

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 22, 1979

Time: 10:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle -Russell): Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the first report of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House.

Your Committee met on November 30, 1978, February 27 and March 20, 1979, to review the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceeding of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and such other matters as were referred to it.

On November 30, 1978, the Committee accepted the resignation of Mr. Green and appointed Mr. Jenkins in his stead. On February 26, 1979, Mr. Green was substituted for Mr. Jenkins by resolution of the House.

Your Committee agreed that Item No. 7 contained in the Report of the Committee submitted on February 17, 1976 (p.p. 23 to 28, inclusive, Journals of the House, 1976), which set the quorum of the Committee of Supply, or any section thereof, at ten members be repealed. The quorum of the Committee of Supply, regardless of whether or not it is sitting in two sections, shall consist of ten members.

Your Committee has also agreed that, on motion of the Government House Leader, the House may adjourn at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday and permit the Committee of Supply to continue its deliberations from 8:00 p.m. onwards; the proceedings of the Committee of Supply shall be reported to the House during Routine Proceedings at the next sitting of the House.

Your Committee has also agreed to the following changes in the Rules and recommends them to the House:

Subrule 10(4) am.

1 THAT subrule 10(4) be amended by striking out the word "three" in the 3rd line thereof and substituting therefor the word "four".

Subrule 21(3)

2 THAT subrule 21(3) be struck out and the following subrules substituted therefor:

21(3) Where business, other than a motion on the Order Paper, is under consideration when the House adjourns for the day, that business is terminated when the House adjourns for the day and shall not be continued at the next or any subsequent sitting of the House.

21(4) Any debate on a motion made under subrule 27(1) or any debate on a grievance raised on a motion to go into Committee of Supply or Committee of Ways and Means is terminated when the House adjourns on the day of the debate and shall not be continued or resumed on the next or any subsequent sitting of the House.

Subrule 22(4) am.

3 THAT subrule 22(4) be amended by adding thereto, immediately after the word "member" in the 1st line thereof, the words "other than a resolution for an Order for Return or an Address for Papers".

Subrule 22(5) am.

4 THAT subrule 22(5) be amended by adding thereto, immediately after the word "member" in the 1st line thereof, the words "other than a resolution for an Order for Return or an Address for Papers".

Rule 29.1 added.

5 THAT the Rules of the House be amended by adding thereto, immediately after Rule 29 thereof, the following Rule:

29.1 Where in a debate a member quotes from a private letter, any other member may require

the member who quoted from the letter to table the letter from which he quoted but this rule does not alter any rule or practice of the House relating to the tabling of documents other than private letters.

Subrule 35(5) added.

6 THAT Rule 35 be amended by adding thereto, at the end thereof, the following subrule:

35(5) If the motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne is carried, the address shall be engrossed and presented to His Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, by such members of the House as are of the Executive Council and the mover and seconder of the motion.

Subrule 49(1) am.

7 THAT subrule 49(1) be amended by striking out the words "Orders for Returns and Addresses for Papers take precedence" in the last 2 lines thereof and substituting therefor the words "the item 'Orders for Returns, Addresses for Papers, referred for debate' under Private Members' business is reached".

Subrule 64(3) am.

8 THAT subrule 64(3) be amended by striking out the words "subject to an appeal to the House" in the 3rd and 4th lines thereof and substituting therefor the words "subject, except in the case of the Committee of Supply, to an appeal to the whole House and, in the case of the Committee of Supply, to an appeal to the Committee".

Rule 73.1 added.

9 THAT the Rules of the House be amended by adding thereto, immediately after Rule 73 thereof, the following Rule:

73.1 The Chairman of a Standing Committee or a Special Committee of the House, shall maintain order and shall decide all questions of order subject to an appeal to the Committee.

Rule 94 am.

10 THAT rule 94 be amended by striking out the words "page of the volume of the Statutes or Journals" in the 8th and 9th lines thereof and substituting therefor the words "the section of the Act or the page of the volume of the Journals of the House".

Subrule 105(1) am.

11 THAT subrule 105(1) be amended by striking out the word "six" in the 2nd line thereof and substituting therefor the word "ten".

Subrule 105(2) am.

12 THAT subrule 105(2) be amended by striking out the word "seven" in the 2nd line thereof and substituting therefor the word "eleven".

Subrule 106(1) am.

13 THAT subrule 106(1) be amended by striking out the figures and symbol "\$100.00" in the 5th line thereof and substituting therefor the symbol and figures "\$250.00".

Subrule 106(2) rep. and sub.

14 THAT subrule 106(2) be repealed and the following subrule substituted therefor:

106(2) Before a Private Bill incorporating a joint stock company with proposed authorized capital of more than \$100,000.00, or increasing the authorized capital of a joint stock company, is reported by the Committee to which it is referred, the Petitioner shall deposit with the clerk additional fees of \$25.00 for each \$100,000.00 or part thereof by which the authorized capital exceeds \$100,000.00 or is increased, as the case may be.

With respect to television coverage of the proceedings of the House your Committee has agreed that T.V. be accorded the same privileges of access to the proceedings of the Legislature and be subject to the same conditions regarding expenditures by the public as any other members of the news media. In essence, the conditions are as follows:

1. No additional installations or changes in the atmosphere of the House are required.
2. There is no dispute as between the various television outlets regarding the distribution of film.
3. Arrangements can be made by the Press Gallery to accommodate the T.V. media members.
4. There is no requirement that the Government become involved in the delivery of the programmes — i.e., provision of equipment, etc.

Subject to these conditions, it was agreed that the T.V. media would be permitted to film such proceedings of the Assembly as they saw fit and that only changes in the physical arrangements need be approved by the Committee. The Speaker was given authority to vary these conditions on special occasions such as the opening of the House, the Budget Speech, etc., to augment coverage.

Your Committee recommends these proposed changes to the House but suggests that amended Rules 105(1),(2) and 106(1),(2) not come into effect until the next session of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

MR. THOMAS BARROW (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a non-political statement.

It is a great pleasure for me today to stand here and to say a few words about a man who sits on this side of the House; a man well respected by all the members of this House. He's fluently bilingual — both Yiddish and French — a man who refereed in the CFL for over 18 years, so his duties come easy as Chairman and Deputy Speaker, although I do wish he would just say, "You are out of order," instead of penalizing you 15 yards.

Today, he's celebrating his 51st birthday, and he's on hold — 51st 0s and I know you would join me in wishing him well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson with a non-political statement.

MR. ABE KOVNATS (Radisson): Just to add to that non-political statement, Mr. Speaker, I

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS (St. Boniface): 51 my eye — 68.

MR. KOVNATS: I would just like to point out to the honourable members that it's me who the honourable member was making reference to, and I'm enjoying my birthday today, and I enjoy the association of being here in the Legislature with my friends. Thank you, sir.

MR. SPEAKER: What has transpired, I hope will not be construed as setting a precedent.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK (St. Johns): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, to ask him whether it is government policy to force the universities to increase tuition fees and to maintain an equal standard of fees for all three universities.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. KEITH A. COSENS (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, in answer to the Honourable Member's question, let me say first of all, that the government did not prescribe any particular fee increase this year.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Deputy Leader.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, the minister did not really answer my question. I asked him whether it is the government's policy so to do, the reason being that Dr. Duckworth of the University of Winnipeg is quoted to have said that he was ordered or recommended by the University Grants Commission, and that continuing financial erosion would result by defying the government appointed body, which allocates the funds. The question I asked the minister was, "Is it government policy," and I want to know whether he's prepared to answer whether it's his policy, the government's policy,

or whether he wants to lay the entire burden on the University Grants Commission, which is a government appointed agency, which is it?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to comment on what I understand is a press clipping, that the honourable member is referring to. There may have been discussions between the Grants Commission and the president of that particular university. The substance of those discussions, I'm not aware of at this time. I'm not prepared to comment on what may be written in the paper, or what supposedly the president has said. I would have to check with the University Grants Commission and the president to find out what in fact, did transpire.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Education whether he wants to leave the impression, which is apparent from what he says, that the government and he as minister, has had nothing whatsoever to do with the negotiations and decision of the University Grants Commission relating to insisting or enforcing a tuition fee at the university. Is he saying that whatever was done was done without his knowledge, or authority, or approval?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, I can again reply to the honourable member by saying that it is my understanding that long before any discussion took place between the Grants Commission and the president of the university, as it's referred to, the university had contemplated a fee increase.

MR. CHERNIACK: I wonder if the honourable, the minister is prepared to state whether he, and/or his government had anything whatsoever to do with increasing the tuition fees, or approving of it, or whether he absolves himself of any responsibility whatsoever, by laying it on to other bodies. Which is it? Is he taking responsibility as being a participant, or not?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. May I suggest to the honourable member that he is possibly being argumentative. Would the Honourable Member for St. Johns you care to rephrase this question?

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes, I wish to apologize, Mr. Speaker. I do not want to be argumentative, but, Mr. Speaker, I do want to be insistent, that we do get an answer that this minister accepts or rejects responsibility and participation in the fee increase; and he has not yet said so, and that is the reason, Mr. Speaker. So, I ask him in . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. May I suggest to the honourable member that it is quite within his right to ask for an answer to a question. He can only ask for it; he cannot demand and answer to a question. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Quite right, Mr. Speaker, I was apologizing to you for appearing to be argumentative in explaining the reason. But I want the Minister to answer: Does he as Minister of Education responsible for colleges and universities financing, accept responsibility or not for the fact that the universities are increasing their tuition fees and have been instructed so to do by the Grants Commission?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, I'll try to state quite clearly and explicitly, there is no recommendation has come from my department to the universities to increase their fees this year. That decision as far as I am aware was made independently by the universities and not by the Grants Commission nor through the direction of this government.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns with a fourth question.

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, then I would assume that the Minister of Education says that this was a voluntary decision of the universities not imposed by the Minister or by government or influenced or authorized or approved by the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the Day. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. LLOYD AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the First Minister. With the forthcoming Western Premiers Conference, can the First Minister indicate whether the provincial government has established any Position Paper that it will be submitting to that conference and could he indicate what priority items of discussion or initiation he will be advancing during the course of that conference?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. STERLING R. LYON (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend will be aware that there is an agenda for the conference which is in the public domain so far as I am concerned. I can say without any question that the two major points among a number of important points that will be discussed at the conference and in which Manitoba will be participating' will be the total grain handling situation, No. 1; and the western power grid, No. 2; and by not mentioning other items which are on the agenda I'm not in any way trying to say that they are not important. But those are two of the major items which we will jointly be addressing ourselves to on Monday and Tuesday in Prince George and on Wednesday actually making an onsite tour of the Prince Rupert facilities.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I thank the First Minister. I'd like to ask him as well, whether on the agenda and in the position taken by Manitoba, whether he intends to address the question of the jurisdiction over natural resources and to take issue with his counterpart in Alberta that the total control and jurisdiction should be held in provincial hands.

MR. LYON: Well, Mr. Speaker, the whole question of the economy is on the agenda and that will permit a wide-ranging discussion of many such matters as my honourable friend raises. The question of natural resources and the control of the provinces over their natural resources which has been traditional is a position on which there seems to be a fair amount of unanimity among all of the provinces. The only problem seem to come from my honourable friend's colleague, the Prime Minister of Canada, who seems to have rather funny ideas on it.

MR. AXWORTHY: As supplementary then, Mr. Speaker, can I take it from the First Minister's answer that he is indicating that he now agrees with the position taken by the Premier of Alberta, that the total control of pricing and distribution of energy resources should be within the provincial jurisdiction?

MR. LYON: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the First Minister whether or not the province will be submitting a proposal with respect to the grain handling problems in western Canada at this conference. Just to remind the First Minister, at the last meeting there was no provincial position submitted as far as I'm aware, and I would like to know whether there will be one this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend will be aware that these are discussions at which proposals and counter-proposals are put forward, and I'm sure that when the conference has been concluded that he will find himself able to agree with the proposals and the suggestions that not only Manitoba but all of the provinces will be sharing in. We don't claim to have any sole monopoly on wisdom in this field; we've got some ideas to advance as we did at the last conference. And I'm sure that my honourable friend, along with the grain farming community in Manitoba, will be in consonance with the general proposals and ideas that Manitoba, and I'm sure the other provinces, will be putting forward.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Honourable Minister of Economic Development. In view of the fact that the Minister of Labour had indicated to the House yesterday that he will assist the over 100 employees of the about to close Brandon Consumers Co-op in finding employment and/or retraining for employment, would the Minister of Economic Development indicate what he is doing to assist his colleague and to motivate the private sector in the Brandon area to assume their social responsibility and generate jobs for these people and thus prevent the level of unemployment from continuing to increase?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

MR. J. FRANK JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I'm not prepared to answer the first part of the question that he asks, because I haven't had meetings with my colleague on that subject, and I will do that, I will certainly have a meeting with my colleague to discuss the answer that he gave yesterday in the House.

We have three programs going at the present time that are involved with the Brandon area. We've had meetings with the whole Westman area on two occasions; things are going well, and if the honourable member would keep himself up to date, he'd know what was going on out there.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question. Is it likely that the Minister's bird program of which he is so proud and so staunchly defends may create some jobs in the Brandon area.

MR. JOHNSTON: It's not worth answering, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. My first question is to the Minister. Has the Consumer Association of Canada been in touch with the Honourable Minister with regard to computer price indexing in supermarkets and the use of automatic scanners that are now being introduced in two supermarkets in the greater Winnipeg area?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. JORGENSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. JENKINS: My second question to the minister is, is the minister considering Legislation, such as is in place, I believe, in six American states, where the use of automatic scanners is in vogue, that prices will still be marked on the articles so people will know what they are paying for when they go out of the supermarket, or go through the cash register.

MR. JORGENSON: We are giving consideration to that question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan with a final supplementary.

MR. JENKINS: A final supplementary. I asked the honourable minister, I believe, last week, if he would find out when the one cent per litre start-up subsidy for metricification would be coming off the present price of milk. I wonder if the minister has the answer now.

MR. JORGENSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. This one cent a litre added cost that had been implemented is due to come off on April 1st. To the best of my knowledge, it will be doing exactly that.

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

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the First Minister. In his answers to me yesterday, he indicated that I should not rely on Press statements. Could he indicate whether or not his newly appointed Executive Assistant has been manager of the Progressive Party Headquarters until last Monday?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: The answer is, no, Mr. Speaker. Prior to that time, the estimable lady in question, prior to her appointment to the present position — prior to that — she did hold that position.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the question to the First Minister and ask him if he is denying that the lady in question moved into his office as his Executive Assistant as of last Monday.

MR. LYON: The lady in question, Mr. Speaker, moved into that position on or about the day the Order-in-Council was passed. I think what's confusing my honourable friend, and I will straighten out his thinking for him, is that she occupied an office on the first floor for a number of weeks,

and approximately a week ago she moved up to the second floor, and I think that should assuage my honourable friend's real concerns about this matter.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A.R. (Pete) ADAM: Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the First Minister. I would ask the First Minister if it is the intention of his government to press the federal authorities for the retention of the Crowsnest rates, or is it the intention to discuss the change of these rates? What is the policy of this government in this regard?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, the whole topic of grain handling and transportation will be discussed at the Premiers' Conference as it was discussed at the federal-provincial meeting in January. The position of the government, and it can only be shortly stated, as I am sure it was the position of our predecessors, is to protect the legitimate interests of the farmers of Manitoba vis-a-vis the Crow rate, and at the same time to ensure through whatever means can be devised through mutual discussion that Manitoba farmers and western Canadian farmers generally, are able to take full advantage of the opportunity that lies ahead of them over the next five years to export the largest quantities of grain perhaps in our history and to have a handling and delivery system that is capable of doing that and to ensure that people participating in that receive a fair return on the dollar for their investment.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I thank the First Minister for his long reply, and would ask him if this includes what he has just said? Does that include retentions of the Crowsnest rates.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. May I suggest that the honourable member's question is repetitive. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. Has the Minister an answer for me now in regard to the question that I asked a few days ago, and last year, and during the Estimate of the Department of Health — that is the financial formula from the federal government in financing health with the provinces, and the amount received from the federal government under the last year of cost-shared formula, and now in this block funding? Has the Minister have an answer for me now?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, the member asked, at least put it on the record yesterday, and I said that I would read his specific question on the record and try and determine an answer for him.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, if it takes the Minister three days to read the record, how long will it be before I get the question? Is this another stall, or will we get the question while we're considering the Estimate of the Department of Health?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, the question was first directed specifically to myself yesterday in the question period, and my intention was to take it from Hansard, as I indicated in answer to the question yesterday, and will attempt to give him the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. WILSON PARASIUK (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I'll just wait I was going to direct a question to the First Minister in the absence of the Minister of Health, but since the Minister of Health is here, I'll now direct the question to him. Yesterday at a public meeting on the three health centres that are threatened with closure by this government, I was informed by representatives of these three health centres that they have not received all the data that the Minister indicated to us in the House had been provided to the health centres. They told me that they've only received some computer print-outs for the years 1975 and 1977. They've received no information for 1976, or for 1978, the latest year. Therefore, I would like the Minister to ensure that those health centres will receive all the data from the government so that they can in fact defend themselves fairly, and get an unbiased hearing.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L.R. (BUD) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, once again I reassure my honourable friend that the health centres will have made available to them all the raw data and statistical information that is provided to the government, that has been provided to the government, on this subject. It is my understanding they have received that. I told them I would check that out for them and ensure that they received it, if they have not.

