

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Friday, 20 March, 1981

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 Member for Radisson.

MR. ABE KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report same and asks leave to sit again. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Dauphin, report of Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS
AND TABLING OF REPORTS**

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. STERLING R. LYON (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I would like first of all to lay on the table of the House, a copy of a letter which I wrote to the Prime Minister on March 5, relative to the Garrison project and his meeting that at that time was forthcoming with the President of the United States. There have been questions on this topic in the House prior to this tabling. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to make a statement to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce the establishment of a small French Language Services Section in the Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources. This new two-member section will assist the Deputy Minister in the following functions:

Liaison between the Franco-Manitobain community and the Provincial Government departments;

Liaison between government departments and channelling requests for specific services or information required by individuals or organizations;

Studying and recommending policies and priorities of services provided in the official minority language, French;

Responsibility for matters relating to French language and culture at the provincial, federal and international levels;

And advising Provincial Government departments in the planning and operation of programs and services in French.

Mr. Speaker, members will be aware that as required by the Supreme Court decision the Provincial Government has undertaken in earnest, to translate Manitoba Statutes and Regulations and to provide translation and interpretation services as and when required. Despite the fact that there are at most 25 qualified legal translators in all of Canada most of whom work for the Federal and New Brunswick governments, we have made good

progress in translating statutes and legislative bills. As of February 15, 1981, 30 Acts or related material totalling 750 pages have been translated.

With regard to interpretation services I am informed that 14 requests have been accommodated so far, 13 for the courts and one for public hearings on the Constitution by the Standing Committee on Statutory Regulations and Orders. Members will recall that for the first time in recent Manitoba history at these hearings, briefs could be delivered in either of the official languages.

After further study, Mr. Speaker, of what additional measures are required to improve the Provincial Government's capacity to meet the need for certain services in both official languages and after consultation with various interested organizations and persons, we have decided that the small section we have announced will best respond to the indicated needs.

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

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Merci, M. l'Orateur. Il me fait certes plaisir de féliciter le Premier Ministre et son Cabinet à ce temps-ci. Je crois que c'est quelque chose qui nous manquait depuis environ quelques années lorsque nous avions le Secrétariat des Affaires culturelles fédérales-provinciales et, comme de raison, avec le caractère que doit prendre le Canada sous peu je crois que c'est quelque chose de très important. Il me peine quelque peu que le Premier Ministre n'a su à cette occasion, cette unique occasion, dire quelques mots français ou au moins nous donner une traduction française. J'aimerais aussi féliciter le Sous-ministre des Affaires culturelles qui croit à oeuvrer pour les francophones du Manitoba et j'espère que cette chose sera un organisme qui pourra fonctionner justement comme le disait le Premier Ministre, pour créer une liaison entre les francophones et aussi les anglophones intéressés.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that you will find the translation in Hansard. I thought that it was a unique occasion to speak French but I congratulate the First Minister of the Cabinet in the —(Interjection)— I won't tell him all the bad things I said.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this is something that was needed. We used to have the Secretariat on Dominion Provincial Cultural Affairs and that petered out or I don't know what it's doing now, and I think this is a unique occasion to act as a liaison as the First Minister said. I think that they have a good man in the Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs, who I think is working for the community. Mr. Speaker, as I say I think that it would have been proper though at this time on this occasion, to have a translation of this. It wouldn't have taken that much. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion.

The Honourable Member on a point of order.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW (Lac du Bonnet): No, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to make the point that I was trying to hear the Member for St. Boniface, but it seemed

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that the translation service has not yet been implemented in this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HON. DOUG GOURLAY (Swan River) introduced Bill No. 35, An Act to amend The Planning Act.

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the First Minister when it is that his government intends to change the Property Tax Credit Program in order to deal with the apparent anomalies that do exist in the program and the discrimination that does exist within the program as was explained to the Minister of Finance during the course of his Estimates Debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister of Finance has already answered that question on behalf of the government, indicating that he and his department have been monitoring complaints about alleged anomalies and, as was said at the time the White Paper was first brought out, if these anomalies are found to exist, corrective action can be taken on them.

We're monitoring the situation right now because we share the same view as the member who has asked the question and I think all members of the House, that what we're intending to do through the White Paper programs is to bring targeted help to the people who need it most and to the extent that we find that the regulations require improvement to better effect that purpose; that will be done after the monitoring process that has been undertaken by the Minister and his department.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that a year ago during the Budget Debate it was pointed out to the Minister of Finance then and indeed to the Premier and his colleagues, that the effect was going to be in fact what it has proven to be, given the fact that they have had a year to look into that question, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance why it is that they persisted with the formula as announced a year ago when it was pointed out very explicitly to them the net effect of those changes one year ago.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney): Mr. Speaker, the net effect of those programs is very beneficial. What the members are talking about is some of the effects around the fringes of the programs and we acknowledge that there are some difficulties and the First Minister has just said that we are continuing to monitor and identify those situations. But there is without question, the net effect of the White Paper programs has been very beneficial in bringing additional assistance to those people who need it most.

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

MR. USKIW: Well then, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Health whether he can indicate to the House just what kind of a commitment he gave to the people of Manitoba when he was interviewed by Peter Warren instead of the Premier on the Peter Warren program, the interview with the Premier every Friday morning. My understanding is that the Minister of Health gave an undertaking that there was going to be a change that's going to take place that will remedy the situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L.R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry): That's not correct, Mr. Speaker. I was asked by the interviewers on that program whether the government was addressing this problem and was concerned about the problem and I said yes, that the Minister of Finance had responded to it, that the purported anomaly was being examined and evaluated and if it was found that there was a valid reason for the criticisms and a valid reason for change, that change would certainly be effected by the government. That was the commitment that I gave.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister saying that he is satisfied that there is need for a change?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, the system has produced benefits for a substantial number of Manitobans in terms of their financial situation and their tax situations, thousands upon thousands of Manitobans. There are some apparently who are at the present moment under the impression, and it may be a correct impression, that on balance, on average, they are put in a position of disadvantage rather than advantage; that is being explored by the Minister of Finance and his officials.

If it is demonstrated that that is the case and it is working hardship, that was certainly not intended by the government on persons in specific income categories who would be affected and be injured by the regulations, I can assure the honourable member that this government will move to redress that situation, but the examination and evaluation has to be carried out first. The complaints and the criticisms are being investigated and I might say, Mr. Speaker, that we are not hearing publicity and attention focused on the thousands of cases who have benefited under the change that has been made.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Health whether he can confirm that there were approximately 2,200 pensioners that participated in the SAFER Program in 1980, in the year 1980 the calendar year which is the same as the income tax year that we are now talking about, Mr. Speaker, 2,200 participants in SAFER, and of that 2,200 I would venture to say, no more than a couple of hundred actually got a net benefit after the tax credits were removed from them.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I cannot confirm that. I don't stand here and dispute it, but I can't confirm

it. What I have said is that the government is concerned that there appear to be people who are disadvantaged by the changes made that have now come to light, and is investigating those complaints and is investigating those situations. What redress and correction is necessary will be proceeded with, will be instituted, but to leap prematurely to the conclusion that those who perhaps interpret their income tax situation as reflecting and as representing a disadvantage for them would be most unreasonable and irresponsible. There are other sides of the income security and income benefit program system in Manitoba through which many have benefited, but confronted with their revised income tax forms, it does appear in many instances that they are suffering a decline in overall net income.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance in his Estimates indicates a \$15 million reduction in tax credit benefits to the people of Manitoba. The benefits . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I believe the honourable member is debating rather than seeking information.
The honourable member with a question.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister of Finance confirm that there is a reduction of approximately \$15 million in the tax credit program . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. Questions of confirmation are much similar to those of agreement. Would the honourable member care to rephrase his question?

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the Minister of Finance to indicate to the House how many pensioners had a net benefit from the SAFER Program last year, and what percentage that is of the \$15 million reduction in tax credits for 1980.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Information of that nature, I think, should be received by an Order for Return.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: If I may at this time interrupt, to introduce 25 students of Grade 5 standing from Robert Smith School, under the direction of Mr. MacBeth. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

We also have 16 students of Grade 11 standing from Miles MacDonell, under the direction of Miss Lindsay. This school is in the constituency of The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

We have 40 students of Grades 9 to 12 standing from St. Vladimir's College, Roblin, together with exchange students from Ste. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec under the direction of Father Boychuk and St. Vladimir's College is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Roblin.

