for giving me the opportunity. With regard to the concern of the Member for Portage la Prairie and lie detecting equipment and the use of it by companies, I would like to ask him the name of the company that has established itself in Manitoba for that particular purpose. As the member knows there is a Personal Investigations Act here, but I don't think the terms of that Act covers this particular lie detection operation. It certainly would seem to me to be an odd, very odd condition of employment for a manager, or a business, to require its employees to submit on a random basis to questions asked while they are hooked up to a lie detector of one kind or another. That strikes me as being most peculiar, and if there is such a corporation operating in Manitoba I certainly would like to talk to him, and consequently would like the name of that company and someone I can contact in it, so that I can question them and see just how they are going to operate.

The point raised by the Member for Roblin with regard to the cashless society broaches a subject that I very much would like discussion on in this Legislature. The Federal Government has a habit of proposing various new departures in this particular area related to telecommunications of various kinds, which is really what we're talking about here, and has a habit of proposing the use of new technology and, frankly, this department under Communications is expected to deal with it.

The idea that the cashless society, which is really quite different from the present credit card type of transaction, the idea of the cashless society can be introduced as certainly an idea that at an unguarded moment I would regard as an exciting idea, and the reason is this: That the cashless society really depends on almost instantaneous transmission of information with regard to a particular transaction. There is supposed to be, I think theoretically anyway, no time lag between the time that the customer presents his card to consummate the transaction and the time that he could subsequently present his card for another transaction. That means, of course, that his debit balance, or against his account, would be instantaneously on record and he would not theoretically be able to get into debt. His account would be there and when he ran out of money presumably the machine would kick out some kind of red warning flag the next time he presented his card to make a purchase. Today, of course, the credit card society

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) . . . . leads to problems because there is precisely that time lag between when the customer goes in to make a purchase with a credit card and he can run up what is in fact a debit against his total assets. So that the cashless society I don't think can be criticized on the basis of what we know today as the credit card society.

But nonetheless if we're talking about the cashless society this would perhaps infringe again on personal privacy; it would encroach on provincial jurisdiction, and I don't think that any province will accept it without very careful scrutiny. And I can advise the Member for Roblin that the members of my department, both in the Communications side of it and in the Consumer Affairs side of it, are looking at these proposals of the Federal Government, and will be scrutinizing them with great care, for the reasons I've indicated.

The Member for Roblin also wanted to know how the inquiry into the Trades Practices Act, with regard to price spreads in meat marketing, was coming along. It is my understanding that that inquiry is in the process of working out its recommendation. To date, as far as I know, they are still in that process. I have not seen either an interim or a final report. But I can advise him that one of the people within the Research and Planning Branch of my department is engaged in that meat inquiry, to look particularly at that aspect of price spreads between the wholesale price and the final retail price. That's the area we are concerned with.

It's rather interesting of course and perhaps gives a certain perspective to the whole problem of inflation to look at the reasons for the establishment of the meat inquiry and the general conditions of inflation or escalating prices in meat at that time, and of course to look at the same market today when we see meat prices falling somewhat. While the examination in price spreads I think still remains to be . . . still remains as an important area to examine, we do see here in a very short period of time prices going into decline again.

The Member for Portage touched upon an area that I must admit I would like to do, that is publish an annual report much as some of the other departments and boards do, setting forth in two or three colors with pictures what the Department of Consumer Affairs has done over the preceding year. That information I think is much needed in the community, and although there are tens of thousands of pamphlets on Consumer Affairs and Landlord and Tenant matters out in the public arena, and perhaps these could be supplemented by an annual report, and certainly for the next year's operations I will look to the possibility of publishing a full scale report outlining what the bureau has been doing in some detail. The report that I did table of course, Mr. Chairman, does contain that information. There is statistical information in it with regard to prosecutions and complaints and what not received by the Consumers Affairs Department . --(Interjection)-- Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

MR. G. JOHNSTON: . . . this type of report that is recorded as a sessional paper, could you have a copy made available for all the members?

MR. TURNBULL: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I can have that done, and presume that my answer to his question is an indication that it will be done very shortly.

I think that deals with most of the points raised except the general one of rent increases, which we discussed in some detail last night, and I was surprised somewhat to see that the Member for Riel and myself were on much the same wavelength with regard to the need for rent controls and perhaps the timing for the introduction of them.

The question of interest rates is another area that the department is involved in but in a peripheral way. Today there is no legal rate on the purchase of credit I am advised. The rate on loans under \$1,500 is controlled by the Federal Small Loans Act, and the rates given for it: on the first \$300 are 2 percent per month; on the next \$700, 1 percent per month; on the next \$500, one-half percent per month.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I have a couple of more questions re the marketing inquiry established by the Minister. I am wondering . . . he mentioned the flood of protests that he had had from the producers and the consumers. Were the protests . . . was there one group more than the others? Did you have more letters from the consumers, or more letters from the producers? You mentioned in your statement that you had had a lot of letters of protest and concern regarding the problem. The other thing I'm wondering, have you set a deadline for that committee to give the data you will report, or the House, and then if and when the report is completed, will it be a singular statement from your department, or is it a joint

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd) . . . . statement coming from your department and the Department of Agriculture?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that any definite deadline has been set, that certainly there is nothing contained in the Order in Council as I recall it, and as I scan it now, which would indicate a definite deadline for the handing down of that report. With regard to the issuing of the final report, I would expect that as the O. C. establishing the inquiry was an O. C. suggested both by myself and the Minister of Agriculture, that the report would be issued jointly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON (Rock Lake): Well, Mr. Chairman, since the Minister has now indicated that there is no deadline insofar as this committee that has been appointed to establish the costs and the results thereof of a meat product, that I think is vital to the diet of all the people of this province, I'm wondering now - I don't know whether the Minister can give any information as to it, because the Federal Government have already done some investigation on this matter. Mrs. Plumtre indicated to the nation that through their findings they found there were no irregularities from the producer right through to the consumer level. And I'm wondering, in this committee that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture have appointed, have they had any consultation with this with the federal committee to find out if there's any value of consulting with the federal committee on this particular matter?

MR. TURNBULL: I could get detailed response to that question. I think it's one that merits not an off-the-cuff answer but consultation with the people involved in the inquiry to see just the extent of consultation that they have had with federal people involved in the field, and other information pertaining to it that the Member for Rock Lake mentioned. I'll have that information for him hopefully later today.