MR. PARASIUK: A supplementary. I was told specifically by them that they haven't yesterday at that meeting. We were also informed by some 300 people representing various sections of the community that they had not been consulted with respect to the health centre reviews. The Minister told us specifically in the House a few weeks ago that the "community" had been consulted. Given the statements from representatives of the community, and clients of the health centres, that they haven't been consulted, could the Minister please tell us who he consulted when he decided to close them down or phase them out? -

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, while rejecting the latter contention in the remarks of the Honourable Member for Transcona, I can tell him that we have met with the boards of those health centres, and their directors and directorates. They presumably speak for the community individuals who make use of the health centres. Officials in my department including the top officials in my department have personally been conducting visits to the health centres, so that I reject his allegations out of hand and unconditionally.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated to us in the House that he had consulted with the community before the Health Services Commission had the meetings with the boards of the health centres. Therefore, before those meetings, who did the Health Services Commission and his government consult with when they made the decision to phase down these health centres? The doctor community, or the community at large and the clients of those health centres?

MR. SHERMAN: That's item 3(t) under my Estimates, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the Estimates process for the Minister of Resources, asked him if his staff would be agreeing to a meeting with the Poplar River fishermen regarding their concerns for the quotas on their fishing area for the summer season. On Tuesday this week, I also asked the Minister when his staff would be meeting with that group of fishermen. He answered me in the Estimates that his staff would meet. On Tuesday, he indicated that his staff had already met with the fishermen. I thank him for bringing it to my attention later that his staff did not meet with the fishermen, that he'd made a mistake in that regard. So I now ask him if he can indicate when his staff will be going to Poplar River to meet with the fishermen, to deal with their concerns regarding their fishing quotas for the summer season.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines and Natural Resources.

HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney): Mr. Speaker, the information given by the honourable member is not quite correct. There is an advisory committee for Lake Winnipeg, on which there is a member from the Poplar River area, and my department had been in consultation with that representative from the community, so it was a technicality as to whether or not they had met with the community. My department had been in consultation with a representative of the community, and that individual was asked to come back to the department with a firm indication of what the feeling was in the community, because the understanding that we had was that there was some difference of opinion, rather serious difference of opinion within the community. So when that response comes back, Mr. Speaker, then we will be following it up, and if a meeting in the community is necessary, then it will be held.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Agriculture. In light of the fact that the job descriptions that have been put forward for the new Federal-Provincial cost-sharing program on rural development are identical to the job descriptions of the 50 agricultural

employees who will be laid off at the end of this week. I would now ask the Minister of Agriculture does he intend to rescind that layoff order and provide for those job openings under the new program to be given to the agricultural employees who are scheduled to be laid off on Friday?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. JAMES E. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I perhaps should clarify the question for the member concerned, because it was a Federal Government stipulation that no employees would be able to be hired under the Canada Manpower Agreement, there isn't any capacity for governments to hire people under the new program.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Agriculture then, that in knowing about the layoffs that would be occurring for the past two months, has he made any efforts to change that condition so that these employees who will be laid off from his department who fit the job requirements under the new cost-sharing program would have first option, or in fact have preferential option on receiving those openings under the new agreement? .

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, we have been endeavouring throughout the total department the re-employment of people who were being laid off because of the ending of the program, the last Federal-Provincial program which ended last December; we have been striving to employ those individuals who are being laid off throughout the total department.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Speaker, I admire the efforts of the Minister to do that. It was my understanding that they have not been successful though in providing any re-employment, and therefore I would come back to the original proposition: will the employees who will be laid off at the end of this week, whose job qualifications identically fit those that will be required under the new Rural Development Program, will they be given first preference or treatment in the hiring for those new positions?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, if they are qualified for the job, they will be given consideration for re-employment.

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

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address a question to the Minister of Health. In view of the fact that his department is still studying the program entitled "Building the Pieces Together", could he indicate the justification for his order to the Alcoholism Foundation to stop promoting it as a teaching device?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. SHERMAN: The justification, Mr. Speaker, was the complaints and concerns and anxieties raised and directed to me from a number of parents who were concerned that the difficulties that their children seemed to be having in absorbing and adjusting to that particular instruction.

MR. CHERNIACK: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for that answer. Is he prepared to make available to members of this House the nature and extent of these concerns that were expressed so that we too could share with him the knowledge of complaints expressed by concerned parents? Could he also indicate whether it was an organized body or individual parents that were in touch with him?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. May I suggest to the honourable member he may be asking for information which may, of necessity, be of a confidential nature.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your suggestion as to what he may be referring to, but I guess he really knows what he is referring to and could then respond on that.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I can certainly do that. I would expect that this subject would be very much a part of our examination of the AFM appropriation in my Estimates. I certainly can draw no conclusions that it was part of an organized effort. I do not have any evidence of that; it was individual letters and phone calls and call in person.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, in confirming with the Honourable Minister that there is no doubt that there will be discussion during his Estimates on this program, may I ask him to be ready to respond with a report on the investigation or study which has been taking place so that the matter can be settled as to whether or not this is a dangerous or helpful program?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet yesterday sent me a copy of a bill from a constituent of his who had been invoiced by a hospital for a stay in hospital beyond the point in time at which he was medically discharged. I can report to the honourable member that there's been no change in procedures over the past 20 years in that respect, Mr. Speaker. The patient was medically discharged — hospitals find it incumbent to try to discharge patients after they're medically discharged and they naturally exert some influences in order to effect that. In this case, they have furnished the patient with an invoice for a seven-day stay beyond discharge date.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister would indicate to me whether there has been such an occurrence previous to this particular one?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I checked with the Health Services Commission on that, and my answer, my impression would be, "yes", there certainly has been, there have been, and there will continue to be. It's discretionary on the part of the hospital as to how much pressure they want to exert. They cannot claim a refund or claim additional funding from the Health Services Commission, because they're not paid on a per diem basis for situations of this kind. They have to find that money within their own budgets. It's discretionary as to whether they want to press the case, or write it off as a bad debt.

MR. USKIW: Would the minister then explain to me why it was that the assistant administrator of the hospital indicated to me just yesterday that they were instructed recently by the Health Services Commission to levy those fees.

MR. SHERMAN: No, I can't, other than that obviously if that took place, it was result of a conversation between the administrator of the hospital and the Health Services Commission, but the Health Services Commission informs me that the hospitals use discretionary strategy in this regard. There have been cases in which they have, I assume, written charges of this kind off as a bad debt; but if they're collectable, they try to collect them.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, I would then like to know from the minister, whether or not there will be a lien placed on the assets of any patient who does not pay the bill.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, that's up to the hospital, Mr. Speaker. The hospital has got a budget to live within, and it's up to the hospital.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health indicated that there has been an instruction to all hospitals by the Health Services Commission, that these fees must be collected. It is then incumbent on this government to tell us whether it is their policy to impose liens on the assets of patients' properties throughout the province.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, what I'm telling the honourable member is that there has been no change in the existing procedures and the commission advises me that this has been the practice followed for the past 20 years. There has been no change; if they haven't issued liens in the past, then they're not issuing liens today.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, yesterday I accepted a question as notice from the honourable member for St. Vital. The question was in regard to the annual traditional luncheon that is hosted by the government for the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, a group of very public-spirited and conscientious citizens, who give of their time and talent and energy to help operate the school divisions of this province. I can tell the honourable member that this tradition has been going on

for 30, 40, probably 50 years — the oldest member of my department can't remember when it wasn't carried on by the government in power — I suppose a recognition of the fine work that these people are doing. As far as the details are concerned, last year some 472 participants attended the luncheon, and the cost to the government was some \$3,425.00. This year, they expect to have some 500 registrants at their conference, and the cost will be in the neighbourhood of some \$3,800.00.

Now, the member in asking that question, I certainly would not want to impute any particular motives, but if he is telling me that members on that side of the House think this is a tradition that should be discontinued, I wish he would state it clearly, so I can convey that to the trustees tomorrow, when I speak to them.

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

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable minister for the information. If there is to be any question of not proceeding with this particular luncheon, perhaps he would like to ask the trustees, when he sees them, whether they, the trustees, would be prepared to give up their luncheon in order that some under-privileged members of Winnipeg's core area may go to camp this year. Would he like to put that question to the trustees, and see which choice they would like to make?

MR. COSENS: Mr. Speaker, in just reacting to the member's statement, might I say in answer — I wonder if he had the same concern when some \$40 million were going out the window with Saunders Aircraft.

MR. WALDING: Not quite as much concern, Mr. Speaker, as when \$91 million were going out to CFI.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface. Order please.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I wish the House would extend the courtesy to the Honourable Member for St. Boniface to let him ask his question.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask the Minister of Health, if he doesn't realize that he has misled the House on his answer to the Member for Selkirk. Didn't the minister say there was no change at all in the last 20 years? Is the minister saying that before his administration, there were any times that the hospital kept patients and they weren't paying for it, that they weren't getting the money? The minister has said today, that they will not get the money. There's been a change, Mr. Speaker, and it's misleading. Does the minister remember that there's been a change in the block funding now, and therefore, there's no money from the federal government — if the hospitals are told that they're not going to have any money, this is something new.

And secondly, Mr. Speaker, shouldn't the first thing, the most important thing to do, is find out where this patient can go, before worrying about 20 years ago? And isn't there another policy that now, because of the change in funding, that now the hospital can charge the same rate as a person in a personal care home? And are you going to put a person on the street? Apparently the only place they can go is with somebody that's 88 years old? So, is the intention to put these people on the street, or send them a bill of over \$100 a month? The question is this — when you have a policy now that you can't charge for the first time that they can charge the same per diem rate.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please.

MR. DESJARDINS: Now, the question is this, why are those people not charged the per diem rate in this hospital, why? You made your speech already, you keep your trap shut — ass-hole.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I didn't realize that we were discussing the entire subject area of health funding in the nation. We're not talking about changes from 50-50 cost-sharing the block funding; we're not talking about changes with respect to panelling for personal care homes.

The question that was asked of me by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, was whether or not there was now a policy enunciated by this government to lien properties of persons who had been medically discharged and were still in hospital and were being invoiced for that hospital stay. My answer to him was, the answer that I received from the Health Services Commission that

there is no change in practice or procedure for as long as they can remember going back as they suggested to me some twenty years. What happens is, it's discretionary on the part of the hospital. It always has been.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface with a supplementary question.

MR. DESJARDINS: But, Mr. Chairman, didn't the Minister say that this hospital would not receive any funds for those days that that patient stayed and saying that this existed for the last twenty years. —(Interjection)— You did. You said there's been no change in policy. So that's . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. May I suggest that the Honourable Member for St. Boniface is arguing rather than asking a question. The time for Question Period having expired, we'll proceed with Orders of the Day. The Honourable Government House Leader. Order please. The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I will enable the Honourable Member for St. Boniface to continue that debate in just a moment. But before I do I would like to announce that it is the intention of the government to call Bills on Tuesday. Wednesday, of course, as you know the House is not sitting and in the event that the Estimates of the Department of Health are not concluded by that time, the Minister of Health will not be here and . . .

A MEMBER: When?

MR. JORGENSEN: On Tuesday . . . not be available on Tuesday. He has a commitment that he finds necessary to keep. So we will be calling Bills on Tuesday and then whatever department of Estimates is being considered in Room 254 will move in here.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Manitoba Telephone System 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 Radisson in the Chair for Health and Community Services, and the Member for Emerson in the Chair for Municipal Affairs.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY — MUNICIPAL AND URBAN AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Albert Driedger (Emerson): Committee come to order. I'd like to refer the members of the committee to Page 71, Item 3, Resolution 94 — 3(d). The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday we ended off at 4:30, and I posed a question to the Minister of Municipal and Urban Affairs. In light of last night's tabling of the city council budget, I want to again reiterate my question, and ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs whether he favours the policy of increasing the user pay fees on transit buses rather than supporting the transit operations from the overall budgets in terms of subsidy from the province and the city? Whether he is in favour of those increases in user fees.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

HON. GERALD W.J. MERCIER (Osborne): Mr. Chairman, on the way down here — and unfortunately I had to miss question period — on the way down here I had the opportunity of listening to Mr. Harry Cohen, the president of the Amalgamated Transit Union in the city, on a radio show, stating again that the transit fares in the City of Winnipeg are the lowest in Canada. And that's a decision that will be made by city council as to what level the transit fares will be in the city. It's not a question of . . . what I favour is irrelevant.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, now I wonder who is sensitive about issues of whether fees should be raised or items should be discussed or not. It really boils down to a matter of provincial policy,

as to whether they see public transportation within the City of Winnipeg as such, and the use of which should be encouraged as greatly as possible. And is the Minister then saying that even though there may be an increase in fares, that there will be more riders in transit, that public transportation will be utilized more than it has been in the past, and that he is prepared to accept the funding of public transit through the user pay principle versus the ability to pay in terms of subsidizing transit through general revenues from the province and the city.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I have always favoured on City Council, and now, a policy with respect to public transit, that would encourage the utilization of public transit. That's one of the reasons why, in establishing the base grant of \$30 million this year, which is \$1 million more than what the city expected on their current account, there are sufficient revenues in there to cover 50 percent of the operating deficit for subsidy of the transit operation. That's included in the grant, and I assume that they will continue that operation and continue to encourage transit. That is the policy of the City of Winnipeg, and it's one with which I favour.

MR. URUSKI: The minister hasn't . . . maybe I'm missing his point in his answer but he is certainly not indicating to me that in the event. . . Is he telling me that the city has enough funds within their budget to maintain the transit fees at the rate that they are, and there are enough funds from the Province of Manitoba to assist the city in maintaining the transit fees at the rate they are because of the increase — I think he said \$1 million over and above what the city had expected from the province — the city, with the increased money, could have kept the transit fees at the rate they are? Is he telling me that?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the city have the complete jurisdiction to do what they wish with the \$30 million.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 3.(d) — the Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: I would like to ask the minister as to what then is the provincial policy towards transportation within the City of Winnipeg? Could he indicate what the provincial stance and the provincial policy is with respect to transportation, public and private transportation within the City of Winnipeg? How does he view the provincial role versus those two areas within the City of Winnipeg? How does he view the province's role in this area?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, we have included in the \$30 million unconditional grant, sufficient amounts to cover the cover the operation of the transit system and the former policy of 50 percent of the operating deficit, which indicates I think, our support for public transit. And I have indicated the amount of that grant will be increased from year to year, but the final determination as to how that money will be utilized, will be made by City of Winnipeg Council.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Did the Member for Virden wish . . . were you going to speak?
The Leader of the Opposition.

MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk): Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister what policy is intended with respect to the adjustment of this grant, and we have established a block funding grant, \$30 million. What is the approach or policy of the minister pertaining to future adjustments of that block fund?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I gave to the members' opposite a copy of my letter dated January 12th, 1979, to the City of Winnipeg. On Page 4 of that letter, in the second paragraph, I perhaps can read it into the record, indicate "the province has considered the need to determine future changes to the block grant in 1980 and beyond in a manner which will reflect repeating demands upon provincial resources and a desire to advise the city well in advance of its adoption of the next year's fiscal budget. Therefore, any future increases to the block fund will approximate the anticipated rate of increase in provincial expenditures." And it goes on to say "in avoiding a rigid formula expect to advise the City of Winnipeg of its 1980 block grant by December 31, 1979."

I've also indicated during the course of our committee meetings that subsequent to that, the Urban Affairs Committee of Cabinet met with the official delegation of the city to discuss this matter, and the city indicated satisfaction with the amount of \$30 million for this year's budget, but did indicate they felt the amount, the base amount of the grant should be reviewed in anticipation of future years capital expenditures. And we have undertaken to review the base amount of the grant

with the city during the course of this year prior to determining a figure for next year.