On behalf of all honourable members we welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS (Cont'd)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. GEORGE MINAKER (St. James): Mr. Speaker, if I might, I believe I might have the information for the Honourable Member from Lac du Bonnet with regard to the \$15 million program or rebates that he is looking for. I would suggest he refer to our department of Community Services and Corrections and he will find that there is in excess of \$15 million in the new programs under CRISP, the Child Related Income Supplement, as well as the Manitoba Supplement. And also, in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, if I may . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Speaker, I might remind the honourable members opposite that these programs were just introduced in January 1 of this year and the major portion that they're referring to in the new Estimates are listed in our department and he will see that \$15 million are there.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the other question relating to senior citizens receiving the SAFER Program I believe that the Honourable Member from Lac du Bonnet may be not aware of the program that's called Pensioners Special Assistance for Education Tax and that is completely independent of any SAFER Program payment; it is not income tested. The regulation calls for that the pensioner has to be over 65 years of age; they are not income tested, it relates directly to the rent they are paying or charged for and anyone paying over \$136 per month, Mr. Speaker, will receive 10 percent of that back, up to \$175 to look after the education tax portion of their rent. That is independent of SAFER; it's independent of any income testing; and I believe that the honourable member was not aware of that particular program.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister is so full of vigor this morning, perhaps he would tell us, perhaps he would tell the House how many hundreds of thousands of dollars of benefits were paid out to the senior citizens that he makes reference to in 1980 because it's not millions, it's a very small amount.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Speaker, I might advise the honourable member that that program was just recently introduced and was not in effect prior to the White Paper reform.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister who is responsible for The Clean Environment Act and I ask the Minister if he is taking any action, and what action he is taking, against the Playgreen Inn in Norway House which was charged last summer with dumping raw sewage into the Nelson River which is a water supply for the people living in Norway House, and has only recently been charged again with dumping raw sewage into that same stream. I'd ask the Minister if he is taking

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proper corrective action so that this will not happen again.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

HON. GARY FILMON (River Heights): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the member is quite correct in saying that charges were laid under The Clean Environment Act last summer and a conviction was achieved against the Playgreen Inn. Similarly, as a result of an inspection by one of my Public Health Inspectors earlier this week, more charges were laid against the same establishment. In addition to that, at the present time we're having the Senior Medical Officer of Health issue a formal order to plug the outlet pipe on the discharge from the sewage disposal system and to make orders to the effect of sewage being hauled away until such time as the repair is effected to the sewage disposal system.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister if he is going to ensure that there is a sufficient penalty in this case against the people that are guilty of this offence, in view of the fact that the last penalty was \$150 for dumping the raw sewage, which represents a slap on the wrist for a very serious offence. I would ask the Minister if he is going to, in this case, personally take note of the situation and ensure that there is a proper penalty assessed and that he is going to make sure that there is a proper resolution of the problem.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, the nature and the size of the penalty is one that's set by the courts and as with the case of an entrenched Bill of Rights, we have the courts making these decisions for us. That is not a matter under my jurisdiction.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MS. JUNE WESTBURY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is addressed to the Honourable First Minister. Has the First Minister yet joined the four Atlantic Provinces, the Province of Saskatchewan and the two Territories in appointing a Minister specifically responsible for pension reform, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. LYON: Not as a separate Minister, Mr. Speaker, in response to the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, but the Pension Commission of the Government of Manitoba operates under the Ministry of the Department of Labour and Manpower.

MS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, in response to a question in the Federal House, the Federal Minister

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. This is the time for questions; not for statements.

The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the First Minister would advise the House whether he received a letter from the Prime Minister of Canada sent to all

Premiers suggesting that a Minister specifically responsible for pension reform should be appointed, and if he has responded affirmatively or negatively to that letter.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I did receive a letter from the Prime Minister of Canada some time ago in connection with the upcoming National Pension Conference. I would have to reread the letter. I would be extremely surprised if, as the honourable member suggests, the Prime Minister of Canada is now giving gratuitous advice to the Provincial Governments as to what Ministries they should form. I would hope that is not the case; if it is the case I can say, Mr. Speaker, that we always pay respectful attention to comments by the Prime Minister of Canada, but I couldn't give any undertaking that we would follow the advice of any Prime Minister with respect to how the Provincial Government structures itself.

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

MS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, would the First Minister please tell us which member of Cabinet will be representing Manitoba at the Conference on Pensions at the end of this month?

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge that the Honourable Minister of Health will be co-ordinating the various ministerial inputs into the Pension Conference that is upcoming.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs. Can the Minister advise the House whether in fact moneys have been given by the Province of Manitoba to the City of Winnipeg for the approaches and other work relative to the Sherbrook-McGregor overpass?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs.

HON. GERALD W.J. MERCIER (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I think I would have to check into that matter because, of course, the proposed construction of the Sherbrook-McGregor Overpass goes back some years, and in recollecting back some six or seven years ago when there was property acquired by the City of Winnipeg to accommodate approaches and construction of the overpass, it's my recollection that the then government, previous administration, did pass on to the City of Winnipeg some moneys, which I believe were designated for those projects or designed to assist the City of Winnipeg with those projects, but I'd have to check the exact detail, Mr. Speaker.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's recollection conforms with my own. I ask him whether if his check does in fact indicate that moneys were given by the Province of Manitoba to the City of Winnipeg for the purpose of constructing the Sherbrook and McGregor overpass, then that those moneys should be used for that purpose and

not for any purpose and that the province either be repaid or have the moneys used for the purposes for which they were given.

MR. MERCIER: As I've said, Mr. Speaker, I would have to check the details of the previous payments that have been made to the city and the purposes for which those payments were made.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Honourable Minister of Education. In view of the fact that the Federal Government has changed the requirements with respect to student loans, reducing the minimum school attendance requirement from 26 to 12 weeks, is the Minister going to make a similar change in the eligibility requirements for the provincial bursary portion of Student Aid.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. KEITH A. COSENS (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, we've considered certain changes in the Student Aid Program and I'll be announcing those at the appropriate time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rossmere.

MR. VIC SCHROEDER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Minister of Finance. In view of the fact that the front benches of the government have been indicating that there are thousands benefiting from the new Tax Credit Programs, could he give me an example of someone earning more than \$45,000 per year, who is not receiving a benefit of at least \$100 more than last year if they were paying property taxes of at least \$325.00?

MR. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised that the honourable member hasn't been able to come to the conclusion that when the property tax minimum was raised, that they would get that sort of benefit.

MR. SCHROEDER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are finding out who is getting the benefits. Can he now give us an example of one individual earning between \$2,000 and \$18,000 who receives more under the new cost of living formula than they would have received under the old formula? In fact, can he give us one example of one individual earning between \$2,000 and \$18,000, who is receiving the same amount?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. May I suggest to the honourable members that questions of that nature are better handled during debate on Estimates, rather than during debate in the question period.

The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask this question of the Minister of Agriculture on whether he has been able to receive information with respect to the questions I posed to him about the marshy point in the R.M. of Coldwell.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, I was about to rise to provide the member with that information. The questions that the member asked on Tuesday, I believe, was there local input, or was there discussions taking place or had taken place with the local council, and yes, there had been before the crossings were put in. The reason for building the crossings, Mr. Speaker, were to allow the farmers to take the hay out before the ice was frozen adequately to remove the hay early last fall. If they had to wait for the ice to become thick enough, then it would have been January probably before they would have been able to move it out. It was for early hay removal, that was basically the reason.

The third part of the question, the point that the member raised about removal. The council indicated they would have to further review it before they would make a determination whether it should stay in on a longer term basis, but because of lack of rainfall and snowfall this winter, there is consideration being given to leaving it in, in case the hay would again be required this particular year. A permit has been requested from the Department of Natural Resources to leave the crossings in.

MR. URUSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister indicate whether the information provided by local farmers that approximately 500 tons of hay were cut in this area, whether the expense of \$25,000 to put in those crossings would not have been excessive as has been reported by the Minister of Natural Resources' staff, that the funds appear to have been excessive in terms of the benefits of these crossings?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, the information that I had provided to me has been from my staff. I am not aware of the amount of tonnage and the actual paying out of the funds to put the crossings in, but I can review the matter, Mr. Speaker, further, at this particular time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. WILSON PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Health. In view of the Minister's admission that there hasn't been the fullest co-operation from the owner of the St. Adolphe Home, and that the government was on the verge of withholding funding to the owner of the St. Adolphe Home for past indiscrepancies, is the government still actively considering this company's application to the government to build more private profit-making homes under the Provincial Health Care Program?

MR. SHERMAN: Not actively considering it at this time, Mr. Speaker.

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, a supplementary to the Minister. Is the government willing to consider applications from non-profit community, religious and service groups to provide the needed personal care facilities and services that were being supplied by the owner of the St. Adolphe Home, and that were being applied for by the owner of the St. Adolphe Home, in

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terms of providing more services, which the government up to now was considering necessary, because the file was still on the active file, not on the dead file?

MR. SHERMAN: The short answer is yes, Mr. Speaker, but the fact is that the application from the operators of the St. Adolphe Nursing Home to build a new personal care home was not an application to build in St. Adolphe. It was in another part of the southern Winnipeg area.

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

MR. PARASIUK: Yes, I'd like to ask the Minister if the Minister and the government would be willing to consider applications from non-profit religious, community and service groups, to provide the needed services in the other southern parts of the area of Winnipeg, that presently the government is considering providing through private profit-making corporations.

MR. SHERMAN: We do and we are, Mr. Speaker. Of the 22 personal care homes under construction in the province right now prior to announcement of my 1981-82 Capital Program, 17 are non-proprietary, five are the proprietary operators to whom I've referred earlier, who have been re-licensed to come back into the field. Of the five or six personal care homes that are being constructed in the new 1981-82 Capital Program, all of them, I believe I'm correct in saying that all of them are non-proprietary.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. BRIAN CORRIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and relates to the recent judgment of the Manitoba Court of Appeal with respect to the Law Society Reimbursement Fund matter. I would ask the Minister whether the government will be moving to amend The Law Society Act, in order to clarify the intention of the Legislature as to whether or not the Law Society membership should have a discretion in making awards of indemnity from the Reimbursement Fund. That is the fund that is established to satisfy claims for lawyers, or dealing with people who suffer loss as a result of misappropriation by solicitors, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that legislation comes under my jurisdiction, so it's a matter I'll have to discuss further.

MR. CORRIN: I'm indicating, Mr. Speaker, that this is a matter for Consumer Affairs, because we're dealing with consumers of a service, professional service, but if the Honourable Attorney-General feels that he would prefer to deal with the matter, he can address himself to this question. If not, I have got a supplementary which I would address to the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I had requested and just received, but not had an opportunity to review the transcript of the judgment in that particular case and I would like an opportunity to do that.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Speaker, I would ask either Minister, although I would prefer the Minister of Consumer Affairs to deal with it, whether he or they feel that self-governing professions such as the legal profession should have an absolute discretion in law, which allows them to decide what constitutes a satisfactory claim against such a reimbursement fund, which is of course, supported by contributions from the profession. Does one or either of them feel that consumers of legal services are adequately protected in this regard?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Corrections, and ask him whether there is a strong demand for children for adoption in the province, and if he can also indicate what a normal waiting period would be for an average couple.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Speaker, there always is a demand for children in the adoption process in Manitoba. I can't give the exact figures to the honourable member, but I can get that information for him or, if he wishes to wait until the Estimates, they are going to be up in approximately a week's time, I can have that information for him then.