MR. EINARSON: Well, then, Mr. Chairman, I think that it would be very interesting not only to the farmers of this province who are producers of beef, or in all red meats, but also to the consuming public. Can the Minister give us any assurance at all that there will be either an interim or a final report from this committee before this session ends?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I can, as I say, talk directly to the people involved in this inquiry and see where they are at with regards to the work that they're doing. Having appointed the inquiry I'm always inclined to let the people fill, appoint, and do the job that they were appointed to do with a minimum of interference from myself. But because of the concern expressed I will get in touch, have my staff get in touch with them and try to get that information for the member. I'm obviously saying that at the present time, this moment, I cannot give him the assurance that he asks me to give him.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Chairman, I think it would be interesting to know - he states that there were letters received by his department from producers of this province and also from consumers. Could he give an indication as to just how many letters were received from both producers and consumers in regard to this matter?

MR. TURNBULL: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can attempt to dig up that information. Quite often when consumers write in to the department, and particularly to the Minister's Office, their letters contain a great number of issues, and they often, you know, are concerned about a variety of issues and they believe that the one letter will suffice to bring their concerns on all ranges of issues to my attention. But nonetheless I will attempt to see what we can dig up in the short time available.

MR. EINARSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to go back to the topic that my colleague from Roblin brought up in regards to the credit card system, and probably better stated as the "cashless society." And if I understood the Minister correctly he was saying that it was a moment of real excitement to him that the way the Federal Government is involved in this particular issue, and thought maybe that it was a step in the right direction. If I am wrong, Mr. Chairman, I stand to be corrected by the Minister. But I understood him to say that if a person is using this, what they refer to as the cashless system and you have a credit card, the computer system if it's on the deficit side when the bill comes in, I'm wondering how many bills could run up from the time that that bill is stated by the computer system as having no funds in his account. There's a problem that a person could run up a number of bills, or make purchases, before the first one gets to the computer system stating that there are not sufficient

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. EINARSON cont'd) . . . . funds in his account. And so I'm wondering if I could get an explanation of this. I can't help but feel that this is a detriment to the system that could be dangerous still when comparing with our other system that my colleague from Roblin stated that through the credit card system there are a lot of accounts that are not being paid through that system. So I would like to know if he could give us some information as to what I referred to there.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to clarify the member's interpretation of my remarks on this subject of a cashless society. First of all when I'm regarding, or when I'm contemplating the implementation of the new technology I do find it relatively exciting to see how that technology could work out. On the other hand, I did indicate that the encroachment of the Federal Government through this particular technology onto what may be a provincial jurisdiction is one that my department will have to scrutinize with great care, because it is, or it could be, rather an encroachment on provincial jurisdiction, and it may also of course impinge on the privacy of individuals.

I was also indicating earlier that the concept of the cashless society really is a theoretical thing developed at the moment by the Federal Government. It is based on, you know, instantaneous telecommunications across the country. Now my understanding of the idea of the cashless society is that people who are involved in it, and I assume ultimately the Federal Government sees everyone being involved in it, people will have an account. That account will be charged for every transaction made, and the charge will be made, as I say theoretically, instantaneously. Now if that happens as soon as the credit balance approaches, you know, a limiting factor of five or ten dollars, the next transaction will obviously make the computer terminal at the business where the customer is presenting his card flash red lights, or whatever colour lights they're going to use, so that that will prevent the customer from overspending and running into debits on his account. Today of course that is not the case, there isn't that instantaneous transmission of information.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I direct the honourable members attention to the gallery where we have 24 students of Darwin School, Grade 6 standing, under the direction of Mrs. Poitras. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Vital. On behalf of all the members I bid you welcome to the Chamber.

SUPPLY - CONSUMER, CORPORATE AND INTERNAL SERVICES (cont'd)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. HENDERSON: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry that we drifted away from the topic, we were on Landlord and Tenant Act, and I realize these other things are relevant but they did get us a long piece away from where we were, although I think the discussion is good.

Actually The Landlord and Tenant Act seems to be a very good Act but actually in the application of it, it actually is a very difficult Act for the landlords and turns out to be more of a tenants' Act. One of the reasons that it turns out badly for the landlord is that when there's people rent places and leave them, they take more to fix up than the one-half of the deposit. If they don't leave you have trouble getting them out, which is also costly and you don't get legal help for nothing, especially if you happen to be somebody that's got some property you can't go through the Legal Aid.

And one of the other things that I feel is quite important, and I have had it drawn to my attention several times - I presume the Minister must have too - is that when you get people that are on welfare in houses many of these people have severe difficulties, and we needn't go into them, but they make pretty poor tenants in a lot of cases, and when they leave there's a lot of damage done and you have trouble getting them out, and the government or the Department of Welfare will not assume the cost of the rent or the damages. I feel this is one that has probably been brought to your attention before, but the result of this is that you find people with buildings not saying now that I'm going to charge them more, because I'm going to have to have something extra to make up for the damage that's done, or for losing out on deposits, or for getting them moved out, but you have people saying, I'm not going to let them in, because who wants to come in and have their place wrecked and have to go through the redecorating and fixing? And I have heard it said many times that the government should, where they

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. HENDERSON cont'd) . . . . have welfare families and in particular where there's a lady only and she has several children, that the government should guarantee the responsibility of landlord or the receiving of his rent. And I think this is only fair because I can think of several instances myself where it certainly turned out to be very much to the disadvantage to the owner. And I think this is something the government should do.

I know that your deposit is not practical at all when it's only one-half of one month's rent, because the damage that these people can do in one week, you know, and it's just more than can ever think of them paying for in a couple of months' rent and according to The Landlord and Tenant Act what the landlord is supposed to be able to do, he's supposed to sue them. Well I'd like to ask anybody how they ever made out suing people who are on welfare. How do they make out? Who pays the lawyer, and did you get any money out of them anyway, So the result is, it's going to cost them more anyway to go through the legal process in most cases, and even if he won the case he can't collect any rent. So it's not very practical in this sense, and I think the government when they have people on welfare and get welfare homes into houses, that they should assume the responsibility of paying the rent. I'd like to hear your comments whether you get complaints on this, and what your feelings are on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 36(a)(1) -- the Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, The Landlord and Tenant Act is an Act which attempts, and I think it attempts successfully, to maintain the balance in right in the landlord and his tenant. Now the adjustment of the balance of power, if you want to call it that, or the balance of right between landlords and tenants was a relatively new idea which was brought into this province by The Landlord and Tenant Act. Prior to that, as the Member for Pembina well knows, the tenants didn't have a chance. All the rights, all the power, all the authority, were on the side of the landlord, and I've perused in years gone by leases that people were required to sign, and it was pretty clear that those leases were drawn in such a way that if the tenant so much as sneezed he could be evicted. And that to me was just wrong. And The Landlord and Tenant Act has eliminated that kind of arbitrary power that landlords in the past, before the introduction of this Act could use.