MR. PAWLEY: If I could relate to the Member for St. George's question pertaining to transit and the block funding grant, it would seem to me, Mr. Chairman, that it's of interest, not only to the City of Winnipeg, but also to the entire provincial community, that there be a public transit system — an economic public transit system — that will discourage, by the very fact of its attractiveness, would discourage congestion in the downtown part of Winnipeg. I think that's a provincial community concern, not just a City of Winnipeg concern. And what concerns me about the Minister's statements, is that he appears to be prepared to kind of slough this off as only a City of Winnipeg concern, and I would like to, for instance, we've seen the fact that the city has had to charge 10 cent Dash bus fees. And the result of that is, I understand, little use of the Dash bus. Prior to that, there was considerable use of the Dash bus, and thus acted as an inducement to prevent the congestion of cars in the downtown part of Winnipeg.

Now does the Minister not feel that there is a provincial community concern, as well as a city community concern, insofar as any future policy position, insofar as his government is concerned, with the City of Winnipeg on transit?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I think if we're going to deal with the province as a whole, part of that will be discussed in the next item, which deals with urban transit grants in the rest of the province.

But I want to indicate, I want to go back, Mr. Chairman, a few years, and in fact give credit to the previous government, because when I was on Council and Chairman of the Works and Operations Committee responsible for the operation of the Winnipeg Transit, we, on Council, established a policy of encouraging public transit, and at one time the provincial contribution to the subsidy of public transit was very low indeed. And we, at City Council, repeatedly requested from the provincial government a greater contribution, and through the years '73, '74, '75, '76, were successful in persuading the previous government to arrive at a formula of contributing to 50 percent of the subsidy of the operation of the transit and I was complimentary to the former Premier and the previous government in agreeing to that, because I think that did make a significant contribution towards the operation of transit.

And, Mr. Chairman, that is still the policy of the City of Winnipeg, to encourage public transit, and included in the \$30 million block funding agreement is a sufficient amount of funds to cover that policy. I've said the amount of the grant will be increased from year to year; the City of Winnipeg still has the lowest transit fares in Canada, and I am satisfied that the Council are responsible enough and have sufficient vision of the future and the energy demands that we have, and the kind of support that should go to public transit that that policy of encouraging the use of public transit will be continued.

And the only thing we are discussing here, essentially, Mr. Chairman, seems to be a concern on the part of some of the members opposite, as to whether or not City Council are responsible enough to continue that policy, and I am satisfied that through the past approaches of City Council that they will, that they recognize the importance of public transit and that policy of encouraging the use of public transit will continue.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to say in response and lead to a question. The minister keeps inferring that members of the opposition would some way or other like to assume responsibility from duly elected members of the City of Winnipeg, and I am sure he would like to probably leave that impression so far as municipalities as a whole are concerned in the province.

I think there is a difference, a very distinct and sharp difference, between the approach, the minister, our approach. I think that insofar as the approach of the opposition is concerned, we recognize the importance and the fundamental role that municipalities have in the province — they're creatures of the province — but in so saying, we accept a continuing responsibility on the part of the province to provide input, so that at least, Mr. Chairman, there is opportunity for choice on the part of municipal leaders. And what I dislike about what is happening is, that that opportunity for choice of direction is being undermined by the passive and retrenchment attitudes of the present government.

For instance, the news this morning — and I don't think it's just coincidence — admission by city that there's been a reduction in services, increases in user fees, whether we look at transit fare, or ambulance fees increase, at the same time an increase in taxes. So that there's something very much astray insofar as the approach of the government, and just to say "well, that's their baby — that's their responsibility," I don't believe is sufficient.

I think that the province has to ensure that the municipal governments have the resources to carry on, and that may mean some conditional grants. I don't think it's enough just to provide block funding, and then escape any further responsibility for ensuring that there's a transit system in the City of Winnipeg that will prevent congestion, as much as is possible. There will always be a certain amount of congestion in the downtown part of Winnipeg. I would be concerned, for instance, what is happening to the Dash buses. They were well used, some time back. The city found that it had no choice but to impose a 10 cent fare, and now they're used very infrequently. We see an increase in congestion in the downtown part of the city — although I'm sure no city councillor would have wanted it that way — they've now ended up with no alternative, with no choice, due to the omissions and neglect on the part of a government which is very very quickly retrenching and retreating from any direct leadership in the field of urban affairs in the Province of Manitoba.

I don't think it's enough for the Minister to continually say, "Well, those opposition fellows over there, they would like to just take over the running of the municipalities and make the decisions for the municipalities." What we want to ensure, from the Minister, that municipalities are not restricted from free decision-making, due to the fact that his government has seen fit to slough off more and more financial and policy leadership in the Province of Manitoba. I'd like the Minister to comment on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I want to be as charitable as possible, —(Interjection)— well, I will be. Because, if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition thinks that a 10 cent fare on the bus is really discouraging the use of transit, then

there's no way that I could convince him of anything. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that the cost of riding public transit is so low compared to the use of operating a private automobile, that obviously it's not the economic difference that is stopping people from using public transit, because you just have to think of the cost of an automobile, its maintenance, insurance, upkeep is so phenomenal compared to the cost of a monthly bus pass, which is somewhere between \$12.50 a month. There's just absolutely no comparison in terms of cost. But it's a whole public attitude that has to be changed, or a review of the kind of service that has been supplied. And there have been many improvements, I grant, in service in terms of Express bus routes that have been increased on major highways — Henderson Highway, Pembina Highway, Portage Avenue — but there is just an unwillingness, for one reason or the other, on the part of the public, many people in the public, to use public transit.

I think a number of people have been converted in the past few years, and no doubt as the cost of gasoline and operation of a car increase, more and more people will turn to the use of public transit. So, I have to project, Mr. Chairman, the fact that the cost is a major impediment to the use of public transit generally.

Mr. Chairman, I have to repeat once again, for about the fourth or fifth time in the last 20 minutes, the fact that the Province of Manitoba is including the block funding grant sufficient amount of money to cover the subsidy to the City of Winnipeg Transit System. And while they certainly can't point to any real change in the operation of the Transit System that are unjustified, I think they will have to wait, along with us, and see what happens in future years.

We've indicated we're prepared to review that amount, to increase that amount, in future years in accordance with the rate of expenditures of the province, and we'll just have to determine and see what happens in the future. I don't share the doom and gloom of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: I would be very interested if the Minister has figures, which I'm sure he would have access to, as to the number of passengers that would daily, for instance, use the Dash buses prior to the imposition of the fare, and the number that are using the Dash buses now. I know that there's quite an impression that there's been a very sharp reduction, and that in fact very few now are using those Dash buses.

The concern that I have is that, due to the fact the city found itself with no alternative but to increase the user fees because of inaction on the part of this government, that they'll now say "Well, the Dash bus service isn't economic and we'll drop it." And then you're going to find a lot of the pensioners and others in the downtown part of the city, for example, that can't walk far, having to take a cab. I say that directly relates to the omission on the part of this government to provide a reasonable level of financial assistance.

I'd like to just take another instance — the announcement this morning of a substantial hike in ambulance fees. I believe it's \$60 to \$80 —(Interjection)— \$40 to \$60, and I believe that to be a matter of concern. I know the Minister will respond by saying, "Well, in the block fund there

is excluded the ambulance service grant". But what is, I think, happening is that the city is finding itself more and more in a financial squeeze; is having to look to more and more user fees to try to make up for a reduction of costs in grants that it's receiving total-wise, in relationship to the increasing inflation, and again is finding itself in the untenable position of having to increase user fees on something such as ambulance service, which again I believe to be a matter of provincial community concern, and not just City of Winnipeg concern.

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, of course under that particular grant comes from the Department of Health and Community Services. Now, outside of the City of Winnipeg, the grant, according to my information, generally covers the whole cost of the services. In many cases, volunteers, etc. or municipalities band together to provide a service in that area. But many people in the rural area, I'm sure, would wait a substantial length of time in the rural area before they got an ambulance. I'm sure they would be lucky in many cases if they got an ambulance within half an hour. But I'm sure there are members here who could advise me, but there would be long travelling distances.

In the City of Winnipeg they decided that they want an ambulance service which will have a 5 minute response. Now if that's the kind of service you want, that's the kind of service you have to pay for. I would suggest though that this a particular grant that comes under the DEPARTMENT OF Health and Community Services and if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would like, he can go into the other Committee Room and ask the Minister who is dealing with his Estimates there.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister's personal view, really at this point, to the Minister's position as to what he feels about a 50 percent increase in the cost of ambulance service in the course of one year to the . . . —(Interjection)— another 20 percent next fall? —(Interjection)— 100 percent increase? No, a 50 percent increase in the space of one year. Is the Minister concerned sufficient about this that he would want to discuss this matter in his liaison meetings which I'm sure he has with the City of Winnipeg as to whether there's any alternative by which this can be prevented? The minimum wage hasn't been increased, the wage earner is pretty well kept down to a 5 or 6 percent increase. The old age pensioner is squeezed heavily and depends a great deal on this service. Is there any action on the part of the provincial government to try to assist the city in preventing what I'm sure is a very distasteful increase as far as they're concerned as well?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, this is an area of responsibility that the previous Council asked the previous government to assume in total as one that related more to the health care field and therefore one of which the provincial government had more responsibility for. The previous government rejected that argument. The new City Council, I understand through the newspaper, have been discussing raising that subject again with our government and I would expect that over the next few months we may be engaged in some discussion with them on that particular subject but I can't indicate what result will occur but it will appear to be a matter that the city will be raising again with the provincial government.

MR. PAWLEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I wasn't suggesting that the province should assume responsibility because I think a service such as this is best decentralized and handled through the municipal level. But I'm specifically dealing with the question of financial support. Is the Minister satisfied that more assistance could not be more forthcoming from the province in order to prevent this type of increase?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm sure in view of what I think will be representations made by the city to the province, that the Minister of Health may wish to review the amount of the grant. I would say one thing. It would be interesting to know, Mr. Chairman, and perhaps this can be part of the review, how many people have Blue Cross which provides insurance for this charge. I'd be interested in knowing what that figure was to know how many people were insured for that as well as semi-private coverage, etc.

MR. PAWLEY: Can I assume or am I fair in assuming from what the Minister is stating that the ambulance fee increase will be under review by the Minister of Health and assume by himself as well as to steps that might be undertaken in order to prevent such a sharp increase in the ambulance fees this year.

MR. MERCIER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I expect the city, as I said, through the media, I understand

will be raising this subject again that they raised with the previous government as to whether or not we're prepared to assume responsibility for the operation of the ambulance service, and as the Leader of the Opposition indicates he rejects that idea but in the review some of these other areas, they have to be considered, the amount of the grant and the insurance coverage through Blue Cross. But these are really matters, Mr. Chairman, that will be dealt with through the Minister of Health and Community Services whose department at the present time makes these grants to municipalities throughout the province.

MR. PAWLEY: In those same discussions will there be any discussion as to whether or not anything further can be done in respect to the transit system in the City of Winnipeg in order not only to deal with costs but to try to bring about greater use of that transit system to prevent congestion to the downtown part of the city? It seems to me, what is happening is that there is a steady growth now developing in the suburban areas of the commercial shopping centres and the detriment of the downtown Winnipeg. So not only is downtown Winnipeg suffering housing-wise, recreational-wise, and other fields but even from the area of demolition of commercial activity.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, as I have indicated we will be reviewing with the city this year the base amount of the \$30 million increase and the rate of increase for next year. And no doubt during the review of that with the City consideration will have to be given to programs which the city may wish to undertake in the areas that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition raises.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to pursue the matter of urban transportation a little further in that, as I understand it the Minister's indicated that the block grant adequately provides for any contingency with respect to covering the deficits of the transit system in Winnipeg. But at the same time, I believe the Minister indicates that the city will have the discretion as to how it will use the block fund. In essence, am I correct in understanding the Minister, that the city may decide to go total 100 percent user fee to cover the total cost of transportation and that would not alter the block funding provision or the policy of this government. Am I correct in making that assumption?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, as I have indicated, the city has the responsibility of determining how they wish to use and allocate the \$30 million block funding grant. Again, one of the members opposite raises the spectre in the fear of that kind of irresponsible use of money and the whole direction and attitude from that side is based on the fact that the councillors do not have sufficient responsibility to deal satisfactorily with the use of these moneys, and I have to simply reject that argument. It's hypothetical, and it's based on irresponsibility on the part of elected members of City Council.

MR. USKIW: I very much disagree with what the minister is saying. The City Council may very well feel it is quite legitimate to go to a user fee system entirely, and to use the \$30 million in other areas, or at least all of it in other areas; and they may feel quite justified in doing so on the basis that the province is not providing them with a sufficient amount of capital support, or financial support. We may have a situation where the City Council may simply throw their hands up and say they can no longer support public transit out of their particular tax base, since the province has withdrawn support from its tax base; so that in essence, it's quite within the realm of possibility that we may end up with the user fee system entirely. Now, I would hope that doesn't happen, but as I see it, the minister is saying that that could happen, he doesn't think it will, but as far as he's concerned, if it does happen, he is powerless to do anything about it, given the fact that he's committed to this principle of city financing — provincial granting of funds for city financing, for city problems.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, once again we have indicated the supposition that the amount will not be adequate. City Council has indicated that the amount is adequate, it was \$1 million more than they expected to receive on current account. They have certainly not taken any irresponsible decisions this year, in the use of these funds. We still have the lowest fares in Canada, and the rest of the member's argument is based again, on the irresponsible use of these funds and I have to reject it. —(Interjection)—

MR. USKIW: I have not at all indicated that the city would be responsible. It may be a question of allocation funds that they may have not much choice about. —(Interjection)—

MR. MERCIER: I've indicated for the eighth time now, the satisfaction of City Council with the amount of the money this year, the fact that some members have indicated a concern over the establishing this amount as a base for future years to be increased, and I have said repeatedly that we have pledged with the City to review the amount of that grant throughout this year in determining an amount for next year. The results of that review and the allocation, or whatever amount it is for next year will determine whether or not it is satisfactory. So the member's comment is hypothetical, and simply based on the premise that the amount will not be sufficient and I reject that.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the minister may be right, he may be entirely wrong and only the future will reveal that, and I accept that. We, of course, have to be worried about what the future holds for us with respect to the City of Winnipeg. What really is a concern is the attitude . . .

MR. MERCIER: I can assure the member right now that he doesn't have to worry. Things are in good hands.

MR. USKIW: What really is a matter of concern to us is the attitude that the government has no role in trying to help the City of Winnipeg plan its future; that somehow, we are not a party to the development of Winnipeg, and that is the disaster that I see in the present government's position. If we're talking about moving towards greater utilization of public transportation, for example, I'm sure that there are mechanisms that could be employed to bring about greater use of public transportation that would be in the public interest, and this is something that I would have thought the province would have had an interest in, rather than sloughing off the total responsibility on to City Hall. There are different cities in different parts of the world that have used various techniques towards encouraging the general public to use public transportation, and indeed, to discourage the private automobile as a means of conveyance to and from the workplace.

As an example, you know, I think that it's worthwhile to have our urban affairs people work along with the City of Winnipeg in the area of innovation, the area of promoting new ideas on how to cut down the flow of traffic. I suppose one could illustrate an example or two, which we haven't tried, but couldn't we have a policy, for example, whereby we would give provincial support to programs that would encourage car-pooling? In other words, we could encourage the City of Winnipeg to designate one lane on a multiple lane street for car-pools, taxis and buses only during the rush hours. There's an example, you know, there are many things that can be done to enhance, enhance the flow of traffic and the movement of people to and from their places of work; but if the province says, "This isn't our role. We don't really care what kind of environment we have in the City of Winnipeg, that's the responsibility of the people in Winnipeg," then I think it's a sad state of affairs, Mr. Chairman. I think the province should be involved, it should care and should direct funds in a way that would enhance the total environmental situation in the urban area.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I would just have to go back for a moment and attempt to recollect the figures, but as I recollect the figures with respect to the use of transit in the city of Winnipeg by the public, that the city of Winnipeg had the highest per capita ridership of all cities in Canada, I think with the exception of — it could have been Montreal and Toronto who had the subway — which obviously contributes to a higher per capita ridership.

I suggest that there have been many improvements in the public transit system within the past few years; that that's a distinct policy of the City of Winnipeg to do that. We would certainly be prepared to co-operate with the City if there was anything that we could do to assist them in accomplishing or furthering that policy and we'll continue to meet with them on a regular basis, in order to determine if there's anything we can do in that regard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to get some clarification, first from the minister on some of his statements. I interpret from his remarks that he and his colleagues were taking the position that the Province of Manitoba has a basically neutral stance, as far as the City of Winnipeg is concerned; that it has a neutral stance that it is not in the business of establishing any set of provincial priorities or strategies or directions or guidelines in respect to the development, shaping, whatever of the City of Winnipeg and that they simply say, "We will provide a set amount of money per year for the City Council to dispense with as they see fit, according to some formula based

upon population and per capita grants. Is that a fair interpretation that we now have a provincial policy in neutrality as far as the City is concerned?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable Minister.

