



First Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARR, James	Crescentwood	Liberal
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CONNERY, Edward, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 11, 1990

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for 1988-89 for the Legislative Library and the Annual Report for 1989-90 of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1990-91 Revenue Estimates for the Department of Finance.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the gallery where we have from the Cecil Rhodes School thirty-seven Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Marvis Lenaghan. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Also this afternoon we have twenty-five students from the Glenboro School, and they are in Grade 7. They are under the direction of Mrs. Greenlay. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Speaker (Mr. Rocan).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Substance Abuse Program Cuts

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

Today while the Minister was announcing his Government's consultation on drug and alcohol abuse, he was cutting in half a program, the Youth Intervention Strategy pilot project, delivered to students coping with drug and alcohol abuse in Manitoba's high schools. It was delivered by the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba.

I want to table, Mr. Speaker, in this House an independent evaluation of this program which conclusively shows that both the teachers and students at these schools found the intervention program very valuable.

How can the Minister square his rhetorical concern for drug and alcohol abuse, as expressed in his news release today, with his willingness to cut back drug and alcohol abuse programs in high schools that are proving to be effective?

*(1335)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is a really interesting debate that we are going to have with my honourable friend with information that she may purport to put forward. I simply want to indicate to my honourable friend that the ministry of Health does not directly fund any such program in the high schools to my knowledge. Certainly the Minister of Health, myself, did not undertake any alleged reduction as my honourable friend states to the House today.

Mr. Speaker, let me try and point out to my honourable friend the value of this discussion paper to the strategy of this Government in terms of coming to grips with the issue of alcohol, drug and substance abuse in the Province of Manitoba. This is not a single department initiative or a single-funded agency initiative of Government. This is a multidepartmental effort involving Health, my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillehammer), my colleague the Minister of

Education (Mr. Derkach), my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) to bring together and to focus from the community their ideas, their initiatives and the good ideas that they have to make the war on drugs a more effective program for Government across all departmental lines—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, the Minister knows that the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba funds the Youth Intervention Strategy pilot project, and he knows that his Government has cut back the Alcoholism Foundation for precisely these kinds of projects.

Legislation

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I want to ask the Minister if he is willing to put some real commitment behind his rhetoric and not only provide funding to secure and expand the Youth Intervention Strategy project, but will he also finally proclaim the anti-sniff law, passed by all Parties in this Legislature last year, which could help police fight chemical abuse and could play a major role in this very serious problem facing all aspects of our society?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, to the answer of the second question, yes. To the answer to the first question, as I tried to indicate—and now my honourable friend has answered her own question.

Now, if the AFM in funding that high school project and in analyzing it believes it to be a very excellent program, I am going to ask them why, with a \$10.5 million budget, they refuse to continue funding it, if as alleged by my honourable friend it is one of the more valuable programs that they have funded in the past?

That is exactly the kind of initiative and direction that we are wishing to take in this consultation paper whereby Manitobans from such diverse areas of the province as the North, to the South, to the City of Winnipeg, involved in education, family services, justice, as police enforcement agencies and community services groups will have the opportunity to share with this Government through a consultation process their ideas, their initiatives and their directions, that we can undertake as a Government caring about abuse of drugs.

Program Cuts

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, if this Government were serious about dealing with the chemical abuse in our school system, he would ensure the continuation of the Youth Intervention Strategy project and not see it cut back. I want to ask the Minister why his Government continues to cut support programs like Youth Intervention Strategy, child-parent centres and refuses to meet with representatives of Pritchard Place, all of whom help people facing drug or alcohol abuse every day, and yet in his press release today he admits—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member's question has been put.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let me answer my honourable friend's question by simply asking her: How can she be so ill informed? I met with the representative of Pritchard House.

My honourable friend talks about an AFM reduction in funding, which she alleges they have undertaken and done. I want to tell my honourable friend that it was this Government that reinstated funding for women's alcoholic treatment services and expanded them into the community after the NDP cut them back—1988, Mr. Speaker. It was not the NDP who kept the administration of AFM in Brandon. It was the Conservative Government on this side of the House.

It was not the NDP who refused to fund a new Sun Centre in Brandon and refused and let people suffer in a substandard building. It was this Government that committed a new one. I accept none of that rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Environmental Laws Enforcement

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, today the federal Government announced its much awaited Green Plan. The Financial Post quotes a private environmentalist as saying, do not expect much that is going to cost the private sector money. When we look at the Green Plan, we see that the federal Government has gone the way of voluntary compliance of environmental law.