Now if one is a landlord I am sure that the adjustment of the balance of rights in the province is a matter of contention for them. And, you know, having enjoyed all the power that they could possibly want over the years, they are now faced with a more equitable situation established by The Landlord and Tenant Act, and they have to adjust to do it, and I don't find that that adjustment is something that should be overly onerous for most landlords. In fact the landlords that have contacted me at home about complaints that they've had about tenants are landlords frankly, that many of them that have called me are landlords that I certainly wouldn't want to have anything to do with. They are both obscene and incredibly crude in the expression of their opinion about tenants, and if that kind of person thinks that this Landlord and Tenant Act should be adjusted the opposite way to give them the right to call people the most incredible names then I can tell the Member for Pembina that that will not be done. The Act has established a balance, and I intend to maintain that balance between the rights of the landlords and the tenants.

With regard to the second point that the Member for Pembina made, I gather he was concerned about the landlord's right to obtain an order for possession. Is that correct if I could ask him? Is it the order for possession that you were concerned with?

MR. HENDERSON: I'm really sorry. Just at the moment the Member for Minnedosa passed me an article. I missed your last remark. If you wouldn't mind repeating it, then I'd know what you wanted.

MR. TURNBULL: I think I got the gist of the member's earlier remarks, he was talking about the landlord's difficulty in getting a tenant out of the premises. And I was just asking him if he was talking about the procedure the landlord must follow in obtaining an order for possession.

MR. HENDERSON: Well the way it is when a tenant becomes in default it's very difficult to get him out, and it can hardly be done; you're going to lose the rent, and you're going to lose the deposit. And then if there's damages done you have to collect. So what I'm saying is, while the Act is a good Act, and if it could be followed to the letter of the law you could say it would be good. But in the actual application of that Act, it doesn't work that way. I said that when the tenants do these things and they leave and they're poor and they're gone,

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. HENDERSON cont'd) . . . . and you don't even know where - lots of them have moved out overnight on people in apartment blocks and have done damage, they can't even find them. The people who rent out apartments have found out that they've had to raise, actually raise the rents on account of more losses since the Act went in. Now it's all right. This is helping the people who are abusing the Act because the Act as it is is good, but they're abusing the Act and there's no way of catching up with them. Now this means that the rent is raised and the good tenants have to end up by paying for the poor tenants. Either that or else the landlord is out, and the landlord doesn't usually stay short too long because he has to catch up for it some other way. And I'm speaking in particular of people who are on welfare that are so poor that you can't do anything about it. I think that the government has a responsibility there to see that the landlord gets paid for his damages and for rent that isn't collected.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, it is clear now that the Member for Pembina was speaking about the landlord's attempt to get an order for possession. That process tends to be prolonged. The landlord is required to go to court to get an order for possession, and I think that is justified because regardless of the damage that may be done, regardless of what the tenant does, the landlord should not have the right to remove shelter, remove the roof from a man's head. So I think that the appeal to the courts to get an eviction is a justified process.

Now with regard to damage done to premises. This certainly is a problem, and I don't know what law or what court procedure could be instituted to prevent people from acting like they were demented. I mean, you know, I know the kinds of situations the member is referring to where tenants poke holes in walls and smash all the lights, and this kind of thing. You know, that's wilful damage, and you know there are people in society who act that way, and I am at a loss to know how any statute could be introduced which would just prevent it from happening. The landlord and the tenant of course reach an agreement on rent to be paid and conditions of the tenancy. If the landlord's judgment is faulty for one reason or another and he allows people in who are likely to do that kind of damage to the premises, then frankly he's made a bad deal. When the tenant is in there the landlord can get him out if the tenant is in default of his various obligations.

Insofar as the government or state should assume responsibility for welfare recipients who happen to be in accommodation where they do damage, that I think would be unjustified. I do not think the Crown should be responsible for paying damages to a landlord who decides of his own volition, being an adult, to rent his premises to a welfare recipient. I have seen some of the accommodations in this city that landlords make available to welfare recipients, and I can understand the frustrations that those tenants must have with the quarters that they are living in. Those quarters that are made available to welfare recipients the last time I checked, which I must confess was some years ago, those quarters cost more per square foot than do quarters in better parts of the city where houses are somewhat larger. And I think that if a landlord wants to charge rents that are higher per square foot for poor accommodation and the tenant does some damage to it, that is one of the risks of his doing business. But to call upon the state to compensate the landlord for a deal that the landlord got into with his tenant, I think that would be wrong.

MR. HENDERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Minister has admitted what I've just stated earlier, because the people that have apartments, and that, or houses, have had to charge exorbitant rents, more per square foot as you said, because they're doing it for these reasons. And in particular, where you're talking about more slum tenants, and I just don't like the term but I mean it makes it a little bit easier to define the thing, but when we particularly then have the welfare people coming along, and when you come along through the Landlord and Tenant Act and say you can sue and have them put out, and all the rest of it, you can't get the money from these people. Now if the government would assume the responsibility of the damages when these tenants left, or the rent that might be in default at that time, then these people wouldn't be so . . . they might let them in and give them a better chance. Now they're not only saying that I'm going to charge them more because they're going to break the place up, they're going to say I don't want anything to do with all that racket and all that trouble, I don't want them at all. And that's why that some of the people that are on welfare are having the trouble they are. And my point is this, I think that the government should be assuming the responsibility of the damages in cases like this where people are on welfare.



## SUPPLY -CONSUMER AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

MR. EINARSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think this is an interesting subject we're discussing here, and probably the Member for Pembina has been raising a very important one in regard to the legislation as it pertains to the Landlord and Tenant Act. And while I am one who feels and hopes that the Act as such will be fair to both the landlord and the tenant. But, you know, I overheard the Minister of Mines and Resources from his seat refer to it as landlord socialism. Landlord socialism, Mr. Chairman, and so I'm getting an impression over here that they've got a biased attitude when we talk about the Landlord and Tenant Act. -- (Interjection)-- Yes, I didn't think I'd have that opportunity, Mr. Chairman. But you know, sir, I would like to pose a proposition to the Minister and say, supposing Mr. Jones had five homes for lease and four of them were rented out, but the fifth one, two people come along and want to lease that fifth house from Mr. Jones, and for some reason, unbeknown to anyone of us here in this House, he says no I'm sorry I'm not going to rent that home to you, but he had his reasons. And this having happened, those two people went to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and conveyed to them their story saying that Mr. Jones refuses to rent his house for various reasons. I would like to know what would be the reaction of the Minister if this was to happen.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. WARNER H. JORGENSON (Morris): The Minister's glib dismissal of the question that was posed by the Member for Pembina that if a landlord was so stupid as to get himself into the difficulty of having a bad tenant, that was his bad luck; he's just made a bad deal, and will know better next time. What the Minister fails to take into consideration of course is that if there is a refusal on the part of the landlord to admit anyone in, then they are going to run right down to the Human Rights Commission, and there are going to be all sorts of reasons why that landlord is going to be compelled to do things which are against his better judgment. And, you know, the Minister is attempting to justify legislation that has been passed by this government, and in some respects that legislation perhaps was necessary, but what he has failed to take into consideration and he will not, of course he will not admit, that much of the difficulty that is being faced by people has been created by this government in the passage of legislation that has made it difficult for landlords to exercise the kind of judgment that they must exercise in order to maintain those premises. So the Minister, you know, . . . it's rather interesting to see the way he dismisses that problem by just saying well they made a bad deal, tough luck.