MR. MERCIER: No.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, if we do not have a policy neutrality, would the minister please indicate exactly what is the policy? What are the specific objectives that the Minister and his colleagues have in terms of the growth, development, future of the City of Winnipeg at this stage?

MR. MERCIER: Obviously, Mr. Chairman, one could speak for the rest of the day on a general question like that. But the member refers to the growth, development, etc. of the city in that particular area. Our government is continuing to participate in one of the most important areas of concern to the city, and that is the review of their development plan — transportation planning — and that participation has been continuing for the past, at least, two years, and is ongoing. I think the member would agree that when he refers to the growth and development of the city, that that is one of the most significant areas in which there can and should be provincial government participation, because that will be the basis, I would suggest, for a lot of policy decisions to be made for the future of the City of Winnipeg.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear the Minister respond that way. But as he well knows, a plan really is simply a piece of paper until it's implemented. Then it becomes a plan. Would the Minister acknowledge that from the preliminary reports issued by the Development Plan Review Team, that they are indicating there's going to have to be substantial capital investments in the City of Winnipeg over the next five years — major capital investments — in the area of infrastructure, particularly the redevelopment of the downtown servicing network. There will have to be major capital investments in transportation, major capital investments in housing, particularly in the restoration and upgrading of older buildings. There will have to be major capital investments for the redevelopment of certain blighted areas. And while not playing any amount of numbers I guess even if you throw in the aquaduct for good measure, with a water supply system, we're probably talking in terms of \$200 — \$300 — \$400 worth of additional capital.

It's also clear from statements made by city council during the past year, that their lending capacity I think they set it about \$50 million a year, and that therefore that they are about 75 percent short on an annual basis of what their capital requirements are simply to keep up with some of those objectives.

Now if the Minister is saying that he is going to involve the province in the implementation of development plan review recommendations, can we assume then, that at the present time he is beginning to put together the arrangements for a major capital investment program for the City of Winnipeg, based upon those recommendations?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the Winnipeg Development Plan Review has not yet been considered by council as a whole and the review process is still underway. So the question is very hypothetical.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, the Minister may think it's hypothetical.

MR. MERCIER: I mean in terms of talking about specific amounts of moneys for certain projects.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I would agree with the Minister that the specific recommendations haven't come together as a package yet, but certainly there has been a substantial number of preliminary and interim reports that have both been submitted to the Development Plan Team, of which the province is a member. They have included substantial numbers of recommendations a variety of kinds. I would assume, on those grounds, that there is some anticipation of what could be expected and I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the city council deliberations on a development plan review would be highly conditioned by the expectations or the guidelines set for them by the province as to what they think is possible or feasible in terms of capital requirements.

Now, we may get into chicken and egg propositions, but it does come down to, there has to be some parameter set so we can say what, within those recommendations, are likely or reasonable. We know the total universal recommendations probably would be far too expensive.

So until the province is prepared to set some kind of capital program — and what I'm saying is, and I guess I've argued for it before — should there not be some kind of five year capital program, which I believe, if I'm not mistaken, that the Minister in his former capacity used to argue for himself when he attended municipal-provincial meetings, that there be a five year provincial capital program so that the city could then begin to gauge its own planning and its own investments accordingly, and could we not, or should we not have that kind of indication now from the province what they think, within the total capital market, they are prepared to put forward for those additional programs?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, we have indeed reviewed a proposed five year capital development program with the city and this relates to the concern expressed by some members of city council that the block funding amount, and the formula rate of increase for the future may not be adequate — although it's adequate this year — may not be adequate in future years. That's why we've undertaken a review of city council during the course of this year, prior to establishing base grant for future years — their needs and their concerns — so that when that amount is established for next year and the formula for future years, then the city will be assured of a definite source of funds — an amount of funds — something that was not specifically available previously.

Now Now I would think that the Winnipeg Development Plan Review, somewhere during the course of the next few years when the City of s Winnipeg determines what it priorities are particularly, and we engage in discussions with the city on that, may very well also affect another review of the block funding grant to the city. But the Development Plan Review will have to be completed first and certainly some general discussion with the city, as to what their priorities are. I' prepared to meet with them and discuss that with them, so that together we can have some understanding of the direction in which the city would desire to move and on which we agree on a long-range capital development program.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure in my own mind what the Minister is saying. He is saying that there are really two stages to the provincial government capital allocation to the city. One is one that will be reviewed immediately in terms of immediate requirements for projects that have to be initiated, say, within the next one, two or three years ad then when the Development Plan Review procedure is completed and the city determines some sort of priorities, then there will be another review of that capital program. If that's the case, and if I understand that correctly, could we get back to that first stage then? Because I'm not certain — and I may have missed something along the way — but I don't believe that I have ever seen any guidelines for what the province is prepared to supply in that first stage of capital assistance to the City of Winnipeg.

MR. MERCIER: Well, you're referring to the block funding grant. .

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I would go back to the discussions on City Council, about their capital program, which is, that they locked off several major projects: the southwest corridor; aquaducts; major extensions of roads; northwest corner places like that, simply because they said, "We do not have any capital, we've reached our lending limit, we've got to hold the line", and I do not believe I saw any indication from the province saying, " Look, over the next 2 to 3 year period, we are prepared to supply X millions of capital assistance for the southwest transit corridor or for transportation in these areas.". The block grant is substantially being chewed up in terms of operational or day by day maintenance problems, and does not have any extra in it or any discretion in it for undertaking some of the capital projects that are necessary in order to start rebuilding the city. As I read those debates, what the City Council was saying very clearly that all that this block funding did, was allowed them to keep up just to kind of to keep pace with the ongoing day by day requirements , and didn't give them anything additional to start investing a little bit in future requirements.

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, that's indeed why we have indicated we are prepared to review with the city during the course of this year in establishing the amount of the block funding grant for next year, the city's needs and requirements.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Chairman, we may be headed into a circle, so maybe we can break out of it in a couple of ways. The Treasurer of the City of Winnipeg issued a statement, a letter actually, to the City Council last night where, and I could quote' He said in a letter to city councillors, that: "Winnipeg taxpayers will pay 12.8 million more this year in school taxes while the provincial government only increased provincial-wide grants by 12.9 million. So this only extends that this

proportionate sharing of school costs to the further disadvantage of Winnipeg property owners."

Now the question I think that Mr. Gilmore is getting at is an argument that we have had in this Legislature now for the six years I have been here, and that is about the Greater Winnipeg School levy, which was established after the Unicity Program came in as part of the equalization program. It works substantially to the discrimination of certain taxpayers within the total City of Winnipeg and to the advantage of others, and it also I think, blends in very strongly with the overall question of city finance because it really does impinge upon the carrying capacity of the property tax owner, if they are carrying a disproportionate amount. I believe the City of Winnipeg now, in fact, has to raise more money than it spends for schools in order to pay into the equalization under the Greater Winnipeg Levy, at the same time that the Winnipeg City schools themselves must carry many of the special schooling costs because they contain the central area which has a large in-migration of people from rural areas. So I would ask the minister, does he intend to eliminate the Greater Winnipeg School Levy or certainly revise it to bring it into some more proper proportion and to end the discriminatory aspects of it?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, that's obviously a question that should be directed towards the Minister of Education, but I would certainly be in favour of doing away with it.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear the minister commit himself in that way. I would suggest that he probably has somewhat better access to the Minister of Education than I do, and that as Minister responsible for Urban Affairs and the City, and considering that the Winnipeg School Levy came in as part of the Unicity package, then I would ask him not only if he would be prepared to express his sentiments, but also initiate or undertake that direct request to the Minister of Education to see if it could be eliminated at this stage and he would be able to us his substantial influence over his Cabinet colleague to bring that about.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I believe that should be, or will be, a part of the White Paper that will be tabled by the Minister of Finance, no doubt dealing with property tax credits and the cost of education in general.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, could I ask perhaps a question as to when can we expect this White Paper which is now becoming the omnibus recommendation for all ails and ills of the Province of Manitoba? When can we expect that to be distributed?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, that would be a question that would have to be put to the Minister of Finance who will be responsible for dealing with it. I have no knowledge of when it will be tabled.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I'd like, if I might, to perhaps raise some other questions with the Minister of Urban Affairs. The discussions over the Community Services Grant Program, I gather, is still under negotiation. Because of the elimination of the NIP Program, its replacement by Community Services Program, does the province intend to establish the conditions for that community services grant that would be mainly directed towards redevelopment efforts in older neighbourhoods?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I will be as charitable as I can toward the Liberal member of the House. The Ministers of Municipal Affairs met last June with Mr. Ouellette to deal with the Community Services Program, which at that time of course had no legislation, in effect that there is now legislation passed, I understand, by the House of Commons last week, March 12th, I believe.

No province in Canada has entered into a community services agreement with the federal government yet. There was one agreement entered into in British Columbia, and signed by Mr. Ouellette, but I understand they were subsequently advised by the president of the Treasury Board of the federal government that that signature was not authorized. We are trying to enter into an agreement. I have in fact forwarded an agreement to Mr. Ouellette, which I have indicated I am prepared to recommend to Cabinet that be signed if it meets with the approval of Mr. Ouellette and his Cabinet colleagues.

One of the difficulties with the program is that there is no money budgeted in this year's budget for the program, and that if an agreement is entered into, it would be conditional upon funds being included in the budget of the federal government in the next fiscal year, and is therefore a difficulty for municipalities in that if they proceed with projects under a community services agreement this year, they would not be reimbursed until the following year which is quite different from any other federal-provincial agreement, as I understand it.

But we're prepared and as long as we receive some form of commitment from the federal government, that indeed our municipalities in Manitoba can be assured in some way of reimbursement the following year, because we wouldn't want to mislead them. I wouldn't want to mislead the municipalities in Manitoba in proceeding with projects in '79 for which there is a possibility that they will not be reimbursed in 1980 through this program. I think that would be totally unfair to them. But as soon as we receive some commitment from Mr. Ouellette that the agreement which we have forwarded is satisfactory, I have to say that we've given in on a number of items that we thought were agreed to by provincial ministers across Canada and Mr. Ouellette last June, but which Mr. Ouellette appears to have changed his mind on on a number of them we're prepared to give in.

If there is money available for municipalities in Manitoba, I think it's our obligation to try to do as much as we can to make it available to them. So if we receive word from Mr. Ouellette that the form of the agreement is satisfactory to him and that there is a possibility of some commitment to reimbursement to municipalities in the next year's budget of the federal government, we will certainly then be dealing with the question of what projects we would recommend these moneys be allocated to by the municipalities in Manitoba.

Certainly the range of projects that Mr. Ouellette described as being encompassed in the Community Services Agreement is so broad, that they simply all couldn't be covered under the limited amount of money that's available under the program to the Province of Manitoba. But the NIP program, we haven't decided indeed if we want to establish any priorities, but we haven't decided what those priorities will be, but the NIP program is one of the major programs which the Community Services Program was meant to replace.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I thank the minister for the explanation. I would ask him this question, is the province in its proposed agreement that it's forwarded, does it expect that it would be prepared to undertake certain cost-sharing arrangements under that program? I would remind the minister that under the NIP program which was the major program replaced, much of it was on a cost-sharing basis, 50-cent dollars for Capital Works, I believe, 75-cent dollars, I believe, on social recreation items. Under the Community Services Program, can we therefore expect a proportionate matching of the — I think it was the figure of \$12 million that's coming into Manitoba under that — will we expect the province to put up an additional \$6 million under the umbrella of that program as it did under the NIP programs?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, there has never been under any of the agreements contemplated, specific conditions like that with any province that I am aware of. We, at this stage, haven't received any indication that the agreement is even acceptable to the federal government and when we get confirmation the agreement is acceptable and commitment to the funding, and hopefully the member will use his influence perhaps to gain that commitment and understanding in the next few days or however long it will be before the business of the federal government is otherwise engaged . . .

MR. AXWORTHY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, in that respect I would also enlist the co-operation of one of the minister's relatives in that kind of entreaty, but the question I did raise was this — that why I am concerned about it is the actual package of money that goes into municipal assistance for improvement purposes — and I am recollecting — but I believe under the three-year operation of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program, the province did contribute several millions of dollars over and above the federal contribution for neighbourhood improvement. And what I am trying to find out, is it understood or contemplated, that the Province of Manitoba would be prepared to at least keep up the same proportion of commitment under the Community Services Program as it did on the NIP program for municipal assistance and redevelopment efforts?

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, if and when we're satisfied, and we hear back from the federal government that there can indeed be a Community Services Agreement, then we will be dealing with the question of the allocation of funds under the agreement for what types of projects they would be spent, and we'll be consulting with the municipalities in Manitoba as to priorities and that question will be determined at that time.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would expect then from that, that at this point in time, there is no commitment for any kind of matching arrangement as there was under the NIP program, that really remains to be seen, based upon the agreement that is to be signed, but there is no commitment at this point.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the difficulty is that there is nothing to match it with yet from the federal government.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I realize that there is no specific amount. But obviously the federal government has already indicated what amounts would be apportioned to the Province of Manitoba. I believe it was in the neighbourhood of \$11.5 or \$12 million, something like that on an annual basis. I believe that's the amount. Now, the question is, so they know that once the agreement conditions are signed, that there would be that amount of money being transferred. What I am trying to find out is whether the same percentage or proportion that the province previously matched under the Neighbourhood Improvement Program would be at least continued, hopefully improved.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I can say that we would have liked to have entered into an agreement a year ago with the federal government if it was at all possible. This has been discussed with the federal government for a year and a half now. I think all provinces are frankly a bit sceptical about the whole plan because of the fact that discussions have gone on for so long and nothing has yet happened. And all I can say is, hopefully we'll get a response shortly from Mr. Ouellet as to the terms of the agreement and the commitment for reimbursement to municipalities. As soon as we do that, I can assure him that we will proceed with haste to — certainly I will — to recommend to Cabinet they enter into a federal-provincial agreement and deal with the question of the allocation of funds to municipalities.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'll leave that particular item and go on to one which, again, may be more immediate. As the Minister knows from previous discussion, there has been a change in the direction of the city's policy related to the CPR Railroads and its overpass program. There is now the offer of doing a major study on relocation, with a commitment that if the relocation is feasible, that there would be additional funds and that the city, while they haven't firmly decided, have indicated that they are prepared to go along. I would ask the Minister if the province is also prepared to go along with that direction, if they're prepared to share in the study itself, and also begin to provide some further commitment in terms of what would the province be prepared to do provided the relocation study shows that it is economically feasible to do.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman. This is my day for being charitable, and I will continue to be charitable. When city council approved the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass in their capital budget for this year, we subsequently wrote to Mr. Lang, the Minister of Transportation, indicating that relocation was in, not only the province's view, but the city's view, a desirable alternative to construction of the bridge, but that it couldn't be done without a firm federal commitment towards funding and towards implementation of relocation under the Act.

We therefore recommended to the federal government the allocation of \$7.6 million of funds under this program to the city for the construction of the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass, which was \$2.6 million more in funds than the city expected to receive, and which assisted them to that degree in establishing their own capital budget this year.

Since then, I have had no formal reply from Mr. Lang. There have apparently been press releases issued and comments by Manitoba's minister from northern Ontario at various meetings in Manitoba recently about the matter, which sometimes have been contradicted by Mr. Lang's office. But I have yet to receive, and I think again being charitable, I'm a little concerned that Mr. Lang wouldn't take the time to write to the provincial government in response to our letter, at least formally, to indicate what he has apparently indicated through the media, that the federal government are prepared to pay for a study.

I can tell the member that if and when we ever receive a formal response from Mr. Lang, that there will be some concerns that we will want to express, both on behalf of ourselves and on behalf of our city — the City of Winnipeg — which I think will be fairly reasonable. But, again, maybe he can use his influence to — and I don't think it's asking very much to ask Mr. Lang to respond to our letter that we sent to him a number of weeks ago now — so that he can indicate to us what his position is, so that we can again meet with the city and perhaps indicate some reasonable concerns to Mr. Lang.

I can say, if the federal government is prepared to go along with the study, I think it's reasonable to suggest to him that there should be some form of commitment in writing, to some degree of funding from the federal government if the study shows relocation of the yards or the main line or both to be feasible. The city, I believe, would like to be consulted with respect to the terms of reference of the study. I think there should be some agreement given by the federal government as to extension of the UTAP moneys — because it's a five-year agreement for the UTAP moneys

and the allocation of \$7.6 million is based upon the cash flow during the five-year period for the construction of the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass — there should be some agreement to extend the five-year time limit for the use of those funds after the study is completed and the negotiations that no doubt would follow are completed, so that if the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass is still to be constructed, the moneys can still be used even though the five-year time limit will have expired. Or indeed, if the money is to be used from that fund for relocation, that the time for using it can be extended to cover the time that will be covered by the study and the negotiations that will follow.