MR. DOERN: Can the Minister confirm that in the case of what is called "private adoptions" that it is a condition of adoption that a bona fide government agency must approve of such an arrangement?

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Speaker, that is correct. It would either be the Children's Aid Society, who has the mandate in that region or it could be the Director of Child Welfare.

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

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, does the Minister have any evidence of a black market for babies in the Province of Manitoba?

MR. MINAKER: No, Mr. Speaker, other than the one particular case that has been in the paper the last couple of days, it's the first time that it's been brought to our attention that there is possibility that someone in the province is involved in private adoption, but that is being reviewed at the present time by the Attorney-General and our department.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. JAY COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister responsible for Highways and Transportation. I'd ask the Minister if he can

confirm that Manitoba Hydro has approved in principle the construction of a road from Split Lake to Gillam and that they will cost-share the construction of that road with the Province of Manitoba upon receipt of certain assurances from the Minister's Department?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Highways.

HON. DONALD ORCHARD (Pembina): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm that after a period of negotiation with Manitoba Hydro that they are in agreement to cost-share construction of the road between Split Lake and Gillam.

MR. COWAN: Mr. Speaker, as this is a road that we have been pressuring the government for some time and the residents of that community have been eagerly awaiting, can the Minister indicate what action he is going to take in response to a letter which was forwarded to the Minister in early February, which suggested that the routing of that road and the clearing of that road should begin before the spring breakup of 1981?

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, that suggestion of undertaking clearing prior to the breakup of the spring of 1981 is a valid suggestion but, unfortunately, not one that we can accommodate this year since we are already into the spring breakup period and are unable to undertake normal tendering procedure to enable any work to take place before spring breakup this year.

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

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, as that was one of the conditions of the approval in principle or the support of the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, can the Minister of Highways and Transportation indicate if construction will begin after the spring breakup or can he give us some tentative schedule as to when he anticipates that the clearing and the routing of that path will be undertaken by his department?

MR. ORCHARD: Mr. Speaker, I can't give the Member a specific date as to when construction will take place. We are in the process of developing the tendering procedure under which a construction contract will be let and it is our hope and anticipation that construction can take place as soon as is physically possible on such a road routing and terrain. I only want to point out to the Member for Churchill, as he well knows having that area in his constituency, that often construction of new roads in that area can only take place in the wintertime because of the terrain, the muskeg-type terrain that you have to deal with in road construction in that area, so that it may well be, Mr. Speaker, that construction will not take place or undertake a major initiative until later this year.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Wellington.

MR. CORRIN: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Honourable Attorney-General. I want to know

whether the Attorney-General feels whether present internal review procedures established and put in place by the City of Winnipeg Police Department will be sufficient to deal with the case of the two Winnipeg police officers who were recently discharged as a result of the improper processing of the case brought against them by the Attorney-General's Department. Does he feel that the procedures of the City of Winnipeg internal review will be sufficient to make up for his department's incompetence in that respect, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Wellington made a number of assumptions which are incorrect. He referred to the improper processing of the case as a basis for not proceeding again against two individual police officers involved, Mr. Speaker. In fact the prosecution could have been taken again against the two individual officers, but the Crown Attorneys involved, after reviewing the evidence that was given, decided that there was a lack of sufficient evidence to proceed again against the two police officers charged.

Mr. Speaker, there is a question as to whether or not the two police officers have breached police regulations and that is being referred to the Police Department to determine whether or not there is any breach of their own internal regulations. There is a question that is being raised as a result of the trial over procedures relating to gun control, Mr. Speaker, and those are being reviewed immediately in order to determine whether there are any improvements in those procedures that should take place.

MR. CORRIN: A supplementary to the Attorney-General, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask him why he or a member of his staff did not review that particular case and that evidence before they filed the prosecution and in that regard, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Attorney-General whether he has made an inquiry within his department in order to establish why the wrong person, a person without knowledge, was asked to swear the information which became the basis for the discharge of the two officers in question? Can he advise us whether he has reviewed this matter and has established why this case was allowed to go forward so inefficiently prepared?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, there were two questions there. With respect to the first, the fact is that, as I'm advised by the Crown Counsel involved, is that the evidence given at the trial did not conform with the information that was given to the Crown attorney involved prior to the trial, so there was a change of evidence at the trial which was deemed to be sufficient enough not to warrant the further proceeding with the charges, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the second item, that is a matter of serious concern, Mr. Speaker, to me and my department and steps are being taken to correct that and to ensure that does not happen again.

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

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct this question to the Minister of Natural

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Resources and ask him whether he has responded to the request presented to him by the Chief and Band of the Fisher River Indians dealing with the procedures and elections of future Advisory Board members by the communities, community fishermen that they represent?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, the member would be aware that unlike the situation on Lake Manitoba, on Lake Winnipeg fisheries we do have an existing advisory board that meets on a reasonably regular basis to sort out the kind of difficulties that the Chief of the Fisher Branch Indian Reservation brought to our attention. They have, as a result of that meeting, scheduled a meeting of the Advisory Board themselves to see whether or not some agreement can be arrived at in terms of representation. I think one of the problems was the representation that the northern part of the lake was receiving and/or whether or not the manner or way in which they themselves get appointed. I have not particular opposition; I have indicated to my department that if the mechanism can be set up to allow for self-election I would be quite happy to proceed on that basis.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time for Question Period having expired we will proceed with Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 29 and Bills 11 and 27?

SECOND READING

BILL NO. 29 — AN ACT TO AMEND THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT (2)

MR. ORCHARD presented Bill No. 29, An Act to amend The Highway Traffic Act (2), for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Transportation.

MR. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in introducing Bill No. 29, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act (2), I want to point out to honourable members in the Opposition that the Bill, as they probably already are well aware, contains a number of the normal housekeeping amendments as well as some legislative areas of new initiative that the department is undertaking this year and hopes to expand upon with amendments in this bill.

I won't take time explaining some of the housekeeping amendments because they're rather self-explanatory but I would like, Mr. Speaker, to spend a certain amount of time discussing some of the major amendments and the implications that we see flowing from those amendments.

Two amendments deal with definition only and on the surface are relatively mundane but they do have some significant impact in redefining the moped. What we are basically achieving, Mr. Speaker, is inclusion of the happy wanderer type vehicle as a moped and this will enable owners of those vehicles to licence them as a moped and to use them on the highways and byways of the province. Now, as members recall last spring we ran into a certain amount of discussion and controversy over the use of the happy wanderer type of vehicle by some of the members of our handicapped community and the difficulty that they had was that there really was no category to fit that particular vehicle into. And we have in perusing the Act over the past several months determined that that type of a vehicle can be included under the guidelines of a moped, can be licenced as such providing it meets the various manufacturers of this type of vehicle, meet with some fairly rigid standards that we of course are going to put on those vehicles to assure that they are a safe vehicle and that they are going to perform properly for those who own them.

So in another effort by this government in the year of the physically handicapped, we are making that kind of an amendment to accommodate to a great degree some of the concerns that were mentioned last summer and some of the questions that were asked last summer. The drivers of the newly classified moped will have to qualify for a moped licence and under legislation which has been in place for a number of years in The Highway Traffic Act, there is the ability by the Registrar to put certain limitations on any driver's licence. And we envision this second part of existing legislation to give us the ability to put restrictions if necessary on the area, the times, in which people may be able to operate the mopeds and accommodate the majority of their desires in using the moped, the newly classified moped.

A second amendment to definition, Mr. Speaker, is on the redefining the definition of a motorcycle. Once again, a relatively mundane amendment but it does have some significant impact on the motorcycling community. All of us are aware of the desire for more fuel efficient modes of transportation. Motorcycles represent one avenue of more fuel efficient transportation usable for a number of months in Manitoba and what we are proposing here is that with the new generation of motorcycles coming out which were neither a moped and didn't meet with the speed requirement, the minimum attainable speed requirement of our existing definition of motorcycle we found that the very fuel efficient small cc motorcyles could not be licenced as motorcycles and we are proposing to lower the minimum required speed on motorcycles to accommodate the registration of those much more fuel efficient motorcycles that members of the motoring public are desirous of using.

One major set of second area, major change in legislation is legislative amendments which are necessitated by Manitoba's entry in implementation on April 1st of the Reciprocity Agreement that we discussed in some detail in my Estimates. There are a number of legislative changes which are part of Bill 29 to accommodate the registration, function and the cab card identification function and to set up the

parameters under which we can, within the department, ensure that participants in the Vehicle Registration Program, the Canadian Vehicle Registration Program are living up to their agreement on the prorate sharing to assure that they are living up to their agreement with the franchise rights and the amendments in there give us the framework and the guidelines by which we can ensure that the industry is abiding by the intent of the agreement.

A third area, Mr. Speaker, also discussed in my Estimates and has been a topic of perennial discussion is addressed in a very new way in an amendment to the minimum age for — or the maximum age I suppose you could say — at which a person can receive a driver's licence.

We are accommodating in Bill 29, and to give you some background, we are attempting to increase the participation of our youth in driver training courses in this province. Since approximately 1970, the history of driver training in the province has been one of declining enrolment and the enrolment has been particularly declining in males. Our young men are not taking the driver training courses that are available. Any study that we have undertaken on driver training indicates that it is indeed a beneficial course, that there is some 20 to 24 percent lower accident involvement by anyone enrolled in the driver training course.