Now he offered the suggestion of what kind of legislation can we offer to protect landlords against tenants who wilfully damage property. He doesn't need any legislation and that's just the point that I'm attempting to make. If he would allow these people to exercise a little judgment on their own, they wouldn't ask for or need any protection; they could protect themselves. But what this government is constantly attempting to do is to be the lord high protector of everybody, and in the process create more problems than they ever were intended to solve.

MR. TURNBULL; Mr. Speaker, this has to be perhaps the most low-keyed debate on the pet theme of the Member for Pembina. I can recall several sessions ago that he made a speech which was widely reported which had the theme of, you know, if you're on welfare, let them starve. And I think that --(Interjection)--

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

MR. HENDERSON: I never said if they are on welfare I'd let them starve. I'd say if they were able to work and wouldn't work, I'd let them starve. That's what I said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs. The Honourable Minister of Mines and Natural Resources.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, just to the Minister of Consumer Affairs, I can confirm that the Member for Pembina is correct, he said he wouldn't let them get on welfare, he'd let them starve. He didn't say if they're on welfare, let them starve.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: As you will, Mr. Chairman, I have to remark and thank the photogenic memory of the Minister of Mines for pointing that out. I was going to say before his interjection that regardless--(Interjection)-- Well, anyway it's a good memory. I was going to say that regardless of whether the Member for Pembina wanted people to be on welfare or not,

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. TURNBULL cont'd) . . . . as far as he was concerned they could starve, frankly that's the way I recollect it, I think the sentiment was there.

I have to indicate to him that the point that he is making with regard to rents being exorbitant because of the fact that some tenants do damage is not a phenomenon that has arisen since the passage of the Landlord and Tenant Act. Quite the contrary. Those homes, those houses in this city, in this province, that were regarded as poorer quality have for decades been charged at the higher rate for tenants than accommodation of better quality. And I think that to attempt to say that this phenomenon that we have where the poorer the house the higher the rent, that that phenomenon is the result of the Landlord and Tenant Act is really misleading. If the Member for Pembina will go back in the history of this city to the time of its greatest expansion, he will find that those kinds of high rents were charged for poor accommodation. Certainly all through the forties and the fifties that phenomenon was there.

It is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that the landlord has the right to refuse any prospective tenant. He has the right to refuse that tenant to get into the accommodation, and frankly if he's a businessman, and they often regard themselves as businessmen, and he accepts as a tenant someone who is going to do damage to his property, then he has made a bad deal. And to say to the government that somehow the government should pay the damages that are the result of that bad deal, I repeat is just wrong. And I certainly would not push for any such compensation to landlords who could get themselves into that kind of a bad deal. The landlord has the right to refuse, unless of course he is refusing on grounds that are laid out within the Human Rights Act, race, colour, creed, those are the grounds on which he cannot refuse. And frankly, I have to abide by the ideas underlined in the Human Rights Act, to refuse a prospective tenant accommodation because of his race, color or creed to me is an abominable act by a landlord.

Mr. Chairman, I have to indicate to the Member for Morris that his remarks with regard to what I had to say about legislation to protect landlords, is not quite on the mark. What I was saying is that I didn't know if there is any way a statute could be introduced to prevent people from acting in the way that they do act, that is in this case, doing damage to rental accommodation, and I think he must agree with me that there is no such statute. You cannot legislate people to do what they should, to act the way you would like them to act, which is a somewhat different point than he was making with regard to my suggesting that there is no statute that could be passed to protect the landlord. You can protect the landlord, that is correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Well, Mr. Chairman, there's a point that's being made here and I would rather let the others finish, I want to talk on another matter with respect to the Minister under this particular section. If there are other members who want to deal with this, I prefer waiting.

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. HENDERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't think there's much use spending more time on it. Some of the remarks that the Minister has made just really shows his small mental ability for business. So that's the way I look at it, and I hope it's gone down on the record and that some of the people in the department will take a good look at what's been said, and put that proper interpretation on it.

Now the Minister seems to do so little in other things, and some of the things that I think his department should be looking after is, shall we say, keeping the public informed on questions like we asked about gasoline the other day, where there's such a high variation of the price of gasoline right here within the Province of Manitoba, where we have No. 2 gas selling from a low of 55 cents to a high of 71 cents. And now I imagine that this is in your department. There was questions asked on it here the other day and you didn't know anything about it, and I'm wondering now do you know about it, and do you know No. 2 gas is different than No. 1, and do you know if there's a difference in the difference in No. 2?

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I should tell the Member for Pembina that the kind of personal remarks that he makes I just regard as being not really much to comment on. But if he wants to engage in that kind of mud-slinging I think he will find me at least as good as him at it. But I will attempt to restrain myself from replying in kind to the earlier remarks that he did make, and merely let it stand that when a man makes that kind of remark, that kind of argument, or when he yells loud, it just indicates a poor argument.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Pembina does want the department to provide information about different grades of gasoline that are marketed in Manitoba. For several months now the Department of Consumer Affairs through the consumer officers who are out in the field, has collected information with regard to gasoline prices. This has been a survey which has been conducted in as systematic way as the resources of the branch will allow, and the results of surveys have been published.

If he is complaining that there is a difference in the retail price of gasoline throughout the province, I don't see what point he is really attempting to make. That surely is the epitome of the free enterprise system. If prices are different I expect that those different prices reflect different costs of putting the gasoline at the particular site at which it's sold. The marketing arrangements of the various gasoline companies, we have some information on that, I can read . . . well I think I sent the letter some nine or ten months ago to the Member for Roblin. He was asking me about this different retail price of gasoline, and in that letter I did outline to him the marketing regions and zones that the oil companies tend to maintain, that's part of the reason for different retail prices of gasoline. I don't object to gasoline prices being different; I rather like being able to go to the store, or go to a garage rather and buy gasoline at 60 cents or less, instead of having to go to some other gasoline outfit and pay 63 or 64 cents in the city. If he wants identical prices throughout the province, I suggest he talk to the gasoline companies and see how they react to such a proposal. I certainly wouldn't want identical prices throughout the province where Winnipeggers are paying as much for gasoline as the people in Churchill, that would hardly be an equitable situation.