I think those are some reasonable concerns that I have, and I think the city of Winnipeg share. And rather than dealing with this matter through press releases, perhaps the member could request Mr. Lang's office to write and indicate to us what his position really is, and we can respond and indicate some of our own concerns, and perhaps the whole question can be resolved by agreement between the parties.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, in the same spirit of charity, I would suggest that perhaps, I guess, if there was any inclination to communicate through press releases, it was caused mainly by city councillors relaying a number of private conversations immediately to the two newspapers within 30 seconds of receipt. So I guess it became the prescribed method of communication over a period of time. But I would agree with the Minister, that I think that that kind of response should be given. But let me raise with the Minister a couple of points: that I think at this point the province has been able to get off very lightly, because it's not talking about spending any money of its own. It is simply the UTAP money, in effect, federal transfers, with no additional provincial. . . . I don't think there's one cent added to it other than if there's cost of postage and stamps and stationery. So that the question at this point in time has been one of the demand for relocation, which obviously has a number of positive implications for the city and the province as a whole, that the senior level of government in Manitoba really is not indicating what it's prepared to do, or what commitment it's prepared to make, if the relocation program was to go ahead.

It is simply saying, "We're prepared to spend federal money in some way or other", and I would think that it would be of some use to the city, as well as to the federal government, if the provincial government was also to make a like commitment. And by that I don't necessarily mean again specifying exact dollar amounts — because that has also been the position of the federal government — they have committed that they would undertake additional spending for relocation if it's feasible, but they have often said — and I know that the Minister was at a meeting with Mr. Reid where he said it — "We can't give you a dollar amount until we know what the study is. We can't specify cost until we know what the costs are". But, if we're talking about principles now — the principle that the cost of relocation would be shared by the CPR, by the city, and by the federal government — I wonder if the province is also prepared to become a partner in that sharing, considering the very major economic, social, physical benefits that it would have to the total urban area.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, the only comment I want to make at this time is that the province has indeed made a — and you have to remember, this is a federal-provincial agreement, the Urban Transportation Assistance Program, under which the province allocates funds under the agreement for relocation and grade crossing projects — It was described by the federal government as again encompassing a wide range of subjects, but the fund is simply insufficient to cover that wide range of subjects. But we have made a substantial allocation of funds. Out of \$10.2 million available, \$7.6 million have been allocated towards the City of Winnipeg for this Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass. So at the present time, I think that the province has treated the City of Winnipeg extremely well in the allocation of funds under this program.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, when the Minister calls it a federal-provincial program, he is talking basically about a transfer of federal funds. Now is he saying that of that \$7.6 million that was committed to the bridge, or the overall \$10 million, that a proportion of it is provincial money? Or is it in fact not a direct transfer to which the province simply indicates the criteria, or the conditions under which it will be transferred, and that there is not any additional funds that are available. That would be question one that under the UTAP Program, as I understand it, it is a transfer program, not a matching program.

MR. MERCIER: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. It is a transfer program, but the province determines the allocation of funds. I can assure the Minister that a substantial list of projects was completed — I think approximately 17, I am advised, relocation of railway crossing and grade crossing projects — the Province of Manitoba is determined that 7.6 of that \$10.2 million be allocated to the City of Winnipeg. All I'm saying is that is a pretty reasonable allocation to the City of Winnipeg, a

allocation of funds to the City of Winnipeg.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I understand the Minister now, that he agrees that it is a transfer program. And I agree that the province has the right of determining criteria. But let me ask this then because again, it's unclear. Would that same allocation of \$7.5 million also be available for relocation as it has been for overpass construction; and secondly, that depending upon the front-end costs of relocation, is the province prepared to at least commit, if not in dollar amounts, at least in principle, that they would be prepared to share in certain relocation costs if that's what the study finds to be the best option affordable, above and beyond the UTAP funds that it sets conditions on?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, that is a difficult question to answer, when we haven't yet received any response from Mr. Lang as to our recommendations for the allocation of funds. We haven't heard in any formal way from him what the position of the federal government is on the study, or anything else related to the subject.

MR. AXWORTHY: Well, Mr. Chairman, to the extent that one can apologize for Mr. Lang, I'm not in a position to do that.

We know informally what the conditions are. He has stated them. That the federal government is paying now for a study to be undertaken; it can be done on a joint basis and, that if the study does prove to be the right option, based upon the economics and social assessment, that they're prepared to commit dollars beyond the UTAP funds for relocation; and with those two conditions in mind, I would come back to my questions, that is the Province prepared to take its 7.6, that it has already designated for the overpasses, and be prepared to apply that portion of UTAP funds for relocation and perhaps, go beyond that and commit in principle at least, to do further sharing from its own capital resources, not just simply reallocating federal funds towards a relocation program.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I would expect that that would depend on what Mr. Lang is prepared to negotiate on the extension of time for the use of the funds. We have indicated . . . I did indicate in my letter to Mr. Lang, that in the event there was a change of opinion by the City of Winnipeg Council with respect to the Sherbrook-McGregor overpass, that we would be prepared to reconsider the reallocation of funds, but that will depend on what sort of terms of extension of time for the use of the funds can be negotiated and agreed upon with Mr. Lang. As it stands now, there is five years to use the money and four and-a-half left and if there is no extension of time for the use of those moneys, then as I indicated earlier, there are 16 or 17 other projects, totalling \$55 million, that we would have to consider for the use of these funds.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, I accept the minister's qualification on that exception, but as I understand again from the reports and the transcript of the statement by Mr. Lang, as well as the statement by Mr. Reid that there is a commitment that the UTAP funding would be extended if the relocation was feasible, but I would hope that we would be able to see that a response to his original letter was available very soon.

I would just like to ask then, Mr. Chairman, if I might not monopolize further time of other members of the committee, that in the issue of financial assistance for the City of Winnipeg, particularly in the downtown core, the inner-city area, with the decision of the City, not to go into housing programs and to it appears not invest anything in the redevelopment of the downtown area at this stage, does the Province intend any specific program for inner-city reconstruction development or upgrading of its older buildings, particularly in light of the findings of the City's own study which indicated that there has been close to 1,200 apartment units taken out of the market over the past three years, because of its own by-laws. Does the Province have any proposal to respond to those kinds of conditions?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe the member was present when we've talked in the past few days, that as indicated in the Throne Speech, there has been now established an interdepartmental group reviewing services, government services in the inner core area, and that committee will be shortly meeting and reporting to the Community Services Committee of Cabinet and eventually to Cabinet, and we'll be dealing with all housing issues that will relate to health and community services, education and my department will be involved in the co-ordination of that task force report, and out of that report, I believe, will come recommendations as to how we will be dealing with this issue and other related issues in the services to the core area of the city.

MR. AXWORTHY: I thank the minister for that answer then, I have one other set of questions that relate to the — I presume that this is about the only place in the Estimates to ask, and that is whether the government is intending to provide any major amendments to the City of Winnipeg Act to respond to both their requests and also the perceived inadequacies of the way in which decisions are being made at times at City Hall and really the breakdown of the executive structure. Can we expect major amendments to the City of Winnipeg Act at this session?

MR. MERCIER: No, Mr. Chairman. We have met with the City on a number of occasions dealing with amendments to the Act, and there are some reviews going on at major areas of the Act, in conjunction with the City and I would expect that if any major amendments are to be introduced, they will be introduced at the next session of the Legislature.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, in that respect, one of the things that gives me some concern is that in this exchange, we have heard about the review being done on the property tax system, a review being done on all government services in the inner-city, and now, a review of the City of Winnipeg Act and amendments. The difficulty in each of these cases, that it seems to be a pretty closed process, that the parties to that review are, as I understand it, mainly in house and while the minister is blessed with some very excellent able public servants, they do not necessarily exclusively have the kind of information or opinion that might be required, and I'm wondering whether in each of these cases, there shouldn't be some opening of the process of consultation, review, examination, so that there would be an ability for other organizations to represent their points of view, and citizens and perhaps individual councillors. I can recall for example, the differences of opinion on City Council itself on terms of amendments that the official position taken by the Executive Policy Committee at times was quite distinctly opposed by members of the loyal opposition in City Council and I'm really wondering whether there shouldn't be, at some point in time, at least an opening in each of these processes, so that there could be some examination before they actually end up on the desk of the Legislature for enactment.

MR. MERCIER: Well, Mr. Chairman, I would certainly welcome any recommendations from the Member for Fort Rouge, or any other member or any other member of the public or organization. I want to say though, generally with respect to legislation as the member will have noticed, since the day the Legislature opened, we have been tabling bills in the Legislature on a regular basis, and the whole intention of introducing legislation into the House, in this and future sessions is to introduce it early in the session to allow it to be available for some time, to allow consideration by members of the public and anyone else who's interested in legislation, before it will eventually be passed and I hope that that is an improvement in the legislative process that will allow for a greater degree of public involvement than perhaps has been the case in the past, when important legislation has been introduced in the waning days of the session, and people have not had sufficient opportunity to consider it at length with time to research and put together well-informed briefs.

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can make a specific request to the minister in this regard. I have heard him speak on occasion and it's a view that I agree with, that we should be re-examining the role of the community committees and the resident advisory groups in the city of Winnipeg, to determine — I don't think they're functioning all that well at the present moment, and if we're going to keep them, then obviously something has to be done with them, and as he knows the resident advisory groups that were a creature really of provincial legislation, have asked for the opportunity to be able to analyze and recommend upon the role of resident advisors and community committees; and they have asked for some support in this respect. Considering that it has been a creature of the province and was set up by them, is the province and its Department of Municipal and Urban Affairs prepared to give some resources or support to the resident advisory groups through the City, so that they can undertake that kind of review based upon their experiences and assessments, so that they could bring to bear that perspective on what I consider to be a very critical question, you know, in any revision of the City of Winnipeg Act, that question of how you maintain some degree of local autonomy and decision-making. Is that something that the minister would be prepared to entertain?

MR. MERCIER: The question is whether the Province should fund the activities of resident advisory groups within the City of Winnipeg?

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Chairman, that certainly is one of the options; I'm more concerned at this stage of seeing whether the Department of Municipal and Urban Affairs say, in co-operation with

the City and with the resident advisors, would undertake a special examination of the place, role, function of the community committees and the resident advisory system, and do that on a joint basis, so that there would be a co-operative examination between city officials, provincial researchers and the citizens involved, and be prepared to table some form of report or analysis, so that legislators here would have the opportunity to see it and that there might be, I think a somewhat broadening or different perspective than if it was done simply in house.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Chairman, I'm advised we have just recently received a recommendation from, I believe it's City Council or the Executive Policy Committee for changes that would relate to the activities of resident advisory groups. We've just received it very lately, and as a result, there will be no change included at this particular session of the Legislature. I don't anticipate that the provincial government would get involved, particularly in the funding of the activities of resident advisory groups; but we have a continuing committee meeting on a review of the City of Winnipeg Act with the City of Winnipeg officials, and we might consider with the City of Winnipeg, the kind of review that we'd like to carry on prior to the next session of the Legislature and the degree of public discussion that there might be. I'm sure the member will be well aware there have been a number of — in the past few years — public commissions and inquiries into the City of Winnipeg Act, and many many representations made. I've heard concern in some quarters that, at least in the viewpoints of some, that not all of the considerations, representations were really adequately considered in the amendments to the Act which flowed in the session of 1977. I think those representations that were made then are deserving of another review by our government at this time.

Mr. Chairman, I can't give the member a commitment as to what form of public representations will be taken either by us or by City Council, who are involved to some degree in this review, but in meeting with the City of Winnipeg on the review of the Act, I can and will undertake to discuss with them the kind of public representations that might be allowed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, I am leaving the Chair to return at 2:30 this afternoon.

SUPPLY — HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats (Radisson): I would draw the Honourable members' attention to Page 48 in the Main Estimates, Health and Community Services. We are on Item 3 Social Services and Community Health, (f) Home Economics Services: (1) Salaries—pass. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairma,, before we form this Committee, the House Leader said that he would give us the opportunity to keep on with the discussion that we had, which certainly is a priority and I wonder if we can proceed as directed by the House Leader, that is the discussion as the billing of the hospital, that particular case of the Member for Selkirk. —(Interjection)— Sorry, from Lac du Bonnet. Because I think it is a priority item and after all the suggestion was made by the House Leader that I would have the chance to pursue this immediately so I would like to proceed with that at this time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, I don't see how we can allow any discussion other than the items that are under discussion which is Home Economics . . .

MR. DESJARDINS: I would imagine that we're certainly ready to give leave and this was suggested by the House Leader of the Government. This was suggested before; he said I will now give my honourable friend from St. Boniface the chance to keep on with the discussion just after we settle this. And he made his announcement and now we are in Committee. This is our first chance and I'm sure that my colleagues will give leave, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do I have leave of the House to proceed with the discussion that was presented before, otherwise we would have to stick to the . . .

MR. DESJARDINS: Just on that particular case in the announcement that was made today. Because I still say that that's misleading.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Do the honourable members of the House. . . do I have leave?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have no particular objection but I certainly would want to check with my House Leader — the House Leader was speaking rhetorically about the fact that we were going into Estimates, that question can be examined during the process of the Estimates, but we're on a particular item in front of us in the vote appropriation lineup and I certainly am not, without the concurrence of my House Leader, at liberty to suggest to the Chair that we're prepared to discuss other topics other than the line by line examination. There's been considerable variance and latitude on both sides with respect to sticking to line by line study up until now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The item under discussion . . .

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, Mr. Chairman, the . . .

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

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, this is certainly very clear that the House Speaker while we were having this discussion, and they seem to have an attempt not to have this discussion by some of the speeches that were made by the Minister of Education and the Speaker, who knew that we were following on the same question and didn't allow that and then the Speaker said, "Well, fine I will give the opportunity" —(Interjection)— The House Leader said, "Well, fine I will give the opportunity to my Honourable friend from St. Boniface to continue this discussion".

Now, all right maybe leave is needed but certainly not leave from the House Leader again. The Members of the committee have the right to give leave. And as I say, we took it that this was the position of the Conservative Party, the government. We are giving leave, and then it's up to you if they want to say that this is not the position of the Conservative Party and they don't want to give leave, fine.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I don't believe that leave has been granted.

MR. DESJARDINS: The Hansard will show that you never asked if there is going to be leave, or that you didn't get the answer. The Minister got up and he said he didn't mind, but then he thought that he should discuss it with the House Leader, so I think that maybe you should ask the members of the Conservative Party again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Again I would ask the members — do I have unanimous leave of the House to proceed with these questions? The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: I would like to remind the members opposite that it was the House Leader, a few moments ago, who rose from his chair and indicated quite clearly that we would have an opportunity to deal with this problem as soon as we get into the Estimates debate. Now, Mr. Chairman, if he did not mean that, then he has misled the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek

MR. JOHNSTON: The Member for St. Boniface just referred that the House Leader had nothing to do with it, it was the members that made the decision. The members have made a decision; it's not unanimous.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I guess the record should show then that the House Leader of the government indicated that a certain order would be followed — I don't know his title anyway — Smiley on the other side decided that they do not want to discuss this emergency matter at this time, so fine. —(Interjection)— How do you know it's not an emergency? Would you like, or charged to have your mother on the street \$100 a day? Would you like that, Smiley? Would you like that? That's exactly — you don't want to think about it. That's exactly the point . . . you're bluffing . . . Let the record show that the member doesn't care about somebody that has no place to go and that you could keep on charging over \$100 a day.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order.

MR. JOHNSTON: I never at any time said I did not care about where people went or did not go.

I said I do not grant leave.

MR. DESJARDINS: He's so flustered he can't think what he doesn't grant any more. The point is that he said it wasn't a priority, and I said it was a priority.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would ask the honourable members, please direct your remarks to the Chair. Please direct your remarks to the Chair and we can proceed. Without unanimous consent we are on Item (f), Home Economic Services (1) Salaries. The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the record does not show and should not show, as the Member for St. Boniface has suggested it should, that the House Leader suggested that some particular line of order would be followed and then that the caucus members on the committee were not agreeable to that. The House Leader suggested no such thing. He suggested that the honourable member would have plenty of opportunity to discuss that when we were in Estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: On the same point of order, the Honourable Acting Opposition Leader.