Now what happened since 1970, I suppose you could put it that there has been a lack of incentive to take the driver education course. Prior to the advent of MPIC and the government insurance program, the private insurance companies — I'm not certain whether all of them offered it but the majority of them — offered a discount to a student, to a 16-year-old, taking on his first driver's licence, they would offer him a discount on his insurance premiums if he had taken and passed the driver training course. That particular benefit was deleted in the adoption of MPIC auto insurance and that, accompanied with a general attitude I suppose or a change in attitude, led to a decline in the enrolment in student driver education.

What we are proposing in the amendment here is to bring some of the incentive back into the enrolment of students in the driver training course and this amendment enables a student at 15-1/2 years old to obtain a learner's driver's licence providing he meets with the criteria that are set down in the legislation. I think it is a good move, Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the Member for LaVerendrye thinks, and I know that members in the Opposition will agree that kind of an amendment is a very positive step towards bringing more students into the driver training courses in the province.

Now to accommodate what we foresee is a great deal of anticipation and desire to have that learner's permit, we have to develop into the legislation certain restrictions on it. We will be initiating the program, Mr. Speaker, by designating only certain areas of province wherein that privilege will be available. To give you an example, —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, as the Member for Inkster has asked me if it will just be in Morden, we anticipate that the Member for Dauphin and the school board members and the safety council members will be pleased to know that Dauphin and the Ochre River School Division will be the first area to be designated by

Order-in-Council as having that legislative amendment available to them so that their students at 15-1/2 years, providing they are enrolled in the driver training course, can obtain a learner's permit. The Member for Dauphin has been working with me on this matter for the past year-and-a-half and I'm pleased with the co-operation we have received from the citizens of Dauphin, the school division and their safety committee. They will be pleased to know, I think, that they are the first community in Manitoba with passage of this legislation to be designated as the test area, shall we say.

So that represents a major initiative into driver training. We hope that with this legislative amendment, that as our driver training personnel requirements are adequately met, that we will be able to expand that driver's learner's availability to other areas of the province and the eventual goal would be to have that available not by designated area but throughout the whole province, but that will take, Mr. Speaker, some time because staffing, of course, in my department is not adequate to handle a total province-wide program with a great increase in student enrolment and not all school divisions at the present time do offer driver training. So we consider that amendment to be one of the most significant ones that we have undertaken in the past number of years since the institution of the class licence system, a very positive one in attempting to get our youth back into the driver education program. It's a positive incentive for them and I think it's a positive incentive that all members of the House will agree with and will support.

Other amendments that we are proposing in Bill 29, Mr. Speaker, deal with the setting of weights and weight limits on the various highways under our jurisdiction. Under the current legislation we have certain Legislative requirements and then we have certain regulation requirements, or weight limits set by regulation. The proposal is to combine them both into regulation so that we do not have a requirement in an Act and a requirement by regulation. The amendment will remove the requirement in The Highway Traffic Act. All the weight requirements, restrictions and guidelines will be contained in one set of regulations, which will be available so that there won't be the necessity as it is now to cross reference between the Act and the regulations.

We have another what appears to be a minor amendment but it has fairly significant impact. It's the amendment under the definition of a school bus. It was drawn to our attention by various school divisions and by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees that insurance was not available to teachers or employees of the school division should they from time to time, not on a regular basis, but from time to time use their vehicles to transport students. Because there was no insurance coverage on those vehicles because they were not classified as a school bus, school divisions were running into the problem that teachers and employees were becoming more reluctant to use their private vehicles to, for instance, take students to a sporting event or a drama event in another school division or, indeed, to take a child to hospital for medical services, medical treatment. The amendment proposes and has been agreed to by MPIC to include in the normal insurance of the person the ability to transport upon occasion

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students on an irregular basis. We think that will go a long way to solving the problems that have been drawn to our attention.

We are amending and clarifying certain other aspects of the Act and I would draw honourable members' attention to the clarifications of certain traffic offences. The change in moped, bicycle, trailer plates; we have one dealer plate now which is issued to all retailers of vehicles. Rightfully so, some dealers in the province only sell motorcycles or mopeds or indeed mobile trailers or home trailers, house trailers. They said, and rightfully so, that the kind of insurance requirements, etc., that in the costs of the dealer plates for them represent a significantly lower risk than do dealer plates for automobile dealers. So that what we have done is we are instituting by legislation here two separate dealer plates — one will be the standard one used on automobiles and the other one will be a much smaller plate to be used strictly on mopeds, motorcycles. This will be offered at a lower cost to those dealers strictly in motorcycles or mopeds. We think this is a significant improvement to that retail trade.

So, Mr. Speaker, I commend the amendments in this bill to members of the Opposition. I know they will be most anxious to support them because they do represent some quite progressive, some quite needed and quite new amendments and direction in The Highway Traffic Act.

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

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a few comments with respect to some of the amendments that the Minister has proposed to this legislation. Specifically, one of them, which certainly has caught my attention and that is the issue of issuing Learners' Licences to persons under the age of 16, Mr. Speaker. One of the reasons that the Minister gave during his introduction of the legislation was that no longer is there an incentive because of insurance regulations for young people to receive a discount if they take a Driver Testing Program, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister should have pointed out, that he should recall and make mention to the young motorists of what the rates were like prior to Autopac days that young drivers-to-be were saddled with, Mr. Speaker. One could argue the reverse, Mr. Speaker, that young motorists in the early days were actually discriminated against, because they were treated at a higher rate, a substantially rate, in fact premiums of several hundred dollars going back 10-12 years were not uncommon to first-time drivers. With the advent of Public Insurance in this province, all people were treated relatively equal in terms of the premiums that they paid with respect to the insurance. So, Mr. Speaker, some of the reasoning that the Minister has given with respect to the introduction of this section are not quite valid with respect to the incentives.

He and his department are to be commended in terms of moving in this way. There were several ways of how this could have been accomplished, Mr. Speaker. If the Minister was looking for incentive he could have moved to . . . and I really don't know why he is trying it out just on a pilot basis in terms of designating one area. Does the Minister foresee,

and I would hope that he would answer it, a problem in areas where school divisions now have Driver Training Programs, why they would not be eligible to provide or at least have their students eligible to receive a Learner's Permit at 15-1/2 as is being proposed? Surely if those programs are in place, Mr. Speaker, and the incentive is basically the same that we've spoken about and that I've spoken about and members on this side have spoken about for a number of years, is that unless you're taking a Driver Education Program you will not be licenced until you are sixteen, so we will encourage you by saying register in the Driver Education Program and we will assist by allowing you to have a Learner's Permit at 15-1/2. Basically the same approach, Mr. Speaker, that has been talked about by members on this side; we spoke about this in several resolutions over the past number of years.

But the point of insurance, and the Minister of Highways stressed that as being the incentive, Mr. Speaker, it's not valid and it should be pointed out as such. It isn't valid, Mr. Speaker, because the Minister well knows that the rating system employed by the private companies was done away with the advent of Autopac. Young motorists were given a huge break with the advent of Public Insurance in this province and they were treated like any other driver on the basis of having the best rate that could be given to them, and only if they were bad drivers were they surcharged. So some of the comments that he made with respect to how this section or these amendments have been brought in is not valid in terms of his analysis.

The move, Mr. Speaker, certainly very good. I think the only caveat I put to the Minister and I would hope that he would explain, I really don't see any reason why this move could not have been made throughout the province and only those people who are taking a Driver Ed Course would be the ones that would be eligible for this benefit, as the amendment so indicates, Mr. Speaker. So I really don't know why he hasn't been prepared to move in that area. Because there are other, there are many school divisions who have offered this program, have the necessary instructors in their areas and I really don't see why we would want to single out only one area to provide this benefit and leave other areas who have been doing a good job and leaving them out of the program. Certainly there will be enough incentive to the areas who are not in a Driver Education Program to now say, well why haven't we offered it, here's an opportunity for our youngsters to have good training and have a driver's licence available to them especially in rural areas where farm families depend on assistance from young drivers to move farm equipment, to move farm trucks in harvest time and seeding time that is a necessity. So the point that I make is, I hope the Minister will reconsider and look at other areas of the province that now have adequate driver training and have gone into the driver training in good faith and that they will also be handled. Because I really don't see the difficulty that he has with withholding approval of those areas that already have Driver Education Programs. I'd like to have his reasoning when he closed the debate as to why he is not allowing those areas that have already good programs in place to take part and have these same benefits.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments dealing with the school bus and people, teachers and employees of school divisions and other people who volunteer to assist the school divisions to drive youngsters either for swimming courses in the summer time, extracurricular activities; inter-school basketball, football or whatever sports may be involved, has been a problem with respect to the school children. This does address itself to it.

Where I don't think the Minister has gone far enough, and that is the area, Mr. Speaker, that has been raised time and time again and I would hope that he would look at it, and that is the area where school divisions and school boards liaise with our elderly in their communities, where our elderly have senior citizens clubs, have New Horizon Programs, and they require transportation throughout the province to various activities. What better way to utilize the resources in the community than the existing school buses that are there now that are not used, this would be after hours, weekends. I don't think in most communities this would entail very many activities, but I would think probably if the groups are fairly active, you're probably looking at once a month, or maybe he may want to limit to three or four times a year. I believe that problem, and we did have discussions in our government and we were struggling with it, and I see no move in that direction. I would hope the Minister would look at that area, because that certainly has been an area of concern, and legitimate concern, Mr. Speaker, because our senior citizens are members of our community. They have contributed through their lifetime to the community.