The question with regard to octane gasoline and the actual quality of the gasoline is a matter of some concern. It's a question that as far as I know some chemical engineers have difficulty dealing with. I have heard it expressed by people in the business that octane rating on gasoline, and this is not my opinion but I've heard it expressed, octane rating of gasoline is one of the greatest frauds perpetrated on the people of North America. Whether that is the case or not, I don't care to get into, but I can say to the member, if he's seeking sort of general information in this area, that octane rating of gasoline is not maintained or analysed by any agency of government in the country. No provincial government as I know, as I understand it, maintains octane ratings, checks gasoline for octane ratings, nor does the Federal Government do that. Again, if he is suggesting that the Provincial Government of Manitoba get into analysis of gasoline, rating of gasoline by octane content, whatever that might mean, for efficiency in the engine, I suppose that could be entertained. But I certainly would not want to see this Provincial Government get involved in a wide-scale testing program of that nature. I think that if it's to be done, it could probably be done by the Federal Government who could do it on a national basis where it would have more meaning than if done within the provincial content.

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. HENDERSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, we've got another explanation where it is probably the Federal Government's responsibility where it isn't being done, or else there's some study being done but it's very limited, and this is what we are wondering about the Consumers Bureau they're saying we have antifreeze which was selling for below \$5.00 just across the line, and selling as high as \$12.00 in different places in Manitoba. I'm not saying that the Minister can control individual pricing from place to place, but surely it's the responsibility of his department to make public statements from time to time about the anti-freeze picture, or whether it's the butter that's coming in from the United States, or the price of butter in the United States and butter in New Zealand. I think it's his responsibility at least to inform the people along those lines, because you're the Minister of Consumer and Co-operative Affairs. And the thing is, when we look at it, you don't do anything with this deceptive advertising. You more or less have shuffled it off. And the other thing that we were talking about, the Landlord and Tenant Act, you more or less just try to talk yourself around it. And gasoline, you say, well, that's federal again, and we wonder what you're doing. Why don't you do something on things like informing the public on the different prices of antifreeze and the different prices of butter, possibly sugar, and these other ones, the available supply and the world trends or something?

The thing is, we're wondering what you do for the money you are getting. In fact, when I look at your department and I think of the little bit of work it turns out and then I look at the other department over here, Co-operative Development, I think at least we could save one Minister's salary anyway because they are two very small departments and I understand that the Minister of each department gets paid the same. Well, possibly he doesn't, I'm not sure on this one now. Well if he gets paid the same, I'd say well there would be one good place to start saving the taxpayers some money anyway, because your department is hardly doing anything and this other one's very small - at least they present very small results.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Chairman, I don't know where the Member for Pembina has been putting his head, but he must have just had it in the sand, because, as I said earlier, there have been press releases with regard to gasoline prices. There was a great deal of publicity given as a result of statements that I made about sugar prices, about bread prices, about butter prices, about milk prices. I should caution the Member for Pembina that precipitous statements by politicians on a variety of issues in the marketplace, out of the marketplace, can cause people to rush out and start hoarding. Now surely he realizes that, and if he is suggesting that the Department of Consumer Affairs in the Consumers Bureau is not doing enough to raise people's concern, to advise them to buy now because the price is low and it's going to go up in six months because that's the information we have, then I say I am pleased, I am glad, that the department has not resorted to that kind of inflammation of public opinion with regard to commodities purchased in the marketplace. And if he suggests, if he suggests that inflammatory remarks with regard to commodity pricing is the way to carry on a government, then I am damn glad that I am here and he's over there, because I think that the purchasing public in Manitoba would likely suffer a great deal, if he was in my position, making the kind of remarks about what is going on in the marketplace that he suggest that I make. Now, if he is saying that the Consumers Bureau is not carrying out its statutory responsibilities, then I say he doesn't know what he's talking about.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I think this is probably as good a time as any to enter the debate and to say to the Minister that I listened with interest to his explanation about inflammatory remarks, and I recall last year his initial statements on the question of sugar prices, and I recall how inflammatory they were and how wrong they were and, further, how misinformed he was at the time he made it. And this goes to the basic question, Mr. Chairman, --(Interjection)-- The first answers in this House last year, until the sugar beet growers then met with him and I believe met with the Premier, and tried to indicate what the facts were, and then there was a retreat on the part of the Minister from the position that he said and a retreat for a good reason. At the time he stood up he didn't know what he was saying, he didn't know what he was talking about, but he stood up and said it. And this,

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) . . . . Mr. Chairman, is the problem we have with a Minister of Consumer Affairs who at this stage I do not believe has defined clearly his position, his objectives, the objectives of his department, with respect to the whole range of matters that at this point may or may not come within his authority and the matters which he may or may not, in the interests of the people of this province, review.

And this goes to the question of what research is undertaken and, in addition, as to how he really perceives his position. And I think this is very important and this type of debate on this subject matter is important because we have to understand it. Because I think either there is an expectation on the part of many of us on this side and many of the people in Manitoba that there is something more that should be done, or we really are limited to a person whose concern within the department is limited to the specific responsibilities that have been designated as the result of the legislation in the consumer field, in the landlord and tenant field, and who really should basically keep out of those matters which arise in which the public interest has to be protected.

We recognize now he doesn't feel that there's an obligation on his part to deal with any misleading advertising in Autopac. And by the way, Mr. Chairman, I should indicate that I thought it rather curious to listen to him to say that he rather found it, you know, sort of attractive, I think, to be able to go to one gas station and another, and to be able to choose where he wants to buy if the price is lower. I wonder if he feels the same way about auto insurance. Does he feel that the person should have the right to go to one place or another, to be able to choose what auto insurance he should be buying? --(Interjection)-- No, he doesn't feel that way about auto insurance but he feels that way about gasoline --(Interjection)-- No, nor telephones. Well, you know, we go back to the whole question of whether you can really rationally argue that auto insurance is the kind of utility and service that telephones and water supply is. I don't think that there is an argument that can be advanced that would be credible. I think arguments can be advanced by the members opposite, and they will, they will advance those arguments, but they're not credible arguments and they're not arguments that intellectually can stand.

But the difficulty at this point is that at a time when inflation has caused severe problems in the general economy, at a time when prices are rising significantly in all areas, when costs are increasing as a result of either material cost changes, labour changes, increased costs as a result of government taxation, increased demands that have occurred with respect to the marketplace as a result of government intervention and further government involvement, the problem is: how does the Minister of Consumer Affairs deem his responsibilities to be? How does he conceive his responsibilities with respect to the whole range of matters that could be reviewed by him, that may require at least some accurate information being furnished, that would require, for the lack of a better word, a "jawboning" technique on his part with respect to those areas that he . . . jawboning - the Minister of Finance can explain that terminology to him very well, or the ex Minister of Finance - jawboning technique that can be used in those areas in which, with accurate information, based on proper research, as a result of an identification by his department of areas of concern, he can publicly make statements based on accurate information dealing in consumer matters, so that in effect if pricing at any given time, in any area, is out of kilter, it would have the effect of that kind of declaration coming from the Minister, it would have the effect of accurate information being placed before the public and the likely possibility that it would affect any undue pricing or increase in pricing that was not justified?