During Estimates this Government's Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) also was on record as

choosing not to charge polluters, similar to their federal Conservative counterparts.

Is refusing to enforce polluter-pay legislation Tory policy? Can this Government assure the public that environmental law penalties in Manitoba will be enforced and strengthened?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, it was this administration that increased the penalties in this province for raising the maximums to a million dollars for large corporations, including jail terms. The fact that the Member takes some umbrage that we have not put somebody in jail yet is not a measure of how well we are enforcing environmental regulations.

When she talks about polluter-pay, believe me, it is far better to have the problem cleaned up by an identified and agreeable measure rather than have a site that is considered an abandoned site with no capability of having the private sector pay for the cleanup. Certainly we will fine, we will prosecute whenever we have that ability, but polluter-pay remains the tantamount principle and enforcement.

Ms. Cerilli: I had hoped that the Minister could put on record the maximum fine levied in Manitoba.

Informant Protection

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Another omission from the Green Plan is protection of workers reporting violation of environmental precautions. Will this Government strengthen legal protection of workers blowing the whistle on employers?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, in response to the preamble of the Member, it is not this Minister who sets the fines that are imposed by the judges. The judges choose the appropriate level of fine and impose it. It is not either her job or mine to question the judgment of those court officials.

The fact is that we are quite prepared to deal with the issues of making it easier for those people who have a concern about environmental problems that they see occurring. We want them to be able to feel comfortable in phoning our information line or our emergency response line. We want to be able to get that information so that we can have active enforcement of our environmental laws.

Environmental Bill of Rights Introduction

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is for the same Minister.

Is this Government willing to offer protection of the environment to all Manitobans by introducing an environmental Bill of Rights, since the Green Plan has also refused to ensure that?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I had some considerable opportunity to debate the issues around an environmental Bill of Rights, not only in questions of policy, but also in conjunction with the national round table and in conjunction with enforcement and the best opportunity for protection of environment.

To tell you the truth, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that one of the best ways of laying out the best opportunities and the best methods of protection of the environment include working very diligently within a framework of principles that can be applied on a broad basis across the Government and across the actions of that Government.

An environmental Bill of Rights generally speaking does nothing to enhance the capability to protect environment or to make sure that adequate enforcement is in place.

Substance Abuse Government Initiatives

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

Just a very few minutes ago he said he was going to accept "none of that rhetoric." Mr. Speaker, I do not accept any of the rhetoric in this document which he tabled today, which has nothing new—no new information, no new initiative. All he is doing is reusing Bush-Mulroney rhetoric about a war on drugs.

We know that the number of people using hard drugs is in fact declining. We know that the use of alcohol is declining. What we also know is that youngsters are beginning both earlier. They are the ones we need programs for.

Why has this Minister chosen another study, another wishy-washy paper, when he should have presented to us initiatives as of today that will take place in the Province of Manitoba?

* (1345)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, unlike my honourable friend the Leader of the Second Opposition Party, I do not have all of the answers.

I note with interest that my honourable friend, in posing this question today, has not taken the opportunity in two successive years of Estimates to come in and share her thoughts on what Government ought to do, since she has all the answers.

Mr. Speaker, I reject absolutely and completely the Liberal Party position as espoused by the Leader, that Manitobans ought not to offer advice through full consultation, public hearings and a discussion paper, advice to the Government on strategies for dealing with drugs, alcohol and substance abuse. I reject that suggestion.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, there are youngsters in the gallery today who could have presented a better paper than was presented by this Minister. They have obviously more knowledge of what is happening to their young friends than this Minister does.

Why can this ministry and this entire Government not come forward with one single initiative making sure that those young people have the information necessary, the advice and counselling necessary and the treatment necessary when they find themselves subject to drug and alcohol abuse?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, in the process of the consultation program those same youth who are in the gallery today can come and share their thoughts on the problem with committee Members of Government, because I am sure those individuals will have a greater understanding and knowledge of the problem than the questioner.

My honourable friend wants to say there are no new initiatives. Does she not consider that the funding today and the construction today of a 12-bed adolescent residential treatment program for adolescent women at St. Norbert Foundation is not a new initiative? I want to tell her it is the first of its kind in Manitoba and the first women's adolescent treatment facility in western Canada. That is a new initiative of this Government that I am proud of.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health should talk to the parents who consistently have to send their children outside of this province to other western provinces in order to get treatment for, unfortunately, their drug abuse.