The school buses that are within the area, if they are not used and they are available, they should be able to - you know, they may have to pick up the ongoing costs, but at least the provisions of adequate coverage - and this is what this amendment deals with, to make sure that there are no problems associated with an accident that may occur during these types of activities, so that people are protected and adequately protected, and rightly so. I don't think it's gone far enough and I would urge the Minister to review his position and see whether or not some alternatives to incorporate the seniors in our community could be utilized by these amendments.

Mr. Speaker, as well, the different amendments; I will be asking questions in Committee dealing with the amendments to the moped industry, Mr. Speaker, and to see exactly how that applies to the moped industry, as I personally am not well enough acquainted with this area that I will be asking questions in Committee just to ascertain in fuller detail what is really implied by some of the changes here.

In terms of the amendments with respect to changing from legislation to regulations, the gross vehicle weights, axle assemblies, certainly I think that's a move that should be supported because there will be changes from time to time throughout the year, dealing with possible agreements in reciprocity treaties between the provinces, that there may have to be changes in terms of axle weights and carrying axles, Mr. Speaker, with respect to our trucking industry. The move to change it by regulation will simplify the procedure, rather than having amendments.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at one specific amendment, and possibly I have not caught the full import of this amendment and how it relates to the rest of the Act, and that is the area dealing with the restriction and the operation of certain trailers, where certain trailers equipped with two or more axle assemblies, or a semi-trailer equipped with more than one axle assembly or axle group, shall not be operated or moved on a highway unless there is a permit. I'm wondering from the Minister what type of vehicles is he really talking about. Is he talking about the semi-trailer units that now pull two trailers behind each other? Is he talking about the crane-operated units that have dual steering on the front of the vehicle and may have a longer unit? I'd like to know what he really is getting at in terms of now requiring certain vehicles to have permits? I'd like to know whether these vehicles were required to have permits before, or whether they were allowed on the highway, and what the conditions and restrictions are, Mr. Speaker?

Basically, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister has indicated, those amendments generally deal and reflect changes that are required in the industry. The driver licensing program certainly is a step in the right direction, there's no doubt. We've talked about moving in this way for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. I attempted as former Minister of the Motor Vehicle Branch and the Public Insurance Corporation to have the corporation put in substantial sums of money to have a driver education course provided throughout the entire province, so that there would have been no reason that youngsters who desired to have proper training, this availability of the course and this opportunity would be available to them.

The present government has not seemed to go that route. I feel a bit disappointed that they have not gone that route. I think it would have been the route to go, to combine the Department of Education, Public Insurance Corporation and the Minister's Vehicle Branch, and to provide a comprehensive course throughout the Province of Manitoba, make it available, then have no difficulty of doing as I've suggested in the past, of moving to say 15-1/2 or 15, provided the course has been taken. That's the route I would have preferred, Mr. Speaker; it's not gone this route.

I hope the Minister reconsiders about appointing only one school division as the testing ground. He should reconsider that in light of other school divisions who have had driver education programs in place for many years, and they may feel, and rightly so, that they are being discouraged by not being able to take advantage of the program because of many years of good work.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, Abe Kovnats (Radisson):
The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to draw to the Minister's attention a matter that I raised to him last year, which he apparently didn't appreciate, and that is the question of bicycle safety. I want to remind him that in The Highway Traffic Act, there is some explicit sections dealing with the requirements for cyclists in the evening. I want to say that there are, I think, some provisions that should be added, at least in terms of either regulations or enforcement, because of the

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fact that when we talk about driver education and matters of that kind, we're concentrating on the automobile, which of course is probably the most dangerous and most important of the vehicles.

I want to say to the Minister that there are thousands and thousands of cyclists in ever growing numbers on our streets, driving in the evening when it's dark without, in many cases, reflectors on their bicycles and in nearly every instance, no lights. Now I regard this as a very serious matter, because of the distinct possibility that these people are endangering their lives, and that many of the accidents that happen with cyclists occur because of the fact that they are not properly illuminated.

So the Minister can talk all he wants about teenage drivers, and about motor vehicles, and about mopeds and so on, but I want to know what he is prepared to do to enforce the law as it is presently now written. I don't know whether the onus should fall on him, or whether he doesn't want to deal with this matter even though it's in his Act, or whether the Attorney-General is remiss in not stirring up the police forces, because I wrote the Chief of Police of the City of Winnipeg and asked him about why the law wasn't being enforced. I got a very general letter back, I guess about a year ago, from the previous Chief and he informed me — (Interjection)— I never do, if I can help it. He informed me that the law in fact was being enforced. Mr. Speaker, I assure you that is not so.

In the old days, in the '50s and maybe in the early '60s, the police would stop cyclists and hand out tickets. There was some action taken to encourage people to drive the streets with properly illuminated bicycles. Nowadays, all you have to do is be in the City of Winnipeg some evening when it's dark, when the bicyclists are out and, Mr. Speaker, I would be astounded if you could find one in a hundred that had a light, a flashlight on their bicycle. (Interjection)— My friend from Minnedosa agrees with me. Mr. Speaker, you'll also find that half the people who are driving bicycles don't have any sort of reflectors as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Minister — you know he may regard this as a joke, I know that last year when I raised the matter, he thought this was a big joke; he thought this was just a humorous insertion in the debate - I want to tell him that I am dead serious. I want to tell him that it is his responsibility to do something about the fact that thousands upon thousands of people, mainly young people, are on the streets at night, you cannot see them, and there are several hundred accidents every year. God knows how many close misses, because of the fact that motorists cannot see these people who are zooming up and down the streets of Winnipeg and presumably of the other towns and cities of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say to the Minister that his record on safety, in my judgment, is dismal. The only thing I have heard him say in the past six months about safety is that there were some deaths regarding snowmobilers, and he thought it might be desirable for people in snowmobiles to wear crash helmets, or helmets or whatever. That's all that he said. It was like a passing thought on a situation which - what was it, five or eight people died in snowmobile accidents in Manitoba. Snowmobiles are dangerous vehicles as well, Mr. Speaker.

I know a close friend of mine went out for a drive with his family only a few months ago with two small children and his wife, and he was going only a few miles an hour. By accident, as he was turning, he hit one of the children with his arm and as a result compressed the accelerator and the vehicle shot forward some 20 feet, 30 feet, hit a snowbank or a hill or whatever it was, the vehicle turned over. As a result, he suffered I think, a broken arm, and his young daughter, who is about four, suffered the same fate.

I also heard recently of someone in a snowmobile accident, who fell somehow and got a serious brain injury from a compressed skull fracture.

So you know, those vehicles are dangerous and maybe, I don't know, maybe there should be compulsory helmets or at least an education campaign, that's the least that we would expect.

When it comes to motorcycles I've mentioned to the Minister before, nine out of 10 provinces have compulsory helmets, not Manitoba. I'd like to know what the Minister says at those meetings. I would imagine he doesn't say anything, Mr. Speaker. I would be most amazed if he spoke his position at those meetings and if he did they'd probably toss him out on his ear, and if he didn't have a helmet he'd probably get a skull fracture as a result.

I have also raised with him the question of seat belts in cars. He didn't even have the decency to participate in the debate. He didn't even appear when the debate was going on and I expected him to at least make a defence of his position, which again is becoming a smaller and smaller position as more and more provinces adopt mandatory seat belts, but the Minister says that they will initiate an education campaign on driver safety for seat belts.

Mr. Speaker, I know what happened in the last 12 months — zero, and I know what's going to happen in the next 12 months. The Minister is not going to do anything to even voluntarily encourage people to wear seat belts in Manitoba. So, I'm not very optimistic; I'm not very optimistic.

I listened to the Member for Emerson poor mouth the use of seat belts, spends 30 to 40 minutes running them down and then standing up at the end of his speech with a miraculous statement that he is in favour of seat belts. He is in favour of seat belts and he feels that they should in fact be worn, but he just thinks they are dangerous, cause death, accident and maim people, but other than that, he is fully in favour of the voluntary use. Well that was a pretty feeble argument, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say to the Minister that all the health and safety organizations in Manitoba are lined up against him in regard to most of these issues, in regard to the wearing of helmets for motorcycles, and in regard to the use of seat belts in motor vehicles.

And I am raising another issue and that is the additional issue of bicycle safety. Now, maybe the Minister thinks this is not an issue for him to deal with. He can't be bothered with something that only involves bicycles and children and safety. But I say that that should be one of his major concerns. Mr. Speaker, safety is no joke and I'm just saying to the Minister that if he reads his own Act and if he is familiar with the relevant sections, he will see that each bicycle is supposed to have a lamp that illuminates so many meters or feet in front of it and

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there should be a reflector that is either illuminated or visible from behind.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Minister that a few months ago I purchased a bicycle for my daughter, who is only eight years old, and I made sure that all of the possible reflectors, etc. are on that bicycle. She will not be allowed to drive that bicycle in the evening, but I want to say that I spoke to the dealers and they told me that a safety package of lights, I'm talking about reflectors, costs an additional \$2.00 or \$3.00 for each bicycle and that when they sell these bikes to retailers, quite often the retailers say we don't want that. It's going to add two bucks or \$2.40, I forget the exact amount, or \$3.20 to the cost of the bike, so take it off; we don't need these lights, they are not necessary and they are right. There is no enforcement from the Provincial Government; there is no enforcement from the City of Winnipeg Police, so why waste a couple of bucks on a bicycle. It might save your life, but you may as well gamble with everybody else. I mean, you may as well save the two bucks, put your kid's life on the line, or your own life on the line, take your chances like everybody else.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I say that that is pathetic, that retail dealers in the City of Winnipeg in some instances are choosing to save a couple of dollars because the people who are buying the bikes don't want them. They want the price and the price doesn't have to include reflectors or flashlights or safety lights in the Province of Manitoba because the law is not being enforced.