Now, so far, Mr. Speaker, what we have from the Minister is responses to certain questions that may be asked in the House, or asked by reporters, or asked by some of the public, and those responses in general have lacked any research, are impressions, are the kind of responses that are given by someone who is obviously misinformed as to what's really happening - and this has been the situation - or his response to . . . "that would be a good idea." As an example, when the question was put to the Minister in this House as to whether there was going to be a review by his department with respect to the changeovers that would occur with respect to the metric system, and the possibility that as a result of the change-over a pricing could take place which would not be justified, and we simply asked him, does the Minister perceive this as part of his responsibility to protect the public, to at least ensure or to indicate that he will examine and monitor, or set up a mechanism to monitor that changeover so that the public itself would not be in a position of having an increased

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) . . . . pricing take place by someone who may say, with all justification in the world, say, "When I change over to the metric system I am going to add an additional amount simply because costs have gone up," and in the representation of the pricing would indicate a pricing that was indeed higher than the pricing for the equivalent prior to the changeover to the metric system, and the Minister says, "Well, that's a good idea," well, my God, he is the Minister of Consumer Affairs in this province! He has a responsibility, and I'm not suggesting, there is not a question of suggesting from this side that it should not be considered, but I am also suggesting that it's not a question, you know, that that's a good idea. What does he perceive his responsibility with respect to the consumers of this province?

Now we obviously have a situation where he perceives that with respect to government, anything that government does, he's not there as a protector of the public. They can do anything, they can say anything, they can advertise falsely, he doesn't protect them because he's part of the government.

Now with respect to what happens in the other areas, how much research, how much depth and in-depth study has he and his department taken before he makes a pronouncement as Minister of Consumer Affairs? And I suggest the evidence is that he does very little and that he seems satisfied by saying that "I'm Minister of Consumer Affairs and therefore when I make a statement, whatever I'm saying is going to be in the interest of the consumers." And I think a real criticism can be offered, a very fair criticism can be offered of the way in which the department, or the way in which he and I think the government have perceived his responsibilities. You know, the mere setting up of the Minister of Consumer Affairs or Consumer Department does not in itself mean that there has been great accomplishment. Now there has been, over a period of years, consumer legislation that has been developed, and I may say developed as a result of work that took place between the previous administration and the present administration --(Interjection)-- and oh yes, oh boy. --(Interjection)-- Yes.

Let me just suggest, Mr. Chairman, that there has in fact been a development in consumer legislation which took place over a period of years, and that consumer legislation is now enacted and has to be monitored, and additions to that consumer legislation is required. But in the setting up of the Minister of Consumer Affairs, we are setting someone who in effect becomes for the consumer an ombudsman, an ombudsman for the consumer in this province. And the Minister has not perceived his responsibilities that way and has not acted in that way and, if anything, has acted irresponsibly by some of the ridiculous statements that he makes and by his general flippant attitude with respect to the way in which he conceives his responsibility and the responsibility of his department. And at a time when prices are so significantly changing, when in effect the public at this point are concerned that there be a protection for them with respect to something that may occur in the marketplace that would be unfair, when in effect there are discrepancies - and some of them have been mentioned by the members opposite here with respect to a whole range of matters, of pricing matters - where does he conceive his responsibility to be? To sit there? To simply say we have a Consumer Affairs Department? To say that it is a federal responsibility? Or to act?

What we have seen, really, is what has been typical of the present government in almost every phase of its activity. The rhetoric of reform, the development of the conceptual basis under which some action is to take place, is evaluated, evolved and created, and then we see nothing after that, because they seem to be satisfied that, having done that, that's all that has to be done. And in a time when there is a very real need for the average man and woman to be protected, at a time when government action in identifying quickly and properly problem areas should be undertaken, it would seem to me that the Minister and the government have failed to recognize the position that should be taken, have failed to recognize as well the responsibilities that really have been assumed, and at this point are failing the person who sees a whole range of pricing in a variety of different matters and is looking for some leadership in being able to assist in evaluations and to see that there is protection for him in those areas in which there have been and essentially matters which could be classified I guess as being incorrect, or would amount to a rip-off, or would be to an incorrect action by individuals or by corporations in the marketplace.

The average man and woman in this province wants protection, and the protection comes from both the Acts of the Legislature and the operation of the Department of Consumer

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd) . . . . Affairs and the operation of the Minister. And I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister and the government have failed the people in this province.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I apologize to the Honourable Minister for rising to my feet at the moment when he wanted to respond, but I couldn't help but listen to the Leader of the Opposition and react to what he said, because one of the prides that I have of contributions that I have tried to make in this House, has been the fact that some ten years ago I started talking about the need for consumer protection, and I brought in resolutions about consumer protection, the need to bring about legislation, the need to become involved in consumer protection, and for some time my pleas fell on deaf ears.

I recall an occasion when I was speaking about the need for something to be done by the previous government, and I brought in a stack of material which was at least two feet high when it stood on my desk. I don't believe - no, I'm sure that the Leader of the Opposition wasn't in the House then because it was his predecessor, the Member for River Heights, who was then in the House and was a Cabinet Minister. Yes, the Member for Arthur was present. Maybe he remembers, because I did a bit of a grandstand about it, as I recall, because I brought in all this material and I piled it up, and it did come to about two feet of material that I had obtained from various places, much of which was United States because so little had been done in Canada about it. And I received a cool reception. The Minister then was Stewart McLean, as I recall, and he was seated just in the front bench here, and with practically a deaf ear listened to what was said. And, Mr. Chairman, I give credit to the late Maitland Steinkopf, the predecessor of the Leader of the Opposition, for finally taking hold of it and I believe - and of course I was not privy to Cabinet discussions but from everything I could see it was that member, who was then I think Minister, or became Minister of Public Utilities, who took hold of this problem, who organized the government, who set up a committee of the Legislature to deal with consumer protection, which committee employed a lawyer, Harold Buchwald, to advise the committee, and that committee sat, as I recall, more than a year and I believe between sessions, reviewing all the needs. And I recall the protestations that came before that committee from industry, from business, I remember the banking association appearing, all of them very fearful of intrusion of the government into areas which they felt was their private domain.