MR. CHERNIACK: St. Johns, Sir. The record already shows, and the record will not be changed, I trust, Mr. Chairman — and I think that if you do not allow the discussion to take place, and I think you've already stated it may not, then the record shows that, then I think we can proceed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Item (f)(1) Salaries —pass. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I thought that you had made a decision, then you allowed a discussion on that. I'm saying that if you look at Hansard you'll see that the House Leader said that this could be continued after an announcement was made, and he said that I'd have the opportunity. I took that seriously because I think it is a priority. I think it's not just something about the 20 years for that particular case, who has at home only somebody 88 years old that can't keep them, and Mr. Chairman . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The item under discussion is Home Economic Service, 1. Salaries. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, can you tell me why, after you made this decision, you allowed the Minister of Health to pursue this and now you won't allow me? Can you tell me why?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The statement of the House from the Chairman, it was on a point of order that was under discussion, and . . . —(Interjection)— It was on a point of order, and that is what was discussed. If anybody would care to speak on the point of order, they will be acknowledged, but the item under discussion is Home Economic Services, 1. Salaries. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, that's exactly what I was speaking on, on the point of order, because you . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wasn't aware that you were speaking on the point of order.

MR. DESJARDINS: Well, I'm sorry if you missed it, but when a decision is made by the Chairman, you're not supposed to argue it any more. And I say that the Minister did not have a point of order more than I had. Well that's fine. I'll go along with your decision, and we'll start on . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface on Item Home Economics, 1. Salaries. The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, on the question of Home Economics and Home Management, I want to know what provision is made by this department to deal with problems that arise in connection with home nursing services, when a patient is in a hospital, is being medically discharged and has nowhere to go. I thought the practice was that that patient would be kept in the hospital and would be required to pay a per diem rate to the hospital in order to make sure that that person

is not out on the street. I want to know what provision is being made by the Department of Health under this section to make sure that there is proper home care there to take care of that person who is either out on the street or is in danger of being charged an excessive fee. Now, is it this department and how is it arranged? Now the examples that I heard referred to was that the only place this particular person could go to was to a home where there's an 88 year old person there to take care of the patient. Now, what provision is being made to take care of that kind of a problem? Or is it true that they had to pay \$100 a day while they're waiting for that kind of accommodation?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Chairman. Nossuch service is accommodated under this particular program. That is taken care of under the continuing care services directorate, through the home care service, which as you will recall, Sir, was Item 3.(d) and which was thoroughly examined in this committee, I think on Tuesday of this week. What would happen would be that an application would be made for home care. Home Care Services would respond by meeting the need on the level deemed desirable and necessary; it might involve putting a homemaker into the home, or it might involve two or three hours a day of help from a homemaker. It would be handled under that office.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Could the honourable minister explain the rationale for the approximately 25 percent reduction in the Salaries appropriation for a Home Economic Services? If one looks at last year's appropriation of \$221,000 and adds to it the inflation factor and then takes a look at this year's appropriation of \$194,000, it's approximately 25 percent less. And there is a corresponding reduction, Mr. Chairman, in the related item of Other Expenditures. So really, on both items, there is a very significant reduction. I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, will that result in a reduction of a level of service to those Manitobans who ought to be eligible for this type of assistance? Could the minister explain that?

And perhaps to be a bit more precise and specific in his explanation of the reduction, could he indicate how this is reflected in terms of staff man years for the forthcoming fiscal year as compared with the current one, because given the continuing inflation, it would seem quite apparent, Mr. Chairman, that there must be a reduction in the staff man years?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, there were some vacancies in the complement last year, 3 to be precise. Although it was budgeted to a full salary level, those positions were budgeted for from a salary point of view although the salary total was not necessary, it wasn't spent. This is a realistic reduction based on a reduction of one staff man year and the fact, as I say, that some vacancies aast year continue to be vacancies, although the salary appropriation had been voted for the full complement of 13.

One of the contributing factors also, to the reduction in amounts here, lies in the fact that the former director of the branch, or the division, retired, and was replaced by the assistant director, and we have abolished the assistant director's position, so that it has enabled the realistic reduction in salary appropriation request for this year that the honourable member sees in front of him.

MR. HANUSCHAK: Yes, Mr. Chairman. So it would appear then, that there has been a reduction in the level of service, that last year there were 3 positions that were unfilled; that would seem to indicate, Mr. Chairman, that last year, or I would suspect that we're talking about the fiscal year about to end in a week and a half's time, but during the current fiscal year, the level of service that was offered the people of Manitoba, was not at that level at which the government had planned on in delivering this program at the commencement of the fiscal year because there were vacancies and they weren't filled. Or perhaps the honourable minister could indicate to the House whether, a year ago, he had over estimated the staff requirements to meet the needs of this particular program because if he had over estimated, well then, I suppose we could level another criticism at him and that is of inaccurate estimating of his staffing requirements. But if it was an accurate assessment, a year ago, and then there were the three vacancies, then quite obviously, the level of service must have suffered somewhat.

And I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, that if last year there was a need for an assistant director of this program, could the minister explain on what basis he has come to the conclusion

that now the program can function, or will be able to function, without an assistant director. If the need was there in the current fiscal year, why is it suddenly disappearing?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, last year the complement was 13; there were three vacancies, so the branch was actually operating with 10. We, this year, are establishing the firm complement at 12 and there is one vacancy at the present time, so it's operating with 11 at the moment and there is every intention to fill the vacancy and bring it up to 12, so that we are not operating at a reduced capacity. We are in fact, operating at an increased capacity. The abolition of the assistant director's position was taken in consultation and discussion with the directorate itself, and with the Director, who felt that the assistant directorship position was not necessary and that in fact, we will have more manpower or womanpower as the case may be, in the branch this year than last year because of filling those vacancies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. SAUL A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, we're dealing with Home Economic Services, and I want to ask the minister whether he really believes that what he's doing in his department, in his branch, rather, is adequate for the obvious needs facing us. Very recently, the Social Planning Council reported that it is undertaking a study to look at the rate of death and disability among newborn babies in Manitoba. Apparently, Manitoba has been slipping badly in the Canadian context — it had been very high, it had a very low death rate of infants in '71, but a recent study indicated that in fact, Manitoba slipped to sixth position in this regard.

And in looking at the Annual Report of the department, it indicates that one of the major thrusts of the Home Economic Department, is the nutrition education which, it says here that: "Nutrition education should deal with the population that are at risk with respect to their nutritional status", and nutrition education programs are aimed at these risk groups from both a corrective and preventative standpoint, that it is necessary to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women and equipping them with the knowledge of how to feed a newborn infant. Intervention programs implemented during the prenatal period, have the greatest potential for preventing handicap and promoting the health of the newborn infant. And this certainly is an aspect of the home economic directorate's responsibility, to zero in on target groups of high risk people, the high risk element in our society, that to deal with a problem which, you know, in this day and age it is somewhat surprising to find that there is in fact a problem or high mortality rate and morbidity rate amongst newborn babies. . . One would think that, in this day and age, with the technology that is available, with the knowledge of nutrition that is available, that Manitoba wouldn't be faced with this kind of problem. The fact is, it's not a lack of knowledge by the medical profession or lack of experience by the medical profession, but our medical profession is geared to dealing with people who walk into their offices, and so a certain element in our society who are knowledgeable in these things, who recognize the need for these things, go to their pediatrician, initially with the obstetrician themselves insofar as prenatal diets and nutrition are concerned, and eventually when the child is born they go to the pediatrician. But there is a large percentage, obviously, of the population who don't avail themselves of these services; who don't have the knowledge, the sophistication, the understanding that that is what one should do, and that accounts I think a great deal for the high infant mortality rate.

What is lacking, and I think the Social Planning Council indicated this, is a co-ordinated effort to assure that women of child-bearing age, and pregnant women, and children in the first nine months after birth, that they should receive all the guidance and the treatments that they may require. So, it's a question of identifying the people involved, that is the mothers and after birth, the infants themselves, and not just leave it to the private doctor . . . unfortunately the people at risk are the kind who do not, of themselves think in terms of going to a doctor, they don't look at the doctor in his office as a primary resource. That's the value of community health centres; that's the value of the various agencies who reach out, because a doctor hasn't got the time, nor is he set up nor geared up to reach out into the community. He waits for people to come to him.

So that it is essential that a group, such as this, to zero in and concentrate on that problem which they, themselves, recognize is a major one, and I'm not sure how it is going to be done with a staff of 11 or 12. It isn't just a matter of the number of people working within a directorate, it's the kind of leadership they give to the whole field; it's the leadership that they have to give, by reaching out and in a sense philosophizing amongst various private agencies, non-profit agencies, in the core area or in certain parts of Manitoba, to do a selling job, an educational job, on an element, a target population, which lacks as I say that kind of understanding of what is needed. Because, in 1979 to be faced with a dilemma that there is a high infant mortality rate in Manitoba, is really not acceptable — I'm sure it isn't acceptable to any member of this House, irrespective

of Party. I'm not saying this is something that the Conservative Party has inherited today, this is obviously a problem that has been with us for some time. But now it has been identified, now it has been pinpointed, and with that knowledge, surely the Minister shouldn't be satisfied to simply say, well last year we had ten on staff, now we have eleven, last year we had three vacancies, now we have one vacancy — you know, that's just llaying musical chairs.

Surely, what is required is a co-ordinated effort on the part of this home economics, the health education services, the agencies which are in the field, both social service agencies, the public health agencies, both in government and outside of government, that all of them have to be martialled together so you get a continuing of care, so that the women who become pregnant simply are not left with the idea that, well, we have a medicare program, it's available to everyone, all you have to do is call a doctor's office and make an appointment, obviously there's an element in our society that can't function that way. So you have to reach out to them; you have to go to them; you have got to sell health, nutrition to them for their sakes as well as for the sake of the unborn and then the newborn infant, and unless we address ourselves to that, this problem is not going to go away.

And my concern, of course, with this government is that they do not accept the notion; as a matter of fact they oppose the notion that society has to organize itself in such a way as to reach out, as to make available services, not simply by saying, "We are open, come and see us," which is the individual responsibility that the Minister sometimes talks about, individual initiative. Obviously there are people in our society who cannot or are unable to take that individual initiative. I am sure that the Minister would agree with me that he wouldn't be happy to say, "Well, because the parent hasn't got the education or the standing to take that individual initiative, that the newly born infant should suffer on that account." We have to recognize it is a responsibility by society at large, and that there has to be a bringing together of all of the energies we have, and all of the agencies we have, and all of the facilities and knowledge we have, to zero in on this problem.

Because the infant mortality rate is one set of figures, and one can say, well, that's a set of figures, the child has unfortunately die too bad, and we all regret it, but it's more than that. With the mortality rate, there is also morbidity rate, there is also the illnesses that follow that child from thereon in, the handicaps of that child, which then become a responsibility and a burden on society at large; and an investment of dollars early on in the game, at the very beginning, could prove cost-effective, if you want to put it that way, down the line.

It's not an immediate thing that you can measure, you can't measure it over a twelve-month span, or even a two-year span. But down the line — the Minister likes tousse the phrase, "the bottom line", and "the downstream effect", I think it is —(Interjection)— okay, "downstream costs". Those are the ones that count, and if the matter is attacked early on, there'll be a payoff — and I'll use his terms, because with this ministry you have to talk dollars, you don't have to talk what I feel is the sometimes the more important, the proper attitude towards life, the respect for life, the feeling in my opinion the civilized way of doing things, the quality of life, but I'll use the Minister's approach — dollars want to come to see them, they'll gladly look after them. But that there is an obviously significant target group, and this isn't just in northern Manitoba. This is in rural Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg. A target group which, for whatever reasons do not recognize the absolute necessity, the responsibility to seek out medical assistance. We have to reach out to them, we have to find them, we have to make sure that the children are immunized; we have to make sure that the children are properly fed, we have to make sure that their prenatal nutrition is adequate so that the end result is a healthy birth and a healthy infant that will survive and not end up with a rate of 16.4 deaths per one thousand, which is now the paranatal death rate in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, I am critical of the Minister for not increasing this particular area, and as well all the other areas which have to be brought together to focus on this problem. All the other areas include the Public Health area, the Social Work area, the counselling, the community health centres, which have outreach programs; and work with people in their own community in their own neighbourhoods and which are the most logical way of reaching people because they function within a neighbourhood.

These are the things that we find, if not cut out, are being constrained, and are being kept at a very moderate level. We simply say, well we have it, and you know, so we're doing our bit.

It's obviously we're not doing our bit, and in this day and age, for Manitoba to suddenly surface as a province which has a high infant mortality rate is shocking and I think shameful to everyone in this House.

So Mr. Chairman, I'm not happy with the amount shown here. There's no real improvement here, no significant improvement in the service. There isn't in other areas, and it's just simply do as we have done for the last number of decades, the last number of years, and maybe the problem will go away. Well, it's not going to go away. We know that now, and unless there's a concerted action to meet the problem head-on and clean it up, then I'm afraid Manitoba is going to continue to have the dubious honour of having a very high infant mortality rate. And I know statistics internationally show Canada not in a very good position; in Manitoba therefore, because it's not very high within Canada, is in even a worse position than some of the so-called undeveloped countries which we sort of look on condescendingly, because we're supposed to have all the expertise, we are supposed to have all the knowledge. And we have the resources. There's no question. So I would ask the Minister to re-think his whole approach in this area so we can come to grips with it and remove what I think is a blot on Manitoba, something that I don't think anyone can be proud of, but should be ashamed of.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I certainly don't minimize the importance of child and maternal health, and as the member well knows, a considerable part of that program comes under the item on Public Health Services, which we talked about earlier. —(Interjection)— And they tie together, that's right. There is certainly intensive consideration and interest given by my office to this problem. We have indicated our co-operation with the task force set up by the Social Planning Council, which is designed specifically to deal with child and maternal health, and perinatal problems. We have seconded a member of our staff, Dr. Clem Blakeslee, to the task force to work with them on that three-year project. We do through another member of my staff participate in and contribute to the Perinatal Committee that functions under the College of Physicians and Surgeons. We have addressed the most serious focal points, I think, of infant mortality in that we do have home economists in the north, and in the city of Winnipeg, where the problems are the greatest. There are two in The Pas, two in Thompson and eight in Winnipeg. We have supported the Canadian Dietetic Association, the Manitoba branch, and we are supporting efforts of the nutritionists in the private agency sector in order to help promote the very necessary concept of good nutrition. And it's in fact on child and maternal health. We serve the Agricultural Rural Field Service through 15 home economists, to cover off the rural part of the province.

So I want to reassure my honourable friend that I appreciate what he's saying. I believe that the field of nutrition and child-maternal health is an extremely important one, and we're not minimizing or reducing efforts in that area.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a very important sector of our whole field of health in Manitoba, and especially since the Minister has put the emphasis on preventative rather than curative medicine, I think that this is an area where we should take a good look at the programs and the delivery systems that the Minister has in place for the delivery of his program. As is stated in the Department of Health Annual Report, that the Home Economics Directorate was responsible for developing and assessing program proposals, assisting with program initiation and delivery, evaluating the program effectiveness and the training program delivery personnel, developing programs and materials, teaching resources and co-ordinating and distributing program resources. This is accomplished by a group of program specialists who worked closely with field staff and by operation of the Home Economics Resource Centre. You know, it sounds very nice. It sounds like we have a wonderful program in place, that we have a preventative program, as my honourable colleague, the Member for Seven Oaks, has stated, in home nutrition, especially in the field of the infant mortality rate, which is fairly high and in fact may be one of the highest in the whole country.

It's all very well and good to put out pamphlets and to put out these sort of things. I see that, according to the report, that a total of some 1,900 pregnant women received individual counselling and instruction on prenatal nutrition sessions of the public nursing prenatal series. This is all very well, but when you're dealing with the working poor — I mean it's the native people who don't have the dollars to go and buy these sort of things — if we look at some of the programs that have taken place in western Europe and in the British Isles, where they have a very extensive program of prenatal care for the mother on dietary problems that the mother may be suffering at that time

— even during the war, they issue free milk, free vitamins and orange juice for women in maternity. And if you take a look at the average Britisher of today, his health and the children that were born during the war and post-war are much healthier than the children in Canada on an average. This is because government saw it as a responsibility, that they developed a program that would assist women in prenatal care and nutrition, and this is what has developed a fairly healthy society in the UK, as compared to what their state of health was pre-1914 and even pre-1939. You know, it makes nice reading here, about all these programs that we have. And how do we deliver these programs? The best method, I think, also stated by the Member for Seven Oaks, is the community health centres. Here's an ideal place where health program; they're in the community, they're available to people; they don't have to travel great distances.