So I want to say to the Minister that I think he should look into this situation. I think it is about time he did something for safety. He spends tens of millions of dollars a year — he is not even listening to me right now, Mr. Speaker — but he spends tens of millions of dollars a year twinning highways, four-laning all over the place, putting up cloverleafs, putting up signs; he does all of this for cars because he understands construction of roads, that's all he understands. I'm telling him that there are other things, some of which cost very little, some of which don't cost anything and they are involved in safety too and he should be concerned, Mr. Speaker, with snowmobiles and their safety; he should be concerned with seat belts and the safety of motor vehicles; he should be concerned with helmets and motorcycles; and he should be concerned with reflectors and lights in regard to bicycles. Mr. Speaker, to date, the Minister has shown no concern for any of these issues.

MR. SPEAKER, Harry E. Graham: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: Can I get some advice from the Government House Leader?

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I had already given you the benefit of my advice. Would you call Bills No. 11 and 27?

ADJOURNED DEBATES ON SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 11 — the Honourable Member for Logan. (Stand)

Bill No. 27.

BILL NO. 27 — AN ACT TO AMEND THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J.R. (Bud) BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I took the adjournment on behalf of my colleague, the Member for Burrows.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK: Well, Mr. Speaker, with reference to Bill No. 27 there is only one matter that concerns me somewhat. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I hadn't realized that one of the Highway Traffic Acts was introduced by the Minister of Highways and the other by the Attorney-General, so I'll direct my remarks to the Attorney-General. That may change my approach —(Interjection)— In what way? That's another question.

My concern, Mr. Speaker, is that contained within the Bill is a section which prohibits an individual from operating a motor vehicle if the owner of that vehicle is disqualified from registering that motor vehicle. Now, it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps this could be just a bit too harsh on some individuals.

For example, you might have a case where for valid reason, for breach of The Highway Traffic Act, an individual becomes disqualified from registering a motor vehicles, driving under the influence of alcohol, whatever, and it could be the husband and so he is disqualified from registering the motor vehicle; he may also lose his driver's licence or it may be suspended for a period of time and that's the only motor vehicle in the family, Mr. Speaker; and it's necessary for that individual to get to and from work or he might even use that vehicle in his job. Now, really I see no reason why some arrangement could not be made to enable some other individual or member of his family from operating that motor vehicle. Granted, you know, I agree that perhaps this should not be allowed to happen without notifying the Motor Vehicle Branch that there is this change is made, but there should be some provision, Mr. Speaker, to allow another individual to operate the vehicle.

As the Honourable Member for St. George says, perhaps all that need be done is to transfer the ownership. Now, I'm not sure whether I would agree with transferring the ownership, but perhaps some interim arrangement, particularly if it's a suspension of a right to own the motor vehicle just for a short period of time or for a definite period of time — five, six months, a year, whatever — perhaps an interim arrangement with respect to the registration, some interim change could be made with respect to the registration of the vehicle for that period of time to allow the person, who lost his right to own the vehicle, to allow another individual to operate it,

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particularly where the vehicle might be needed for use in a person's job to earn his livelihood.

So, I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister do take a second look at that section. Now, it might be that there is some other provision within The Highway Traffic Act that does enable that does take care of this situation and that does provide a way out for an individual who becomes disqualified from registering a motor vehicle, to enable someone else to use it for the original owner's benefit, and if there is. I would hope that the Minister would advise us to that effect. If there isn't, then I would appreciate hearing some indication from the Minister that he would take a second look at this and redraft the section in such a way that would not cause any undue hardship.

Now, it's not my intention to water it down to the point where if a person loses his right to own a motor vehicle, you know, that the effect of the penalty should not be felt, but by the same token, I feel, Mr. Speaker, that the hardship ought not be too severe, so that it be reasonable and just.

So, that, Mr. Speaker, is my main concern about the bill. There might be some other members that may have some further comments to make.

Oh yes, the other matter of concern, and I'm not sure that the Honourable Minister in introducing the bill had explained his reason for making the repeal of certain sections retroactive to February 3rd, 1981, and that's not a common section to find in a bill and I'm sure that the Minister must have some explanation or some reason for it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for St. George for being gracious in letting you, without objection, recognize me. I don't have a great deal to say on this bill, but I do think there is something in the bill that deserves recognition and it is particularly with reference to what the Member for Wellington was saying in talking about harsh penalties.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to be acquainted with the history of this legislation and it is therefore, I think, incumbent upon me, even though it's not terribly important to try to add a few comments which apply generally and specifically to this bill but from which we can, I believe, learn something in terms of other legislation.

The courts have now ruled that it is unlawful for the Federal Government to pass a law which purports to enforce a provincial statute. Now, approximately 20 years ago, on the very same argument, they ruled that it was lawful for the Federal Government to pass a law which enforces a provincial statute and I say that, Mr. Chairman, so that people will know that decisions of the courts are not nearly as clinical and as logical as people would have them be. For those people who say that we can put the interpretation of laws ultimately in the hands of the courts and that they will make decisions which are removed from politics and do not take any direction but are merely interpreted, I think that this particular statute is a good example.

The Member for Wellington said that the punishments that are being imposed for some of the offences that are made in the bill are too harsh and that we are going to send people to jail and that the

jail is a form of expense which really is not necessary for certain offences.

The members of the House should be aware that the original federal statute was enacted in my view almost to avoid that happening and that the interpretation that the courts gave to it was based on undoing that. Because, Mr. Speaker, when The Highway Traffic Act was passed and this may come as a shock to some of the honourable members of this Assembly, the penalty for driving while disqualified, and it's cited at 113 of the Revised Statutes of Manitoba. I'll read it and summarize it as I'm reading: "A person who drives a motor vehicle while the registration thereof is suspended or cancelled or while his licence is suspended or cancelled or while he is disqualified from holding a licence, is guilty of an offense", and I've skipped words here, "on summary conviction for a first offense to imprisonment for a term of not less than seven days." Think on that, Mr. Speaker. I pointed out to the Attorney-General that the law that he is now passing when it was originally passed by a province, had a minimum sentence of seven days — that means that anybody who went around and drove a vehicle while his licence was suspended which is a fairly common offense was not given a fine, he was imprisoned and there was no discretion whatsoever on the magistrate, a very rare thing, Mr. Speaker. It is very rare to have a minimum term of imprisonment for seven days.

Now what happened, Mr. Speaker, and in this I am speculating but I believe that the speculation makes sense, is that the Federal Government when they saw that people were being imprisoned for a minimum of seven days for driving a vehicle while their licence was suspended, adopted as part of the Criminal Code a different section and said that a person driving while disqualified is not subject to imprisonment, he can be fined. So the federal statute came in as an ameliorating statute. The fact that it was ultra vires at that time was not really of concern because people said the Federal Government is taking a harsh provincial statute and making it easier. Now the argument that this was illegal was presented to the Manitoba Court of Appeal approximately 20 years ago and the Manitoba Court of Appeal looking at the very same statute said that the federal statute was legal. Twenty years later it goes to the Supreme Court of Canada, lawyers argue exactly the same position and the Supreme Court of Canada comes to an entirely different conclusion than the Manitoba Court of Appeal and says that the statute is not legal.

Mr. Speaker, why did that happen? Well, first of all they looked a little bit more closely at the law and secondly, The Manitoba Highway Traffic Act was changed to provide for fines, a suspended sentence or anything else and the effect of the federal statute was no longer as ameliorative as it once had been. So they started looking at the law differently. I say this, Mr. Speaker, because one of the most frustrating parts of being a lawyer is trying to explain why one judge will say one thing and one judge will say another thing, and why don't they know the law, after all, they're judges.

In this case the Manitoba Court of Appeal is one adopts that reasoning, didn't know the law. The Supreme Court of Canada has come in and has now

changed the law. That is not the way it is, Mr. Speaker. Every time you pass a law it has effects which you cannot contemplate. When it used to be the case that a person convicted of murder, without manslaughter but murder, the mandatory sentence used to be hanging — it used to be mandatory. The judge stood there and he said that you have been convicted of murder, I have no choice that you shall be taken from this place to the place from whence you came and from there you will be taken to the place of execution at Headingley and on the 9th day of March you will be hung by the neck until you are dead.

A MEMBER: A good idea, Sid.

MR. GREEN: The honourable member says it was a good idea. You had a statute that said that driving a vehicle while disqualified was a minimum of seven days. What happened was that the Federal Government came in and passed a law, said that it wasn't. You had a statute saying that conviction for murder meant hanging. Two things happened — Mr. Diefenbaker virtually eliminated it in Cabinet, because they never hung anybody, they undid it, they ameliorated all the hanging sentences.

But secondly, juries, knowing that if a man is convicted of murder, hung, were loathe to convict of murder. So the fact that you say it, doesn't mean that it will happen. This business with The Highway . . . Does the honourable member know that at one time there was no crime of driving a vehicle while you were impaired? It used to be driving a vehicle while you were intoxicated and it was a minimum of seven days. But people being what they are drove vehicles and they found out that they can go to jail, people who — by the way I'm not criticizing this — who really had never committed any crimes, had the indiscretion of drinking someplace and going out and driving, they were convicted and sentenced to seven days. So the Federal Government came along and passed an ameliorating statute. They said if you're not drunk but you're impaired, you don't have to go to jail for seven days, it's a fine, and driving while impaired became much more the charge than driving while intoxicated.