Mr. Chairman, I don't recall what other legislatures in Canada have passed consumer protection legislation, but I would venture to say that none of them have passed legislation of the nature that we have. And that legislation was provoked, prompted in this House over a period of time, and finally, after committee meetings and after a great deal of debate at the committee level, came about in a white paper and finally, after a great deal of delay, which I thought was inexcusable, came about in a bill which was started on, the work having been started on by the previous government. But even the Department itself, I believe, was a first in Canada.

All right, we have the legislation and the Leader of the Opposition can say, "All right, we passed the legislation." Now he accuses the Minister of not being sufficiently involved. I don't know, I'm sure the Minister - I wasn't party to the budget process this last year but I am sure that the Minister would like to double his budget and double his staff and do all sorts of research, and then the first thing we would hear is a member opposite getting up and saying, "Look at all the money they're wasting on accumulation of information and what are they doing with it?" And the question may well be, Mr. Chairman, what can they do with it?

We are still not an island unto ourselves. We are still part of the great economy of Canada and of North America. And I want the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to know that for several years now at federal-provincial meetings I have been asking for certain measures, and I have been unsuccessful in being persuasive so far - I don't think we're through yet. But when we were dealing with inflation, when we were dealing with costs, when we were dealing with exposure by and to the consumer of all sorts of advertising gimmickry to try and create a market where it wasn't there, we got rather a cool reception in Ottawa and from other provinces. And we cannot do it ourselves.

For example, at the last meeting, and the previous meetings of federal-provincial people, I pleaded that we should recognize that there is all sorts of money being spent to divert

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) . . . . people from buying one object in order to persuade them to buy another. I do not see any justification in the expenditure of moneys to convince somebody to have a pink bathtub rather than a blue bathtub rather than a white bathtub, but if you look at the advertising, you look at the magazines one reads, one can see all the money that's being spent on persuading people to spend money on what I think are absolutely unnecessary expenditures in a time of inflation. And when I came in, and I'm sorry I didn't hear the beginning of what the Leader of the Opposition had been saying, but at the time I came in he was talking about inflation upon the burden on the consumer, on the need to protect the consumer.

You know, Mr. Chairman, unfortunately the consumer himself is very much subject to these pressures which I think . . . You know, they're legal and they are not false, but they are wrongly directed. And when one sees the amount of money that is being spent on, let's say, the proliferation of makes and models of cars, colours of cars, the built-in obsolescence that takes place in automobiles as well as many other products, one thinks that there ought to be a real position taken. But what Minister in which province could have anything to do with that aspect of the cost of living?

The Leader of the Opposition, much of what he said was gobbledygook I thought at the beginning. Later on, when he started to attack the Minister's competence, that became very understandable because it's familiar. It comes from him on almost all occasions. But he did not speak with precision as to what could actually be done. What he did say is: get the information and then make statements back on information. Information that can be gotten in many respects is useless unless the governments of this country are prepared to deal with it. We cannot within Manitoba alone do an adequate job, and that was recognized at every meeting that I attended of federal and provincial ministers. There was a suggestion made that there be an attempt to reduce the flow of advertising. I don't know if the Leader of the Opposition would agree that there's too much money being spent on advertising. I don't know whether he would think that there is a waste involved in the use by which advertising is attempting both to consume the available dollars itself, and furthermore to divert people and encourage them to spend money in what many many would agree are useless means.

Now when the point was raised in regard to - what is it? - job ownership - the Leader of the Opposition, who is very erudite, assumed that I was equally so - I confess that I don't know what job ownership is.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: I said jawboning.

MR. CHERNIACK: This time I only heard the word "job".

MR. SPIVAK: Again, I said jawboning. Jawboning.

MR. CHERNIACK: Oh I'm sorry, I really . . . I heard him say it three times and I really thought he was saying a word which I would spell as j-o-b o-w-n-e-r. I really thought he said "job ownership". Oh, jawboning. Of course I know what that is. I hear so much of it when the Honourable Leader rises to speak about it.

Now the more precise point that he did make which I think has great validity, is the question of the transfer to metric scales. I have been trying to explore the possibility of enforcing a - the term escapes me for the moment - a requirement on retailers to declare the unit price - that's the word I was looking for. That is, that when they're selling, let's say, a box of cereal - there's no need to give any trade name for any - but five different boxes of the same cereal, different sizes and different prices, large, extra large, special large or whatever it is, that they ought to in every case be required to give a unit cost: how much is it per ounce or how much will it be per litre, or whatever the metric measurement. I have been told that this would raise the cost tremendously, and that the minute we force that - and I for one would like to force it - I've been told that the cost to every retailer will be so tremendous that they will raise the price completely out of line. So we have to do some other thing. I don't know whether you provide scales or whether you provide charts, you somehow have to tell the shopper how to judge whether a price is right or not, because since I've had more time to myself latterly I've been attempting to do more of the shopping than I used to do, and now I go into a supermarket and I really have to carry a pocket calculator if I really want to know which is the better deal as amongst all those that are so gloriously displayed.

And there's no doubt when we go into metric there's another problem involved, in



## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) . . . that . . . Of course, the Leader of the Opposition seems so suspicious of the merchandising business, to assume that there will be that automatic advantage taken. Frankly I share it with him. I'm cynical. I didn't know he was as cynical as I am about the opportunities that people grab to increase their return because of confusion, but I believe that's quite possible. I would like to see something done. I would like to see something done nationally because, firstly, I think the decision to go metric is a federal decision; secondly, very much of the information that has to be given should be given on a national scale, and I don't know whether we can . . . If we can do it provincially with little enough cost we should, but let's get it clear, I think there's a tremendous cost involved. I think that the Department of Consumer Affairs would have to be expanded tremendously just to deal with that precise problem of unit cost as related to every retailer, I suppose, every supermarket. There has to be some way to bring to people's attention. It means a very very substantial campaign, and I don't know the extent to which the government or the opposition is prepared to finance that kind of campaign, which I believe really should be done on the national scale. Advertising is done nationally, generally speaking, and the problem is a national one. I really think it should be.

Somebody could say, "You're hiding behind, you're not doing a job because you're saying that that should do it." Well, frankly, I do think that the cost duplicated over ten provinces is much much greater than it ought to be if co-ordinated. And all I can do is assure honourable members of this committee that it seems to me at every federal-provincial meeting I've attended in the last couple of years this is one issue I have pleaded with, that in contemplating the inflationary trend, in considering the increase in cost of living, we ought to do something to help the consumer make those choices which will assist in the better bargain being the one that is recognized. I have failed. Now I don't know whether it's just my inability to be convincing, but the fact is that neither the federal Liberal Government or the provincial Liberal Governments nor the Conservative provincial governments have been too enthusiastic. I can say I did get the support of my colleagues in our party from other provinces, but that wasn't really sufficient to be persuasive. If the point I'm making is similar to the point made by the Leader of the Opposition, maybe we could mount an all-party campaign to say to other provinces and to the Federal Government, "Let's get together." I don't know; I've heard Mrs. Plumptre criticized, I've heard her praised, but certainly they are trying to do a job. Effective or otherwise, they are trying to do a job. I think they're being undermined a good deal on a political basis, when in my opinion they ought to be non-political in their approach and I believe are non-political, but I've seen them accused on a political basis.