And it's not just that we should be talking about those people who are in the preatatal state, but there are also the working poor, the people on the minimum wage. What kind of nutritional counselling are they receiving from the Department of Health? Because of the low standard of living that they're receiving at the present time for their services, they are not able to buy the amounts of food that — and maybe in some cases because of lack of education of , they're an educational program as far as nutritional values are concerned perhaps buying foods that are of a junk food value and not really of a nutritional value to them. What kind of a delivery system does the Minister have with those working poor? You know, you could put pamphlets in stores and in doctors' offices and whatnot. As I've said before, when we were talking in the Department of Labour, and I'm oot going to digress into that, but the putting out of pamphlets by the Workers' Compensation Board, what you should do if you're injured. That doesn't work, because most of those pamphlets and leaflets wind up in the garbage can. So if you're talking about a delivery service to these people who require these services, you've got to get off your butts and get out to where the people are and put the program to them, because they're not going to come to you. Unfortunately, that is a fact of life.

So if you want you programs t — 20 years down the road, that's what you're talking about, downstream, where we're going to improve the general state of health of the people of Manitoba — I agree with the Minister, that in the long run that is going to save us money. Because we're not going to have thes expensive costs of medication, operations, saays in hospital, which are all, I think both sides of this House will agree, increasing all the time. So if you are going to put that emphasis, then you've got to put your money where your mouth is. You've got to start developing the system here so that when we get down to Page 52 where we're talking about the Manitoba Health Services Commission, down the road regardless of who will be government at that time, that we will be able to start cutting those services back. Because the problems that we are having in the hospitals today is perhaps in many many cases caused by poor nutritional programs of many years ago, that people are now suffering the effects of a poor nutritional program.

You also in your report here talk about money management. There's another very important feature that we should be dealing with but again I say, how are you reaching the working poor? Because those are the people you have to reach. Those who are affluent in our society I don't really think need too much instruction in money management because they have been able to work the system. But it is those people who are in the scheme of things who don't have the resources, don't have the facilities, won't come to you, you've got to go to them. So I say to the Minister that when you are cutting down the home economics and all the preventative parts of your Estimates, what you are doing is perpetuating the system as we're going to have it now. It will show up 20 years hence down the road because 20 years from now, a lot of the members of this House are going to be in the senior citizens group. I'm not too far from it myself.

So when we're talking about the costs of our whole health care scheme we've got to, and I think this is one of the things that the Minister has emphasized all along is preventative rather than curative. And I think the Minister will agree with me. I think all members of this House will agree on that item but when you start taking out of place, especially if you are going to start taking out the community health centres, which is one method of developing and delivering the program. You can develop all the programs you like, Mr. Minister. You can pile them right up to the ceiling of this building but if you can't deliver that program, and with the delivery of that program, there's no use saying pious words that you should have so much orange juice, you need so much vitamins and such and such, but if these people haven't the facility and the money even to do this, what kind of a system have we got? We've got a plan that on paper looks very nice and it's nice press, nice PR work and the Minister is a good deliverer of PR. Sometimes I think what he delivers is pure rubbish. Because you come up with all these fine fancy schemes and all this nice piety and pious words and what not, but when it comes down to the nitty gritty, what are you delivering and how are you delivering those programs? I'm sure that there were more than 1,900 live births in Manitoba last year. How many of the prenatal cases did you get in contact with, what percentage? And what followup was there after the delivery of the child? Was the child getting the proper nutrition?

was the mother getting the proper nutrition? These are the sort of things that the Minister and his department, if they are going to go on the kick of preventative medicine, this is the sort of thing that you've got to develop, and it costs dollars and cents to do these things.

So I say to the Minister that cutting back on these items certainly is not going to, in the long run, benefit the well being of the people of Manitoba and I think that the Minister should seriously reconsider some of the items that — I'm not only speaking to the Minister as the person who has the final say so, I'm speaking to the rest of your members on the Treasury Bench, because I realize that you have to fight for your dollars the same as any other member of the Treasury Bench, the bench for your department. But I think if we can do anything on this side of the House to reinforce your argument for your preventative medicine then that is our responsibility as members of this Legislative Assembly and I can pledge to you that if you want our support in getting the dollars for the preventative medicine and for the delivery, and not just a lip service delivery but a real delivery system that will benefit the well-being and health of the citizens of Manitoba, then I think you can count on the support of the members on this side of the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I don't intend to debate the points raised by the honourable member. I appreciate that he has placed them on the record and I will assure him that they will be taken into my consideration.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if we can have a breakdown, I think the Minister gave us a partial breakdown, I would like to know who — I think there is a new director now, who the director or acting director is. I would like to know how many home economists there are.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Minister didn't mention this and I didn't hear anybody else mention this, had to go out for a few minutes. This branch here coordinates, it doesn't do all the work itself, it coordinates. Now in the past, and I would like to know if that still exists, some of that work was done, taking the lead I think from this department, but some of that work was done by people in the in the Department of Agriculture and some in Northern Affairs. I wonder if the Minister could explain that, could tell us how many are directly working in this program from other departments. I don't think in all fairness that gives us the true picture. There's more than 13.

But I would like to, first of all, have a breakdown on the 12 this year, and I would like to know a breakdown of those 12, their responsibility. I would like to know how many in the Department of Agriculture are working directly, full-time in this or part-time, if any, and also in Northern Affairs. And I'd like know, well if you give us a breakdown, we'll know how many home economists are there and where are they situated. Where are they working — either in Winnipeg or in the rural areas. I wonder if we could start by that, then we can follow through, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the complement of 12 in the central directorate includes 7 professionals and 5 clerical personnel. The director, who was the former assistant director, is Mrs. Dallas Goodchild. There's one vacancy right now and that the vacancy is a professional position. The intention is that that position will be utilized to develop nutrition programs in the community. That is the position we are attempting to fill and it will be filled. We have 2 home economists in Thompson, one in WestMan, 2 in NorMan and 8 in Winnipeg, that's field services, and we have 15 home economists serving the rural field service of the Department of Agriculture. —(Interjection)— I beg your pardon. All home economists, yes. I don't know if that answers my honourable friend's question.

MR. DESJARDINS: What about Northern Affairs? Do they still have any.

MR. SHERMAN: The part of ours, Mr. Chairman, We took them over from Northern Affairs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: One of the responsibilities of this directorate is to function as a central resource group and direct the affairs and services of the branch to deliver support to field staff, staff training, and the preparation and production of teaching resources.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: If I understand well, then there are seven 7. There's a vacant but that will be taken care of. There are 7 in the department now of professionals and they are mostly preparing programs and so on, they are not in the field that much, expect working with other staff and that staff — I would like the Minister to correct me if I'm not giving the answer, I'm trying to give him my understanding — the staff some of that would come under (t) again, right? Boy that (t) is a big place, everything goes back to (t). several weeks on (t).

MR. SHERMAN: We'll be

MR. DESJARDINS: Yes, I can see that.

Now I'm a little mixed up, the member said that those 7 are all at head office. The Department of Agriculture has 15, those are the 15 in the field. Are there any other home economists in (t)? I don't think I would be out of order if I'd ask how many because that is related to this.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes the field staff is actually reflected in (t), but as I mentioned a minute or two ago, Mr. Chairman, I identified 13 of them; two in Thompson, 1 in West 8 in Winnipeg and 2 in NorMan.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: What about the 15 with the Department of Agriculture? I would imagine that they are all in the rural area?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: They show up and are accounted for in the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. Chairman. They are distributed throughout the province, throughout rural areas only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (1)—pass — the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, the Minister listened to my colleague from Logan and after listening a great deal, simply got up and said he doesn't intend to comment but rather he's . . . The Member for Logan simply put what he thought on the record and that's the end of it as far as the Minister is concerned. I'm not satisfied with that answer.

Mr. Chairman, we are faced with a problem in the fragmentation of health delivery assistance. That's one of the basic problems. This particular item and the remarks I made with regard to the task force, which is now being formed to deal with the question of infant mortality, pinpoints the need for a system which is not fragmented, where the doctor sits and dispenses his medical treatment when called upon, but requires a system which has an outreach, wit which will go to people who, for whatever reason, lack of sophistication, lack of education, lack of concern even, are not taking care of themselves, prenatal and in the perinatal situation are also are not doing what is required. That is a drain on society. It is not healthy for a community. And for the Minister to simply say well I've heard the Member for Logan, I've heard the Member for Seven Oaks, and it's on the record, but what is he going to do about it? Is he going to continue what we started in a very halting manner, the concept of a single unit delivery system? Is he going to continue to foster and help develop community outreach programs through community health centres, through agencies out in the field? Not just to distribute pamphlets — you know you go into a doctor's office, you go into any regional office, just pamphlets, and those who are interested and are concerned take some pamphlets and they read them. Others, I give them the pamphlets, and as the Member for Logan says, unfortunately some of those pamphlets simply end up in the wastepaper basket or they never read, or perhaps never understood, and I suspect the latter in many cases. Where is the follow-up? When it's known that the woman is pregnant, where is the follow-up to make sure that that person is talked to, guided, not once or twice, but on a regular basis? Where is the follow-up to make sure that there is some contact all through the pregnancy period and at least a year or nine months after the child is born? That is the kind of follow-up and the only kind of follow-up that's going to be effective. It's not enough to simply say, "We will print pamphlets, we will prepare some

equipment to the public health units. We will make it known in the community by putting signs on bulletin boards in some public buildings or schools or what have you that on such and such a date there will be an audio-visual program on health care for pregnant women, and prenatal courses." That isn't enough. That's not reaching out to people. That's providing a service for those who have the ability to take advantage of it.

I guess it comes back to the Minister's idea of what is individual initiative. And he says it's up to the individual to take the initiative. We shouldn't deprive people of the opportunity of using your own individual initiative. Or we shouldn't sap their individual initiative. That's rhetoric. That's talk. The facts are that there is a high infant mortality rate. How do we correct it? And it isn't enough to say we'll correct it in the same old way as we have in the past, because it hasn't worked in the past. We have to marshal our forces. We have to get a cohesive, not a fragmented attempt and system in place to reach out to people who don't know enough to seek the assistance, who don't know enough to use the information available as the more sophisticated can or the more educated can and the more concerned can. We have to reach out to them and we have to mobilize them and we have to get at them, whether they like it or not in a sense. Because you can't simply say it is their responsibility, it's the responsibility of a pregnant woman to make sure that the food she's eating will lead to a healthy birth. And to say it's her responsibility, if doesn't, well so be it. Not in a modern society. It may be her responsibility, but the fruits, the results of her lack of responsibility, is borne by all of us in the long run. And therefore the responsibility has to be ours. So I'm not satisfied. The Minister says, "I've heard you, it's on the record." I'm not speaking so that somebody some day can read Hansard and say that what the Member for Seven Oaks said made sense. I want to know what this government is doing about it. How are they going to attack the problem?

What I've heard to date from this Minister and other Ministers is that the government is pulling in its horns. It's going to try to leave as much as possible to the individual. To foster that is what I call an archaic concept, that this is a pioneer society and everyone has to fend for themselves, and the strongest shall survive. It just isn't good enough. It isn't a jungle we're living in. We're living in a highly structured, organized society where the fruits of the scientific technology developed over the years is now available.

When we didn't know, that was one thing, but when we know the answers, when we know what can be done, and it isn't done, then really, it is an abrogation of responsibility to say, "Well, here are services. Avail themselves of it, and if you don't, that's lack of initiative on your part. It's something that if you don't do, be it on your head." It ends up in the final analysis on everybody's lap, because the costs are borne by society, the loss to society of this kind of infant mortality rate is extremely high and therefore it is the responsibility of society and the society is government. It is the 57 members here, elected to represent one million people. The government has to take the leadership. They can't simply sit back and say, "Well, we're here simply to administer, to see there's law and order and do as little as possible." You need an activist, interventionist government to deal with this problem, because the problem is not going to go away if you sit back and say, "It's up to them".

So I want the Minister to indicate what he is doing about this, how he's going to tackle this problem. To what extent are they going to get off their butts and be actively involved in coping with a problem which has now clearly surfaced, which shows Manitoba slipping in relation to the other provinces in Canada. And as I said earlier, not that Canada has so much to be proud of, because as I recall, the infant mortality rate is something like 13 out of 1,000 which puts us pretty low down amongst other countries in the western world certainly. So as I say, it's not enough for the Minister to simply indicate that he is pleased to hear what he's heard. It's on the record and we're not speaking for the record, Mr. Chairman. We're speaking here on behalf of one million Manitobans who now know there is a problem that has been with us for some time, it's now highlighted again, underscored again, and what is this government going to do about meeting that problem head-on to correct a situation that is getting worse?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, there is no suggestion and has been no suggestion from this side that the problem is going to go away. It's not going to go away; it's never going to go away. I'm aware of that. I did not say to the honourable member for Seven Oaks that I would simply let his remarks sit on the record. I responded to the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks several minutes ago. The Honourable Member for Logan delivered a very sensible perspective on the problems in the area of child-maternal health and the problems in the area of nutrition and social nutrition needs. I agreed with what he was saying. What I said was I was not going to debate the Honourable Member for Logan. If the Member for Seven Oaks wants me to debate the Honourable Member for Logan,

I will. I didn't debate the Honourable Member for Logan because I agreed with what he was saying. I debate the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks frequently because I don't agree with what he is saying frequently. But I meant no disrespect to the Honourable Member for Logan. As a matter of fact, I'm sorry if the remark was misconstrued. I meant it quite the opposite way, that the Honourable Member for Logan's remarks are now there for me to take into counsel and consideration and I assured him I would do that. I agree with almost everything he said.

I see no useful purpose to be served by going into rhetorical debate on points that he was making with which I'm in agreement. I stood up to acknowledge his remarks and agree with him. There are many things the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks says that I don't agree with, and I suggest we get into rather protracted debates and we don't need any more than we have. Well, he suggests, for example, that the attitude of this government is that this problem is going to go away and that the government is pulling in its horns. The Member for Logan didn't say that; he may feel that, but he didn't say that, and I'm sure he would back the Member for Seven Oaks on that contention because he should do that politically, and I respect that, but my debate is with the Member for Seven Oaks, because the government is not pulling in its horns in this area. There is no change in terms of philosophy or approach or policy or the recognition of the need in this area.

He's talked about going out and beating the bushes and taking this program to everybody. We do as much of that as we humanly can. You can't force people to conform to a bureaucratically decreed pattern of life or behavior. People do have freedom of choice in this province. We do our best to try to persuade them, convince them, educate them, show them and make the nutrition opportunities available to them. We don't just dump off pamphlets in doctors' offices and he knows that. We deliver nutrition packages to the schools, we deliver them to the personal care homes, they are promoted to the persons who utilize schools and personal care homes by our staff. We follow up on the birth of every single child in this province with postnatal visits to the mother to ensure that she has the child immunized, or understands that she should have the child immunized, to counsel her with respect to feeding and nutrition and care of the baby. We attempt to make the resources available and create the attitude that people should take advantage of those resources without forcing people necessarily to conform to an imposed pattern that is not consistent with the concept of a free society that I suggest is shared by every member of this Chamber. This year, the majority of new resources in this particular branch, Home Economic Services, were developed, and I'm quoting here direct from page 51 of our annual report: "To teach infant nutrition, school nutrition, weight control, heart disease, prenatal for native clientele and nutrition for the elderly." The total nutrition program in rural Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg reached 27,010 people.

Now, I dispute the contention of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks. I don't dispute his right to say it, but I dispute his contention that we're backtracking or pulling in our horns or suggesting that people have the total responsibility to look after themselves and that government should do nothing and that we're adopting the attitude that this problem will go away. It won't go away. We recognize that, and we are working to try to address it; we haven't changed in the commitment to that kind of philosophy one iota from the previous administration in that respect and we won't under this Minister, as long as I'm Minister, because I am interested in certain specific fields. We all are. And one of them is the field of nutrition, which I think is a vastly underrated science. Perhaps better understood and practiced by some ancient cultures than modern-day culture. I think that the seeds of good health and preventive medicine lie very profoundly in a proper approach to diet and nutrition. I recognize that some people socio-economically cannot practice good diet and nutrition, and we have to stand ready as their brothers and sisters to assist in that respect. But I don't need to assist the Member for Seven Oaks. If he hasn't got the common sense to practice good diet and nutrition, that's his problem. All we can do is make that known to him, that that is a secret of good health, provided he's blessed with the good fortune of having reasonably good health. I'm not, obviously, referring to our less fortunate citizens who have the bad luck to be born with bad health, but provided you have reasonable health, you've got a responsibility to do something about it yourself if you're socially and economically capable of doing it. If you're not, then we must stand ready to help and we do that, through the services delivered through this branch and we haven't deviated in that philosophy by one iota from what's been the practice in the past.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I'm glad to hear that the Minister is high on philosophy, and it's very well to talk about philosophy, and I'm not talking about forcing people by laws. There's a law which says that you shall not commit suicide, even though that's a decision taken by a person, and if a person tries to commit suicide, he's prosecuted. It's a crime. Only if he doesn't succeed. If he succeeds, that's the end of it.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister really said it all. He said we're not going to force people. It's up to the individual. All we can do is take — you can take the horse to water, you can't make him

drink, i what, basically, the Minister is saying. And that there's postnatal follow-up. Every mother who has given birth is followed up and advised about immunization, etc. That is not good enough with a certain segment of our population. You have to hold their hands, literally. It's not a matter of force. It's a matter of the social workers being involved, the counsellors being involved, the public health nurses being involved. They know the situation. They walk into certain homes and they can tell you, without a doubt, I know this from them, that even though they've made that call, it's a total waste of time, that unless there's a follow-up and in some cases hand-holding, weekly, both prenatal and postnatal, that it isn't going to have an effect. And the proof is in the statistics we're now getting; 16.4 infant mortality rate in Manitoba, per 1,000 live births.