The same kind of thing happens here when you try to impose an offense of seven days minimum for driving while you're disqualified — certain adjustments take place within the law. They are pretended to be logical deductions of judges. The interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, is we argued this case before the Manitoba Court of Appeal and it was Mr. Bellan who was the leading counsel and I was with him. He was putting his case to the Court of Appeal that the Federal Government has no power to provide a penalty for the breach of a provincial statute because under Section 91 of The BNA Act the enforcement of provincial statutes fell exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Government, which is what the Supreme Court is now finding. When he was putting this argument, I can remember it as it is today, Mr. Justice Trites said: But Mr. Bellan, if you're right, your client gets seven days. Mr. Bellan said, m'lords, that's not your problem, that's my client's problem. There's a reason why it wouldn't have happened. But the fact is that essentially it appeared that the court at that time was not interpreting the law under strict reasoning,

although the reasoning may be just as sound as the other, but obviously the Supreme Court of Canada has now said that the Manitoba Court of Appeal is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not contributing a great deal to this bill and I'm not going to carry it much longer. I know the Attorney-General would like to get it through and I'm going to be quiet in a moment. But I suggest to you that those people who have faith, that somehow the courts are going to decide these constitutional questions clinically and not be thinking in terms of their political and social viewpoints, are wrong. If there are going to be political decisions made, Mr. Speaker, they should be made by the elected representatives of the people and not the people who are appointed as judges and this is a perfect example.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION put.

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

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Interim Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

SUPPLY — INTERIM SUPPLY

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats (Radisson): This committee will come to order, Interim Supply. Resolved that a sum not exceeding \$673,466,010 being the 30 percent of the amount of the several items to be voted for departments as set forth in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1982, laid before the House at the present Session of the Legislature be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1982 — pass.

The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, this morning we had a series of exchanges between this side and the members of the government front bench on the question of the tax credits and how they are affecting Manitobans. It's most interesting, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister in charge of Community Services injected himself into that discussion in a way which tend to mislead not only this Chamber, Mr. Chairman, but the people of Manitoba. Mr. Chairman, it is not surprising to me that is the approach that members opposite chose this morning

because indeed they find themselves in a somewhat embarrassing position with respect to their so-called help for those that need it most. The embarrassment arises out of the fact, Mr. Chairman, that this government has picked the pockets of Manitobans to the extent of about \$15 million for the year 1980 — I'm talking about a tax year, Mr. Chairman, but has provided virtually no benefits to the people of Manitoba in exchange for that particular new tax that was imposed on them.

In essence what we have here is an additional tax burden of \$15 million on Manitoba taxpayers for the calendar year 1980. The Premier, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Government Services, all attempted to convey the message to the people of Manitoba, but there were other benefits that were introduced and this money is going towards those benefits, very important benefits for those who need it most were the words used, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, let's examine who those people are that need it most in terms of the 1980 calendar year. That's the year that we are talking about when we're talking about income tax returns and how those returns are effecting every tax filer in this province, Mr. Chairman.

In the Annual Report of the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, you will observe on Page 8, Mr. Chairman, that there were 2,302 clients on the SAFER Program of which 2,225 were in receipt of monthly benefit. Benefits paid during the period from January 1, 1980 to March 31, 1980 totalled \$291,948.32. That's for one-quarter of the year, Mr. Chairman, — just under \$300,000.00 If you multiply that four times to give you a 12-month period that should be somewhere in the order of \$1.2 million a year. Average monthly benefits were \$47.67 for singles, \$11.94 for sharers, presumably where two people occupy the same residence and \$17.00 for couples on a monthly basis.

So, Mr. Chairman, let's examine what we're talking about here. The Minister of Finance has ripped the people of Manitoba off by \$15 million and in exchange he presumes to have given them back \$1.2 million in benefits. It's a kind of adjustment that no taxpayer will want to have a great deal of faith in, Mr. Chairman. It's the kind of slipshod effort that has been demonstrated by members opposite and the philosophy of this government from Day One, a lot of ado about nothing, Mr. Chairman. The shouting and raving about SAFER benefits a year ago should have impressed someone that there was something great in that program, but it is not in the Annual Report; it is not to be found anywhere. The Minister refuses to answer the question as to how many dollars were advanced for the SAFER Program in 1980, that's a secret figure today, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Community Services had an opportunity this morning to tell us what the sum total was for the year, but he chose not to, he chose to fudge the issue.

Let's examine the further implications of this government's policy for those who need it most, Mr. Chairman, if you take an average rent of \$190 per month, and that is not a high rental rate these days, Mr. Chairman, you multiply that times 12, you end up with a rental charge of \$2,280 for an apartment. If you calculate 20 percent of that as being the tax portion pursuant to the tax credit form, which allows

for computation of 20 percent of your rents as being your actual tax bill for the year, you end up with a property tax of \$456.00. Now if you take the example of the highest paid person from the SAFER Program of \$47.67, that person realized \$572 from SAFER in 12 months, but then when he came to file his income tax, Mr. Chairman, he found out that he first had to subtract 1 percent of his family income from the Cost-of-Living Tax Credit. So that where under the old formula he would have realized a credit of \$141, he now will have a credit of something less than that depending on his income and his family's income, so he loses something there.

The example that I used the other day of a pensioner earning \$2,078 as their total income, would lose \$20.78 on that account, but if there is other family income, then the loss would be greater. But then we get down to the Property Tax Credit calculation and we find that we must subtract, Mr. Chairman, all of the SAFER benefits from the Property Tax Credit, so the property taxes in this example were \$456; the SAFER benefits were \$572, so what we have here is the total elimination of Property Tax Credit on top of a reduction in Cost-of-Living Tax Credit benefits to this particular tax filer. This person may be ahead on the total package by something in the order of \$80 or \$90 for the year, Mr. Chairman. The Minister has set up a huge bureaucracy to issue the SAFER cheques to monitor their eligibility to receive the application forms. We have about an \$80 or \$90 benefit in the most extreme example where benefits may be found. Now I venture to say, Mr. Chairman, that in the most extreme example that there are probably very few participants, but we weren't able to get the numbers from the front benches this morning.

Let's take the other two categories where there are two people sharing accommodation, their SAFER benefits were \$11.94, and if you take the same rental rate of \$190 and, Mr. Chairman, I'm using a very modest figure here in terms of apartment rents, and you establish that the property tax on that is \$456 and you deduct from that \$17 a month — well, let's go to the other one — we deduct from that \$11.94 a month, that's the next category, we end up with total SAFER benefits for the year were \$143.28, which are deducted from the Property Tax Credit, you end up in a reduction of Property Tax Credits from \$456 to \$313.00. What has this individual benefited from in the SAFER Program? You have reduced his Cost-of-Living tax benefits; you have taken away from him every dollar that you gave him or her in the SAFER Program when that person filed his income return, Mr. Chairman. What is the purpose of the exercise? What are we trying to prove? I'm certain it is not job creation that the Minister has in mind, because I have been impressed with the fact that this government doesn't believe in a lot of government employees and so therefore the answer does not lie there. What are we doing, Mr. Chairman, advancing \$500 over a 12-month period, recapturing \$500 at the end of the year from that person who received the advances? Just what are we trying to prove?

I suppose what we are doing is posturing politically, Mr. Chairman, because the ads that one has witnessed over the last 12 months on how good it would be to get into the SAFER Program, may have had some beneficial impact on the Conservative

Party in this province, but that is the only area of benefit, not to the people of Manitoba, but to the Progressive Conservative Government, Mr. Chairman. I presume and I have to assume that is the sole intent of that program. It is a lot of ado about nothing and in most instances, it's a lot of ado about less than nothing, Mr. Chairman, it's a loss, it's a loss to Manitoba taxpayers and it's a loss to Manitoba taxpayers who need it most.

Let's take the other example, Mr. Chairman, the couple that is receiving \$17 a month in SAFER benefits which adds up to a glorious \$204 in a year. Having to deduct that \$204 from their Property Tax Credit, we find that instead of getting a Property Tax Credit of \$456, they get a Property Tax Credit of \$252.00. Again, zero benefit, but we issued 12 cheques; we hired bureaucrats to administer the program; we spent more money on advertising, Mr. Chairman, than the people got in benefits, because in total we have, according to this first quarterly report, and if you multiply that for the annual period, we have advanced about \$1.2 million and I would like to know how much we have recaptured when these people filed their returns. Did we recapture \$1.2 million? Did we recapture \$1 million? Did we recapture \$800,000.00?

I don't know, but I can venture to say that the bureaucratic costs are not far behind the benefits that were in fact paid out to those that did benefit from the program. Then the Conservative Government has the nerve and presumption that they are good managers of the affairs of the people of Manitoba; that they are efficient managers in the Province of Manitoba; that they know how to do things in a better way than was the case with the previous administration.

Mr. Chairman, I would want the Minister to explain to me and to this House and indeed to the people of Manitoba what are the benefits of the SAFER Program for 1980? How much did we spend? How much are we recapturing back from the income tax returns against the \$15 million that he says that we have reduced in the tax credit field or that we have taxed anew because a reduction of credits is an imposition of a new tax, Mr. Chairman? It is a net revenue item of \$15 million to the Province of Manitoba on account of the calendar year, 1980.

The programs that the Ministers talk about do not take into effect until 1981, whether they're talking CRISP, or family SAFFR, or whatever else. So, Mr. Chairman, where are those figures? How can the government justify in doing what it is doing? How can it justify a charade such as this? How can it justify the advertisements that they have bought in the media, whether it be the airways, the television or the newspapers? Certainly I know there was one group that did benefit and it had to be the media because these advertisements were carried on for some length of time and they were fairly huge ads. But, Mr. Chairman, where lies the benefit to the people of Manitoba? Where is the public interest with respect to that whole concept?