I want to encourage the Minister of Consumer Affairs to continue with his work, but I know very well that if we gave him his head he would be the busiest Minister with the largest staff, because there's no question in my mind that when one starts dealing with all the problems facing a consumer, there is not limit to the amount of time you should give, you could give, and you might be expected to give, except by a responsible management operation and by an opposition, which I believe would jump in right away and start talking about the tremendous increase in staff man years and all that research being . . . I've heard members of the opposition discuss research branches of various departments. I know they don't think they're worth anything. I know that they criticize them. How much now will the Leader of the Opposition pledge on behalf of his people? Will he support the Minister of Consumer Affairs if and when he comes along and asks for a tremendous increase in his operational budget to do those things which the Leader of the Opposition suggests he ought to be doing?

But in listening to what he said, I don't think he said, "You ought to be doing it", he kept saying, "How does the Minister view his job in this relation?" And the problem for me is that the Leader of the Opposition was careful enough not to say, "I think you ought to be doing these various things including the expenditure of this kind of money, including the enlargement of this amount of staff." I don't think he said that. To me what he said is: "How does the Minister think he should be going it?" Well that's fine. I'm sure the Minister will tell us how he thinks he should be doing it.

But I don't think that the Leader of the Opposition has been that helpful, especially talking about matters in inflation, which are certainly, admittedly - when I say "admittedly" I mean admitted by many other people of equal mental, intellectual, and academic capacity, as the Leader of the Opposition and people of his own political persuasion - that inflation is not a

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. CHERNIACK cont'd) . . . . Canadian phenomenon, nor is it a western phenomenon, nor is it a Manitoba phenomenon, nor do the causes of inflation arise here. Nevertheless one doesn't ignore it, one tries to make an effort. In my case I try to make a simple effort. I try to suggest that we get busy and stop this pushing of merchandising through advertising and this competition for the same dollar by unnecessary gimmickry, and I haven't succeeded. I'd be only too happy if more people got up and supported me in this effort. Maybe we could really do something about improving that problem in relation to that artificial form of inflation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Chairman, I'm sort of continually amazed in this session to listen to the former Minister of Finance, who has, I assume, been designated to follow me whenever I speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, he's not.

MR. SPIVAK: Well I think the record will show that. It may have been by accident, maybe by design, or otherwise, but I'm continually - Mr. Chairman, I'm continually amazed at the weaknesses of his arguments and further at the approach that is taken. We always have a recitation of history.

Here he had to go back to the former Member of River Heights who left this Chamber in 1966, so we're talking nine years, who he acknowledges was concerned enough to commence certain matters with respect to consumer affairs that ultimately led to the legislation that we now have. And I think that in dealing with that he dealt with past history and gave credit to the individual member and to the Minister and, you know, I think that's fair, I think it's also a credit to the government and the administration of which he was a part and which I later became a part, who furthered the work that he had done. But the other thing is that he brought in another suggestion, which by the way I think is worthy of debate in this House. And that's with respect to the question of unit pricing, and I think that's something that should be discussed and properly is a matter to be discussed. But I have discussed another matter which he was not really prepared to acknowledge as being the responsibility of the Minister, and that was the conversion of the metric system, and whether there is an obligation on the part of the Minister and part of the Department of Consumer Affairs to monitor that conversion of pricing, which is very different from the unit pricing he's suggesting, and to be in a position to see whether that is correct when it takes place and to protect the public's interest. Then I say, not asking him by way of a rhetorical question, I perceive that that is his responsibility. I perceive and I believe that that's the kind of thing he should be doing, and the answers that he gave to this House would indicate that it's a good idea, that but I hadn't thought of it. But he is the Minister of Consumer Affairs and he's the one and his department is the one who has to be thinking about this, and I don't believe that they need tremendous sums and globs of money in the Research and Planning Division of Consumer Affairs or of other departments to be able to handle that responsibility.

Now the other thing is the interesting argument that's been advanced and I want to just mention it for two reasons. The argument of somehow or other curtailing advertising with respect to a number of products that can be sold, so that you can't advertise a blue tub over a red tub, or different makes of cars, and the suggestion that somehow or other that should be limited because that is a cost with respect to a cost of goods, is sort of interesting and it I think puts the ex-Minister of Finance really in the same position as the former Member of Crescentwood, who in his argument in dealing with the question of toothbrushes said, not only should we not have different coloured toothbrushes, we should only have one company producing toothbrushes because that's all we need, one company producing one kind of toothbrush because that's all the people of this country need. And if we did that we would get the scale of production that's required. We would get the efficiency that's required. We would serve the need and we would have the elimination of waste and bring the cost down.

And I want the ex-Minister of Finance to realize that his position now is becoming closer with the former Member of Crescentwood, and I must say that having read his latest letter to Canadian Dimension which would say that he does not think very highly at this point of the former Member of Crescentwood, I find it rather strange to listen to his arguments and to find the similarity in terms of point of view. And that's interesting, because you see you can't have it both ways. You can't argue at this point that this is one of the reasons for inflation, and you can't argue to try and suggest because you want to sort of capture the imagination of the public

## SUPPLY - CONSUMER AFFAIRS

(MR. SPIVAK cont'd). . . . that advertising, the cost - one of the real reasons for the increased costs, without recognizing that the kind of position you are taking intellectually puts you in line and is very consistent with the position that was expressed over and over again by the former Member for Crescentwood, --(Interjection)-- the former member - oh, I'm sorry, I think everyone knew that I was referring to Mr. Gonick, and I will use his name and I think we all understand that - certainly it wasn't the last member whose views I think would be in the opposite direction of Mr. Gonick's in many respects. But, the thing that amazes me is that in discussing this issue that the recognition of really where you're going is something that is completely forgotten.

I want to talk to the ex-Minister of Finance with respect to inflation. I've only got one more minute but I want to make this point. Inflation is something that is probably in many respects beyond the control of governments in the Western world, but there are things that can be done to cushion the increased costs and pricing that's taken place, and that, Mr. Chairman, is to cut government spending. And that, Mr. Chairman, is to cut, at this time, excessive government taxation, to be in a position to be able to allow, to be able to allow the pricing to be able to resist the increasing --(Interjection)-- Yes, I will . . . well, Mr. Chairman . . . I have leave for this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It's 12:30, I am leaving the Chair to return at 2:30 this afternoon.