So you can talk all you want about philosophy, and about disagreeing with me, that I'm sort of suggesting what I think he's implying, almost a forcing of people or a police state. Nonsense, and he knows that is nonsense. I'm not suggesting that. What I'm suggesting is that there has to be a constant follow-up.

You know, we have a system in Manitoba where a child must attend a school; it's not up to the parent to decide. A child must attend a school, and if he doesn't attend a school you can be prosecuted. Here we are not dealing with a child attending school, here we are dealing with the future of that child, whether that child will live or die, whether that child will grow up to be a healthy individual or will carry from prenatal, carry within it the seeds of its own ill-health, and for the Minister to say, "Well, all we can do is provide the services, we can provide the information." We can provide means that the information is there, but it's up to the individual to take the initiative and to see to it that they then follow the advice. We know that there are people in our society that can't do it, whether because they have a mental block, or that they lack the education, whether they have emotional problems whether it's straight inability to adequately understand what they're eating or to appreciate the consequences of not following adequate nutrition, for example, or care of themselves during pregnancy. Whatever the reasons are, these people are unable to do it, and you have to reach out to them, not through publication of literature, not through a call after a birth and the public nurse says, you've had the child, now we urge you to do the following, but a constant follow-up if necessary, in some cases week after week.

The large majority don't need that, the large majority know what they should do — some do it better, some do it not as well — but the large majority do go to their pediatricians regularly, on a regular basis, they immunize the children whenever the time is necessary and the number of times necessary, they are with that pediatrician all the way through their child's infancy, and well into adolescence. Those are not the people I'm talking about, I'm talking about that smaller percentage which need more than just that kind of cursory advice being dropped on their doorstep, because advice isn't enough. They've got to be counselled, worked with and challenged, and educated to do the right thing both for themselves and for their both unborn and newly-born children.

And that's why I'm dissatisfied with what the Minister has said, because to me it is a cop out. Again, it's the old story about, leave it to the individual. "We'll make the resources available," he said, "it's a free society, we're not going to force people." I'm not saying you force them, I'm saying that you work with them day in and day out, not through these central people because they're simply a central office but in the field, through the resources that are in place and have to be expanded. The health centres, the regional offices, the social workers, the welfare workers — those are the ones that have to be on top of it all the time, and if we don't do it, then the cost to society in the long run, as I indicated before, is going to continue at the same rate that it has in the past. We are still practicing curative medicine, and not practicing or following policies which lead to proper health.

You know, the World Health Organization defines health as the well-being of people; it isn't talking about going in for surgery when you have to, by that time it's too late, and the Minister knows it. It is the prevention, and prevention starts in the prenatal, it does not start 5, 6, 7 years down the line when the child gets into school —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, if you want to talk about the ideal and about the level of health in this Chamber, certainly there isn't a person here who couldn't be healthier than they are, but don't take the extreme position to justify an inadequate position at the other end of the scale.

I'm not standing here and saying — and I can say when I look at this ashtray — that there should be a law which says, "No smoking", because we all know, if we didn't know it before, we all know that smoking is dangerous to health. —(Interjection)— Even pipe smokers, we all know it's dangerous to health, and yet we do it. But darn it all, I'm talking about an element in our society, which, from the very inception, from conception, have to be led by the hand to assure that we don't end up with the kind of statistics we have before us today, and which follow that child all through its younger years and into adult life, so that illnesses which have their beginnings initially from perhaps poor nutrition to start with on the part of the pregnant mother, and poor nutrition

on the part of the infant child, which are the basis for future ill-health and severe ill-health.

So I'm not satisfied for the Minister to simply say or to imply that I'm standing here and suggesting you force people, it's not a matter of forcing people. It's a matter of working with people on a day-to-day basis, in the community, in their own homes, being called upon, being cajoled, being talked to, being challenged to do the right thing for the sake of their own health and for their children's health, because in the long run society will benefit. In the long run, we'll have a healthier younger generation. I write off everybody in this room — we're over the hill. We're over the hill in the sense, that there's not much we can do about our health except maybe slow down the deterioration, but I'm talking about future generations — the important element in our society, the youngsters, the children. We're not doing enough in that area, we're leaving it to the individual because that's how this Minister feels — individual initiative, individual enterprise. You know, you might have said that in the early years of the development of Manitoba, in a pioneer community where people had to fend for themselves, they had no resources, they didn't have the knowledge, and the knowledge wasn't available, but damn it all, it's available today, the resources are there today, all we need is the will and the dollars to put in to do it.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I feel like I'd like to participate in this debate, and support my honourable friend from Seven Oaks.

I think the Minister has said that we're not pulling in our horns, we're doing the same thing, there's nothing changed. I think if you're doing the same thing, Mr. Chairman, then you're standing still, you're not advancing, you're not going anywhere. Now, I'm not suggesting that every single program that was started years ago must go on continually and increasing and more spending or throwing money away, and that is not what we advocated, and this is not what we are doing now. But the needs change in society. My honourable friend said, that probably former generations many hundred years ago, were in better health as far as this nutrition is concerned than we are now, and that's true. It's not probably — I'm sure that it is. Why? Because society has changed. Society has changed — you see more artificial food now than you ever did before, people were eating normal natural food. You know, when the people were in the country they took care of practically all their needs; they had the meat, they had the eggs, they had the cream and butter, the vegetables, some fruit — they had everything, and there is no doubt that it was easier. But society has changed all that now. There is a larger number of people that are living in the urban areas; fast foods are the order of the day, and it is so easy to get, and it is so attractive, and there's so much advertising on television and don't think that this is not important. That certainly helps to educate or maleducate the youngsters of our country, and all the free world — probably all the world — and there is no doubt about that.

Now the Minister, especially in this area, this present Minister, and I know he's sincere, but so far it is only words about prevention. This is one of the first places to start, if you are going to have prevention, right under here when we are talking about nutrition. That, Mr. Chairman, is the place to start.

And then, Mr. Chairman, we were talking about the different lifestyles, but we're not changing the. The Minister said, you know it's not up to you if you don't want to change, if you don't want to change that's your business, that's true. The Minister is smoking a pipe right now. He knows it's wrong, he'd like to be able to stop. I'd certainly like to be in a decent weight, I'll tell you that, Mr. Chairman, but it is very very difficult. And I think, you know, we've talked awhile ago, we often talk about — you and I both, Jack, you're in the same boat — we've talked about the bilingual program in Canada, and be patient with me, I'm not starting on constitutional reforms — but it was said that it was a fiasco because they tried to impose it. And I think that every member in this House would agree, that the best way would be to start in the schools, and I think that this is the important thing.

Now, the Minister is saying as well, we aren't pulling in our horns, but there is always one staff man year less, and so on; and we are certainly not starting any new programs, especially a program like this that it took so long for the politicians to realize the importance of that — including our government, the former government. And it was quite difficult to come in, and I don't think there's any difference now, but I know that the director was such a dedicated person, and she had so many ideas, so many programs that she wanted, and it was always one of the places she had less support probably, in another area it wasn't as glamorous, and it was always easy to cut down.

So I say that we weren't doing enough. So if the Minister is standing pat, or doing just a little bit less, he shouldn't be proud. We had been improving over a number of years, and all of a sudden the Minister will say, "Well that has plateaued." Everything has plateaued all of a sudden. And

then you start pulling down on the plateau a little bit, and changing a little bit; not necessarily issuing a new list or policy list, but doing it by not having the staff, by instructing the staff to be a little tough, by not having enough visits, and so on.

That's not going to change the lifestyle; that's not going to teach people the correct habits. It's very late for me now, I know what I'm doing wrong, but after 56 years and in your case 51 years today, Mr. Chairman, you'll agree with me that it is quite difficult to change all of a sudden, when you've had a habit when you were young, and your parents were saying, "You better eat that, because people are starving in India or China." That didn't help anybody if you finished that extra piece of pie, or that piece of bread and butter, and so on. —(Interjection)— I ate it, and the people were still starving, and look what happened to me? That's exactly my point.

So, Mr. Chairman, I say that we have to make a special effort in the schools, and we can't force people, but we certainly can give them . . . what better education, you know, people go to school for what? To learn to live a better life, to earn a living — not necessarily to get more money so that they can have fast food and unnatural foods when they feel like it — so what better way to educate the people than to start in the school.

No mention here, I guess it's an oversight in the report — I didn't see it — no mention is made of day care centres. I would hope that this information would be given at day care centres, this is one of the best places.

But it's not enough, you know, we congratulate each other and we say, "This is a dream," and so the Minister has the same dream as I have, so fine, I'll sit down and that's it, nothing is happening, and we're still stuck with our dreams, but nothing is changing. Sometimes you've got to take radical changes. For instance, we had started a discussion of more interdepartmental co-operation, in this case. I don't want just an answer: "Yes, I've talked to him and we've burned the midnight oil, the Minister of Education and myself, or the Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sports and myself." What is being done? I think that we have those ongoing committees with staff that should discuss that for instance. I think we should look immediately at the school.

The minister is quite proud of this report. On nutrition education it has reached 27,000 people, that's everybody in Manitoba, and "reached" might have been one day. You know, I'm certainly not blaming everything on the minister but I don't want him to run on the same spot or to stand still. I think that we should increase now. There was a study in front of our department . . . but the results, you know, you don't finish it. People say, "Why didn't you do it then?" Well, sometimes it takes a while. And there was a very important study that we had made with the Department of Health and Education on all this question of nutrition and the recommendation that was made, and the election came and we couldn't see the result immediately. But this information is there. A new government doesn't have to start all over, reinvent the wheel every time you start. I think that is an important thing. Has there been made a study? I remember the Task Force minister — I think I'd recognize him if he'd come in, he hasn't been here for a while, but I think I'd recognize him — his thing was lunch after school, and, you know, lunch in the schools and so on. Now, why don't we talk about what is going on in the schools? I believe in freedom, but I certainly would not object if we did away with all these machines for the dispensing of doughnuts and that kind of stuff in the schools. You know, what's the point? You tell people, you know, you're going to — I agree, I'm not that much for the government being responsible for hot soup and all these meals, but I'm all in favour of educating the people and their families to come in and get the proper foods. You know, you can give them the free food, hot soup, and the best food possible, then the money that they save, bang, they'll dump in the machine, they'll get a coke, and a doughnut, and a chocolate bar, and everything is fine. I think that the education has to come in school.

We've received either no education — and it's not necessarily just the native people, or the poor people; they need more help. But it's even the medium people that are fairly well off, about the average, the average revenue, they were getting the wrong information at this time, and then there is so many things around us and as I say, especially the advertising in the schools, advertising on T.V. aimed at the youngsters. You know, you look at all these fast food people advertising, and the chocolate bars, and all these sweet things; all artificial food, and there's practically nothing left but junk.

So, Mr. Chairman, I think this is the direction I'd like to see us go. Now, I suggest that there should be an interdepartmental committee, and I would suggest that they certainly would be the Department of Health, the Department of Education, —(Interjection)— but not for this area. Sure they have committees, but it's not this special thing to go on nutrition and fitness. I'm talking about. . .

A MEMBER: We had a major study.

MR. DESJARDINS: Oh, we had a major study, right, yes, but where is it now? On a shelf gathering

dust. And then I think that the Fitness and Amateur Sports Minister should be involved. My dream, and I also had dreams, that's one of the reasons why we wanted the Reh-Fit Program in an area where we could move around a little larger to co-operate and to work with them and to work with private enterprise, with insurance companies, with the reh-fit people, with the hospital. You know, it's okay to have reh-fit people, and talk about fitness and jogging and so on, but if you're eating the wrong food, it doesn't help, it doesn't help. That is one of the reasons. Many people said that Fitness and Amateur Sports should not be in Health. I disagree. I disagree. If you look at sports; if you look at professional sports, in building arenas, and so on, you're right, but that's not the role of the government, is it? That's not the major role of the provincial government, to worry about professional sports. You know, all the sportsmen, if you say you're against expansion of an arena, you're in trouble. But, are there any amongst us that if we look at priorities that we feel we want to use sports for mass participation and for fitness, and even the definition of health that my honourable friend is talking about, physical and mental health, I think that fitness is very important.

So this is why it was a directorate in the Department of Health, and I don't think that we have to apologize for that. I think it was in a good spot. Now, I'm not going to criticize the government for changing this a bit. This department was too big anyway. It was either taking something else out, so I don't fault them, but I will fault them if the door is closed, when they lose the directorate, and they forget about it, because they can't. If the mandate is to take care of the health of the people of Manitoba, I think that they have to talk to the people in Education; I think it's the best place and the only place to start. And as I say, the best example of that was the bilingual program that I'm not fully satisfied with, because you can't tell somebody, a civil servant that's been working for 20 years or so, 30 years, age 51, that all of a sudden he's got to talk French. It doesn't make much sense. And that's not freedom. And it's the same thing, the minister can't say, well, it's your fault; we have no responsibility. I think the minister is right as far as he is saying, if he is saying that they can't do anything with me. That's right, I think I'm a lost case, I agree. But if I had received the proper education years ago, if I had been helped in choosing the life style and so on, I think that it would be a different matter now. I might be the prime example, but I'm certainly not the only example, Mr. Chairman. What are you blushing for? So, Mr. Chairman, I think this is the important thing.

Now, would the minister tell us if this is being done, if there is at least discussion? Not just be satisfied and say: "Well, there's nothing changed, we're doing the same thing." But what for the future? You've got to give leadership, Mr. Minister, you're not in there just to see that we keep on running in the same spot. You're there to try certain things, and some of the things you are going to try, you'll fall flat on your face, but that's no disgrace. At least you'll be trying. I want to know. Is there any discussion, an official discussion, or semi-official discussion between you and the Minister of Education? And what is being done? What is being done? Can you tell me that as far as you are concerned it would go against the freedom of the individual, so you feel that you do not want to dictate, or the Minister of Education does not want to dictate to the school or the school boards, and therefore, these machines, dispensing machines, will remain in the schools and they will be able to get the facilities for all this junk food? I want to know.

Now, you know, my idea of freedom and your idea of freedom might not necessarily be the same. I'm not saying that if somebody brings a doughnut to school or a drink, that you are going to shoot him. I'm saying, don't make it easy for them to get.

And what about fitness, what about this exercise and this jogging and prevention? Are you talking to the Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sports? And what kind of programs are you devising to help these people? Because, you know, any people knowledgeable in this field will tell you that you can't do one without the other, that you can't just exercise and so on if you don't watch what you eat. And, you know, you've talked about the main thing in this component and nutrition education is school nutrition. Well what has been done in the school nutrition? Infant nutrition, fine, I'll accept that you have carried on in working with pregnant women, and I don't think that you're following through enough, and we weren't following through enough, and I'm not going to be too hard on you as long as you're progressing. But if you just sit on your laurels and figure that everything is fine, well, that is not good enough.

The school nutrition; I don't know what you've done. I don't know anything, I don't know anything you've done except maybe make pamphlets available. Have you talked to the Minister of Education? Is there a certain period that definitely you will instruct people on this better life that you want, on prevention? Should that be in the curriculum? I beg your pardon? —(Interjection)— All right. Is there enough emphasis on it, and is your course assessed? Has it been evaluated? Has it been evaluated or is it just that, you know, you're just saying: "Me too," and we're going through the motions and nobody cares, it's way down the list? I don't know; I'd like to know.

And the same thing, as I say, with the Department of Fitness and Amateur Sports, it's okay

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to make grants to professional sports to help pay large salaries; that's fine. It's recreation. Well, I'm talking about sports and what I think is the responsibility of the government, it is participation sports, participating sports and amateur sports, more so, I'm certainly not against professional sports. That is something that I am very much interested in, but I don't think that I need assistance from the government, too much assistance from the provincial or federal government on that. I think that in the sports that the people were the aim, and I am sure that the Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sports would at least have the same aim, to see as many Manitobans participate in as many sports as possible, or at least one in the summer and one in the winter, and I'm not making any restrictions for age, Mr. Chairman. There's all kinds of different sports. So I think these are the things that. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 12:30, I am now leaving the Chair and will return at 2:30 this afternoon.