Can the Minister of Health tell us how long it is going to take this Government in this mandate, since they did not do it in the last one, to come up with programs that will help our young people?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, not to let anybody who might be baffled and befuddled by my honourable friend's preamble to the question, let me tell my honourable friend, as I have answered her before, that this Government, whilst developing a strategy for Government, has funded important initiatives in the school place such as the Target program as offered through the Manitoba High Schools' Athletic Association. That is only one of a number of initiatives in terms of education designed and geared toward prevention of use and abuse of alcohol and drugs by students in Manitoba—only one.

Mr. Speaker, because it has been stated by Members of the Liberal Party, and the Leader in particular, that when Government does something right, they would give credit. Surely my honourable friend would admit that a new 12-bed adolescent women's treatment centre in Manitoba is an important, proper and needed initiative that we have commenced in our funding.

Economic Growth All-Party Task Force

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are becoming increasingly pessimistic about our chances for economic security and a reasonable standard of living in the coming year, and that was confirmed by a recent poll. Today, CIBC has issued an outlook, a forecast, for the Manitoba economy which is bleak indeed.

Mr. Speaker, given that the CIBC report says there will be no increase in our economic activity in the Province of Manitoba, will the Minister of Finance convene, as has been requested on many occasions, an all-Party committee to look at the stagnant economy in Manitoba and ways to increase our economic activity and provide jobs for Manitobans?

* (1350)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am not intimate with that release. I can indicate that I had a senior official from the Royal Bank visit me this morning and indicated that again they will be downgrading all of the provincial estimates of economic growth in the country and yet

that their number with respect to Manitoba would remain at the constant level showing some economic growth for the 1991 year.

Mr. Speaker, that official again indicated to us how fortunate we were in this province to have this diversified economy, how fortunate we were that within rural parts particularly that there is a robust growth in the economy and that is what, of course, is keeping the provincial average at a level far above the national average.

Mr. Speaker, the Member asks for a common seminar or some type of day discussion on the issue. I say to the Members opposite, if their initiative is based on the additional borrowing of hundreds of millions of dollars, we do not have the same foundation of understanding. I think such a day would be fruitless.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, if the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) could announce a committee to review the Constitution, a document which is esoteric and has no immediate implications for most Canadians, will the First Minister or the Minister of Finance at least take some initiative to do something that Manitobans do care about, the security of their families, their jobs and this province? Will the First Minister or the Minister of Finance convene an economic summit to look at the deterioration of the manufacturing sector in our province, which is referenced as part of the reason for the decline in Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, in preparing for the budget that came down in October I met with all of the economic and labour leaders of our province. I put the question to them as to which was the best way that our province could grow at even a faster rate. I also asked individuals whether or not the provincial debt represented a significant problem and whether or not it curtailed expenditures by Government in the economic development portfolios.

To a person, they agreed that the provincial debt has significant impact. They also agreed that increased taxation was not the solution to our problem. Indeed they thought that the long steady haul of trying to keep taxes lower as compared to the national average, that attempting to hold back the rate of expenditure growth was still the most prudent course to follow.

Mr. Speaker, nobody to this day has been able to show, I believe, the Premier and myself that there is

a better approach to trying to govern over the next two or three years.

Job Creation

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, many people have been asking for an economic summit so that somebody can put forward some ideas for this Government, which seems bereft of ideas.

Mr. Speaker, also mentioned in a CIBC report is the net out-migration of people expected in 1991. Young people are losing opportunities in Manitoba. They are being forced to move out of this province for jobs.

Can the Minister of Finance or the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) tell us what this Government intends to do so young people will have some hope of securing a job in their home province?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer to the question would be similar to the one I just gave.

If the Member is saying, do we have a program whereby we are going to borrow again tens of millions of dollars for the purpose of making short-term jobs like the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) used to do, I would have to say that we are not afforded the luxury of being able to borrow those additional tens of millions of dollars, particularly when Members of the Opposition in the social portfolios are demanding that we spend tens of millions of dollars more on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that we have a responsibility to try and maximize employment opportunities for our young graduates. I can assure the Member that training programs that have been in place in the past will continue to have a great degree of importance, and we will do everything we can to ensure that necessary employment is in place.