The Minister tries to now hide, the Minister of Health; the Minister of Finance is somehow trying to fudge the issue now by saying it was a bureaucratic error, that he now doesn't want to take the responsibility when the heat is on, when the people are filing their income tax returns and are finding out

that it isn't all what it was made out to be, that they are being shortchanged in the process, \$15 million taken out of their pockets in exchange for a couple-of-hundred-thousand dollars in return for the tax year, 1980.

So, Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the Minister of Finance is able to give us some definitive answers of what the figures are, the tax benefits as revenue to the province, the actual cost of the program for 1980 and the changes that he would propose to make to clear up those so-called bureaucratic mistakes that have resulted in this kind of a problem; bureaucratic mistakes that have not been identified by any one Minister to date, Mr. Chairman. What has been identified is a political problem, the minds of the government, Mr. Chairman, who now realize that the chickens have come home to roost and that every taxpayer in Manitoba is finding out that they have been shortchanged on the Tax Credit Program that was announced one year ago and they are shortchanged to the extent of \$15 million for the 1980 tax year.

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

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In discussing this matter a bit further, Mr. Chairman, it's interesting to note on the way this program has been handled by the Conservatives in the Province of Manitoba. You see, if you recall, Mr. Chairman, there were many ads being put forward by the government with respect to all the benefits that the seniors and low-income people were going to be receiving. For several months citizens of Manitoba were being told how great these programs are and it was really nothing wrong with the advertisements with respect to advertising the programs, but when were they were put on, Mr. Chairman? Not now during the year at the time when people are filing, to make sure that they file for their program. They were put on during the summer months after the last Session when members on this side pointed out the pitfalls and the problems that would arise as a result of the program. Those ads continued on for several months and then they were discontinued. As far as I know, Mr. Chairman, they've been discontinued for the last month or two.

At the time when tax filers in Manitoba should be made well aware that these benefits are there for them that they should pick up their tax forms and not to forget that these benefits are there, where is the advertising, Mr. Chairman? Nowhere to be found; there is no advertising, we've quit it; we've stopped it. Why? What have you got to be ashamed of? Why have you quit advertising? I don't begrudge a government agency advertising a program so that most people can apply and get the benefits of that program. (Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Natural Resources talks about introductory program. Mr. Chairman, why aren't you advertising now, the time of year since January 1 till the end of April when the tax filing year ends? This is the time to be advertising so that people can be assured of taking advantage of those programs. So those tax filers who normally don't file and can claim for these benefits will take advantage of it. Where is the advertising? No, Mr. Chairman.

What else did they do over the last years? The previous Minister of Finance a year or two ago, they

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discontinued the assistance to pensioners in rural areas about helping pensioners fill out their tax forms to be able to assist them in filing those forms and be able to get the benefits of the tax credits that were available. Is that service available now? No. The Minister of Finance told me last year, he said, "You know, they can pick up the phone and phone us and we'll help them". Can you imagine sitting down on the telephone and attempting to explain to a pensioner who may not have filed a form before, to tell him or her where they're supposed to put what figures down and how they're supposed to apply for their tax credits. Now there is a great help that this government has given to the senior citizens. They discontinued that service all across Manitoba with the exception I believe, of part of the branch still being left open here in the Norquay Building.

Mr. Chairman, what do they do with the Pensioner Home Repair Program? Mr. Chairman, I believe and I haven't checked the new directory through all the departments, but they've confused everybody, and I'll tell you why. They quit the advertising on the Pensioner Home Repair Program just so that people wouldn't know one way or the other unless they enquired that there's a program being made available. But yet there was the Pensioner Home Repair Division listed in the government directory. As an MLA, we could find the number there and phone the Pensioner Home Repair office and say, if we had contacts, to send out application forms and the like. But this new telephone directory that they just put out, where's the number? You find it, Mr. Chairman. I ask the Minister of Finance to find it under "Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation", unless they've moved, unless that branch has moved, you can't even find a telephone number for the Pensioner Home Repair Program in the new government directory.

Mr. Chairman, is this the kind of advertising that this government is giving to the benefits that are available to the citizens of Manitoba, when you can't even find a telephone number of a government agency or a branch of government that will assist in repairing your own home? Why did you take it out? Or where did you transfer it, Mr. Chairman? Maybe the Minister of Consumer Affairs will be able to get up, let him check the telephone directory and see why that change was made, or are you disbanding that branch; people are no longer wanting that program.

I kind of expected that to happen, with the Minister of Economic Development that that would have been his thrust, that since he stopped the advertising of the program, since they cut out assistance to native people, in terms of the Pensioner Home Repair Program, they were cut out of the program. The next step would have been to get rid of the office, but I guess he didn't accomplish that. It would have taken his colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs. So what do they do? They remove any mention under the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation telephone directory and the government directory. You can't find a telephone number for the Pensioner Home Repair Program. I looked the other day under "Economic Development" — no telephone number. I looked under "Consumer Affairs", I couldn't find a number. Now it may have been buried somewhere else, Mr.

Chairman, to be able to have these programs made available to our citizens, but what a way to advertise your programs, Mr. Chairman, what a way to advertise your programs.

Now we've had the Member for St. Matthews call the program stupid, or the decision stupid. We had the Minister of Health, allegedly on Peter Warren, indicating on the radio program that they're going to review it, and they're going to change it. But when he was asked questions by my colleague, the Member for Lac du Bonnet, "Oh, no, I didn't say such a thing, no, no, no, no".

Where is there any policy coming out of the government? Is there any direction? You know, if the Premier of this Province isn't prepared to give any direction, is this Minister of Finance, who is asking us to approve roughly 30 percent of the expenditures required by his government, is he going to take any leadership and at least bring about the changes necessary that he has said he is monitoring? I'd like to know what monitoring is to the Minister of Finance. I mean, really what is he talking about? What is he monitoring? He should tell us, Mr. Chairman, what is he really monitoring? What is he doing? Is he prepared to provide the figures that have been requested by my colleague?

The Member for Lac du Bonnet asked him some very specific questions with respect to the Tax Credit Program. We haven't had a response. It almost reminds one of the comments and the questions that have been raised with respect to the Education Program, with respect to benefits to residents of Manitoba. You haven't got any figures to back up what the impact of the program will be. You haven't done your homework. We told you that a year ago. Now you've had a year to sit down and do your homework, come up with your figures and say, "Here's what it's going to do; here's who it's going to impact on; here's who it will help", and this is how we estimate.

But you know, they did come up with a figure I think, of 22,000 pensioners that these programs would help; 22,000, it was in the brochures, if I recall. So they did do some calculation, or at least figuring, or maybe they got those figures out of the Federal Income Tax Branch. They did use some figures of who these programs were going to help. Now if you were able to do that kind of calculation, why are you not prepared to stand up here and answer some of the questions that were raised, some of the very specific questions with respect to the Tax Credit Program? What moneys are going where? Who is it going to benefit? How are these calculations made — some of the questions that were raised by my colleague? What are you afraid of?

I mean your programs were advertised, I would say, very well. You know, they really hit home. The pensioner pushing the cart saying, "These programs will assist you"; the SAFER Program, whoever put the advertising together, you probably should use them in your campaign, but the only thing is, I think you'd better be factual, Mr. Chairman, because you have not been factual up to this time. That's been your greatest problem, Mr. Chairman, and I think the government owes it to the citizens of Manitoba to come clean, to at least indicate how they've arrived at those benefits, and explain who's going to get

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what. I mean, who is really benefiting, Mr. Chairman? They've cut out the advertising, and what are they going to do, Mr. Chairman?

There is a segment in our population — the Minister of Agriculture, I'm pleased that he's here — that have been pleading with the government for a year-and-a-half, a segment of our agricultural population, the hog producers of this province, who have been suffering astronomical losses. I think the Minister of Natural Resources knows, he has a number of producers in his own area; he's getting calls, I've been getting calls.

You know, I had a call the other day, Mr. Chairman, from a producer, a husband and wife and a son and his wife — a two-couple operation — they were in the operation of producing, right now they're farrow to finishing 600 hogs. Their operation is of the size and the magnitude that will annually produce 1,200, Mr. Chairman. He tells me that every one of them have had to go out of the home to find employment, that the returns that they're receiving for their hogs do not even cover their feed costs, Mr. Chairman. They don't even cover their feed costs, let alone their labour, their overhead. Mr. Chairman, you know he mentioned to me, and I may as well for your benefit, he said, "I don't know whether there is a Conservative hog producer in the Interlake left", Mr. Chairman, and with the disastrous returns that they have been receiving over the last year.

The Minister of Agriculture and the Premier of this Province announced a \$40-plus-million Drought Relief Program. The end result, and I think the Minister can correct me if I'm wrong, I don't think your expenditures exceeded \$20 million, just around that mark, their actual outlay, Mr. Chairman. Manitoba happens to be the odd man out in the industry. Every other province, Mr. Chairman, in terms of substantial hog production, Manitoba has primarily been the odd man out in the industry, Mr. Chairman, and yet they have been sitting on their hands.

I am told that staff made some commitments to producers in the Interlake at meetings, I think, in Stonewall last summer. Producers came back to me and said, "You know, where is that assistance that the Department of Agriculture promised us?". Well, I hope, Mr. Chairman, —(Interjection)— the Member for Gladstone says, "It's coming". Look, Mr. Chairman, there have been a number of producers that have gone out of business. Is this the way of accomplishing the targeted goal, the TED Report goal, of rural population and rural economy, Mr. Chairman? Is this the way to do it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hour is 12:30 p.m. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. KOVNATS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Springfield, report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

COMMITTEE CHANGES

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MR. JAMES R. FERGUSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a change on Public Utilities, Mr. McKenzie for Mr. Craik.

MR. SPEAKER: Is that agreed? (Agreed)
The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a disposition not to proceed with Private Members' Hour.

I move therefore, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance, that this House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and the House adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:00 o'clock Monday.