* (1355)

St. James-Assinibola School Division Provincial Audit

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): I am asking to respond to a question that was taken as notice regarding the Provincial Auditor's investigation of enrollment discrepancies at John Taylor Collegiate in St. James-Assinibola School Division.

The Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) asked the question whether or not there were other schools in St. James-Assiniboia that were guilty of this same kind of discrepancy that is being investigated at John Taylor Collegiate.

Mr. Speaker, I can indicate that the Provincial Auditor is examining all the records of John Taylor Collegiate and to date we have had no written allegations about another collegiate at St. James-Assiniboia School Division.

The Member for Kildonan also indicated that the Deputy Minister may have in his possession a letter indicating that there are enrollment discrepancies at Sturgeon Creek. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that there is no such letter on file. There is no such letter in my office. There have been rumours by various Members, but indeed nothing has been substantiated, so it appears as though the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) may have been on somewhat of a fishing trip.

Minimum Wage Increase

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, yesterday after Question Period the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) put out a press release announcing that the minimum wage would be increasing by only 30 cents an hour as of March 1. That is an increase of only 6.3 percent since the last increase, an increase of 2 percent a year. The Conservative Government feels that is enough. The Liberals apparently feel that is enough.

My question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). How does he expect minimum wage earners to cope with an increase of only 30 cents an hour, an increase that is indeed only an average of 2 percent since the last increase more than three years ago?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the Member for Thompson that the recommendation to move to a \$5 minimum wage came as a majority report of the Minimum Wage Board. It took submissions in this province, which he was free to make a submission to at that particular time. This Government accepted that recommendation based on a majority report of that board.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I asked in terms of the minimum wage earners how they are supposed to cope.

Increase Implementation

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I will ask another question. Why did this Government choose to wait until March 1 for an increase? These people have had to wait more than three years for an increase. They are going to have to wait past January, February, till March 1 before the next increase of only 30 cents an hour. Why?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, it was the recommendation again of the majority of the board that there be a sufficient period of implementation for that increase. I took the recommendation of the chair on a period that would be suitable of two and a half months, three months.

I should remind Members in the New Democratic Party that one of the reasons we are off on this schedule of well over two-year increases in the minimum wage was that under Howard Pawley, when he was in power, we got off a schedule of year to year-and-a-half increases.

They have been continually coming to this House and indicating that they care so much. Yet when they were in power they did not increase the minimum wage for periods of two and a quarter to two and a half years. This Government is committed to getting back on to a more regular period.

Increase

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the New Democratic Party Government increased the minimum wage by more than 32 percent over six years in four increases, unlike the 6 percent increase in three years of this Conservative Government.

My final question is—and I ask again in terms of the minimum wage earners, I ask the Minister, I ask the Premier: How do they expect people to cope when they are going to be faced with the GST, when they are faced with increases in the cost of living of 5 percent a year? How are they supposed to cope on 2 percent a year?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am just amazed at the information that gets put on the record of this House. My colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has indicated on a number of occasions with respect to the GST the tax credits available.

If the Member would sit down and do some calculations he would probably quickly realize that

those particular tax benefits and payments made by the federal Government will more than compensate or at least compensate for the GST. -(interjection)-

I am not defending the GST. That is a fact. If the Members of the New Democratic Party do not like dealing with facts then they should not be in this House.

I would say to the Member that there was plenty of opportunity for him and others in the New Democratic Party, if they in fact were quite concerned about this issue, to have made presentations to the Minimum Wage Board. I doubt if they did that.

City of Winnipeg Sewage System Upgrade

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

The Minister's federal counterpart today has unveiled the Green Plan—the long awaited Green Plan—which it turns out is neither particularly green nor a plan.

However, one of the statements in that announcement is that Canada must ensure safe drinking water for the future. We must also clean up past mistakes. Steps will be taken to prevent pollution in inland waters in Alberta and in Manitoba.

My question for the Minister is: Can the Minister indicate whether or not in his discussions with his federal counterpart Mr. deCotret the federal Government through these statements is making a commitment to assist in upgrading the City of Winnipeg sewage system, which in fact is the biggest source of inland water pollution in this province, or are these lofty statements simply that—statements in a nice looking booklet?

* (1400)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would not draw the same conclusions necessarily as the Member concluded his question with. I have not discussed specifically the reference that is in this Green Plan to the Red River and the Assiniboine, but I welcome the interest that the federal Government is showing and am prepared to pursue those discussions.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, for the same Minister, one of the other statements in the Green Plan is that

while it is not contingent on provincial participation, that would certainly be welcomed.

Is the province prepared to leverage the federal Government and demand that they do have the conviction of their words in this plan and suggest a tri-level approach to cleaning up the rivers, agreed not just in the City of Winnipeg, but throughout the Province of Manitoba, where the pollution has mostly been at the hands of public authorities?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to exercise leverage to make sure that we have as much federal involvement and as much support as is needed. I see this as also being quite complementary to the process which we are embarking upon, and that is the Clean Environment Commission hearings in relation to the river water quality in and around the City of Winnipeg.

Shoal Lake Water Quality Compensation

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): In fact the more you see from the federal Government the less, I would think, you would want to jump into bed with them, Mr. Speaker.

Has the Minister considered, in light of the Green Plan's lofty words about Canadians' rights to clean water, requesting his federal counterparts to do their part in compensating the Natives on Shoal Lake and perhaps Consolidated Professor Mines in order to ensure that no mining activity occurs which would threaten the drinking water of the City of Winnipeg, seeing as quite clearly the Ontario New Democratic Party is not willing to take that stand?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have been quite dismayed by some of the information that appears to be coming out of the Government run by Premier Bob. I am very concerned about the comments that are being made regarding developments in Shoal Lake.

Let us not get too far away from the suggestion that was originally incorporated in the question regarding the Green Plan, because one of the concerns that is consistently raised when you get into a clean water protection Act is that associated with that, under a number of jurisdictions and a number of people who are pushing out there today, no water allowed for potable purposes should be allowed to be put into the stream without a water treatment plant.

Mathematics Examination Withdrawal

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

The Department of Education is in chaos. This Minister promises a strategic plan; there is no strategic plan. He promises for two years an education finance review; there is no education finance review. He sets in place a high school strategy plan, and he does not even hire people in his own department, which is now trying to hire, to put the plan in effect. The only thing that he has done in the last year is something nobody wants, and that is the high school examination process.

Will the Minister do the right thing, do what all of the people in the education community are asking, and back off the high school exam process, start over and do it right?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): The only body that is in chaos is the body across the way, Mr. Speaker.

Let me indicate to you that with regard to the high school exam in mathematics, the exam is scheduled for January 11 and will go ahead. As a matter of fact, we have had a considerable amount of support from the rank and file teachers who are administering the exam. We certainly have a lot of support from the parents who are endorsing the exam, Mr. Speaker, and yes, there will always be some controversy about the philosophy of an exam, but indeed we intend to proceed with the exam. The math exam will be written on the 11th of January by all semestered students.

St. James-Assiniboia School Division Provincial Audit

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should have acted in the same manner that Members opposite did when they were on the other side of the House.

Has the Minister had an opportunity to review an anonymous letter that I forwarded to his fellow Minister, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), with respect to some very serious allegations relating to St. James-Assiniboia, and will the Provincial Auditor investigate those allegations?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we learn a lot about each other in this

House, and I have learned a lot about the Member for Kildonan in just the posing of that question.

The Member did send me a copy of an unsupportable letter. I have met with the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) over it, and it certainly has been forwarded to the Provincial Auditor. Again, it is amazing how one learns how desperate some people have become politically.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, if I had followed the practice of Members opposite, I would have called a press conference prior to that letter. I forwarded it to the Minister.

Mathematics Examination Consultations

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My final supplementary is to the Minister of Education.

Will he table one single study or one single report supporting his position of the examination process taking place on January 11 that will count for nothing in almost all school divisions?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): As you can see, this Member's questioning is very disjointed, but I can tell you with regard to the examination, Mr. Speaker, over the last two years we have indeed entered into conversation with many people who have some very serious concerns about the standards in quality of education in this province. Indeed that is probably the first and foremost thing on most peoples' minds, especially parents who are sending their children to our education institutions.

It is time that not only schools, but this Government became accountable to the people who invest millions of dollars in the education system. Mr. Speaker, the exam is but one very small step toward that type of accountability in the system.

Personal Care Homes Riverton, Manitoba

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): My question is for the Minister of Health.

The residents of Riverton in the last six months developed and submitted to this Minister a proposal for construction of a personal care home in their community.

Considering the fact that the Interlake as a whole has a 57-person waiting list, 504 beds being used with 561 needed and 28 residents alone in Riverton

waiting for beds, will this Minister tell this House now that he will meet with the representatives from the task force as soon as possible?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, yes, the members of Riverton in the constituency of Interlake have made representations to the ministry and to the Manitoba Services Commission about their need for some form of long-term care facility in their community. I only indicate to my friend that the same challenges in decision making are present for this Government as were for the six and a half years previous in which Riverton desired long-term care and made that same representation to the Honourable Bill Uruski.

We will attempt to meet the needs of all Manitobans in terms of long-term care, including those in the Interlake.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Mr. Speaker, this Minister's department has made claims that the area has been overserved, and I believe that a couple of years ago the same proposal was put before this Minister, yet there are people waiting on a waiting list to get personal care beds in this area.

I ask this Minister: Will he agree now to review the whole proposal, get the project moving before the list gets longer?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend did make a very interesting point in that the Interlake region, in terms of its number of available personal care home beds, is above the provincial average. I investigated and I asked that question, and I am pleased to provide the answer to my honourable friend. The difficulty in the Interlake is that they neglected for a number of years the needs in Riverton and placed all of the personal care home beds in Selkirk, where coincidentally the previous Premier of this province resided, and the people of Riverton did not receive construction for personal care home beds.

* (1410)

Mr. Cliff Evans: To the same Minister, a commitment has been made by the Riverton Hospital Foundation to contribute land and money to this worthwhile project, a huge commitment. So I ask the Minister now: Will he commit his department to prioritize this project now?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend that I share, as coming from a rural community, his enthusiasm for his residents. It is the same enthusiasm that his predecessor shared

in Government as a Cabinet Minister. I simply indicate to my honourable friend that the commitment on this side of the House by this Government has been to substantially increase the number of personal care home beds that are available to the seniors of Manitoba in areas where the greatest need and the greatest disparity of availability is. That included such regions as Benito, Erickson, Manitou—and I can go on and on—Beausejour, Pine Falls.

Income Security Program Federal Minister's Comments

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, some time ago a disabled Manitoban took the federal Government to court claiming that they were acting inappropriately in their enforcement of the Canada Assistance Plan. Well, the case went to the federal Court of Appeal and the recipient here was successful.

Today I have a letter from the Honourable Perrin Beatty, the federal Minister of Health and Welfare—and I am prepared to table the letter—which fundamentally threatens all disabled people in this province with effects, should they not be successful in appealing this case, that could adversely affect Canadians in need and may well translate into less flexibility in provincial systems to meet clients' special circumstances.

My question for the Minister of Family Services is: Has the Minister contacted the federal Minister, and will he ask him to stop intimidating Manitoba recipients of income security programs?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the case that the Member references. This is a national issue which needs adjudication, and I think that what we must do is let the process take place and the courts make a determination on that.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, while that process is taking place, the federal Minister is writing to disabled people in this province saying that they could lose benefits if that case is successful in the federal court.

Now, will the Minister undertake to speak to the federal Minister and ask him to stop this harassment of people who are pursuing a legitimate course of action?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the case is before the courts and has been before the courts for some

time. It is a case that has implications not only for Manitobans, but for people in all provinces. I think that we have to allow the natural course of justice to take place.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister would be willing to let Manitobans know that they will suffer no loss of benefits as a result of this court case.

Mr. Gillshammer: The court case is ongoing. We have to await the adjudication of that case. We are certainly prepared to abide by its outcome.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before I call the motion of Supply, it is my understanding that the Department of Health will have its Estimates considered in the Committee Room. The Department of Natural Resources will begin to be reviewed in the Chamber, to be followed by Housing.

Mr. Speaker, I understand there is not an agreement at this time to waive private Members' hour, but there may be further instructions at five o'clock when we come into private Members' hour.

Mr. Speaker, I then move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to alter the sequence of Estimates? We are going to have Health in Room 255 and upon the completion of Natural Resources in the Chamber, we will do Housing. Is that agreed?

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Health; and the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Natural Resources.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY—HEALTH

Mr. Deputy Chairman (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. We will now resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Health. When the Committee of Supply had last considered these Estimates, the committee had been discussing item 1.(d) Policy and Planning Secretariat: (1) Salaries \$504,300, on page 88 of the Estimates book.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the Minister give us an update on the situation of the shortage of anesthetists because in the Question Period he said that he would write some more information? Can he give us a breakdown? He has said there are 83 people practising right now. Can he provide that list and where he got the number 83?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): The College of Physicians and Surgeons reported to us that the number of anesthetists registered had risen from 49 in 1978 to 72 in 1989, and to 83 in 1990. Now, as I indicated in the House, that is the number that are registered. There are some who are not actively practising, and I am informed by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. This is month-old or two-month-old information. Of these 83, it is reported that 78 are actively practising; and we have five, obviously from that, that for whatever reasons are not practising. I do not have information as to why they may not be. They may be registered and in retirement, for instance, or for other reasons not practising.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister tell us if he has inquired about the group which is serving both hospitals, Misericordia and Concordia, and the issue I raised in the House, not in terms of creating a sort of panic, but I think the situation is going to get worse as of January 1st. Can he give us an update on what kind of measures they have put in place to make sure that the surgical procedures are done as of January 1 in Concordia Hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, again, you know, I am not going to probably provide my honourable friend with a great deal of additional information compared to what was provided in the Question Period. In the May-June period this summer, just in the last six months, we experienced potential difficulties with the practice group out of Health Sciences Centre that offered services to

Seven Oaks Hospital. We took that issue very seriously and made an arrangement that appears to be working fairly well so that the service can continue at Seven Oaks.

The Misericordia circumstance is similar, although I think my honourable friend appreciates that there is a smaller practice group involved than with Health Sciences Centre and Seven Oaks. We are attempting to work a similar arrangement there with the anesthesiologist group, so that we can hopefully continue service provision out of Concordia. We have not concluded an arrangement to date.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister tell us the current situation at Victoria Hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Concordia Hospital is anticipating difficulties, I believe, because of one or two retirements.

An Honourable Member: Victoria.

Mr. Orchard: What did I say?

An Honourable Member: You said Concordia.

Mr. Orchard: Concordia—I meant Victoria. I believe Victoria's problem centres around the potential or the stated intention for one or two practitioners to retire in the new year.

Mr. Cheema: The Minister indicated in the House that the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower has been working in co-operation with the Department of Health to solve this crisis. Can he give us an update on what solid measures they have taken into account to make sure that we will have the accurate number of anesthesia resources in Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: You see, Mr. Deputy Chairman, there are two or three approaches that need to be undertaken. The training side, for instance, is one. The Standing Committee on Medical Manpower does have a role and are playing a role. I will stand to be corrected if I err in this statement, but there has been recent recruitment success into Brandon General Hospital, for instance. I believe that the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower assisted Brandon in that recruitment.

You see—and I think my honourable friend understands this maybe better than anybody else could—this problem in terms of anesthesiology is one that has grown out of the peculiar way in which the MMA has been allowed to, in the past, have exclusive distribution of the global pot of money that

Governments in the past have provided to them. Quite frankly—and we have said this directly to the MMA, so I am not offending them or saying something that we have not discussed with them—they have created their own inequities within the system, because they have created some significant winners, who are amongst the highest paid professionals in Canada, and certainly do very well in the Manitoba context.

You never hear of those people, because they are the winners out of this around-the-table distribution of Government money, which Government did not provide any guidance and input to for many, many years. Then, when a difficulty comes up, I find it quite interesting that the physicians of Manitoba would have from the president of the MMA a letter December 10, 1990, basically throwing all of the blame on Government for this problem of anesthesiology and centring it around the issue of modest amounts of funding and that Governments simply did not give them enough money.

You know, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I hope we have the opportunity to debate this issue, because this is not exclusively Government's problem. This is the profession's problem, and we have achieved, in this agreement that we signed recently with the MMA, one component that I believe is very, very important, and that is a study on fee schedule reform. Within that study I believe that there will be the opportunity to adjust some of the past internally created disparities of the fee schedule that MMA has caused and foisted upon themselves and physicians of Manitoba.

I am hopeful of that process and that will—if it proceeds reasonably—lead to, I think, the MMA being "drug" along, if that is as blunt as I can put it, to solve the problem. Instead of coming to Government and saying, well, just give us more money, and we will solve this problem, the Government has put in this year's budget, \$280 plus million at their disposal. Surely within that, creation of winners and losers over the past, there would be the ability to find the strength from within to help resolve the problem instead of on a perennial basis coming to Government and saying, as the president has in his recent correspondence, it is Government's problem. It is not only Government's problem, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think to some extent the Minister's remarks are quite correct in a way that if you look at the fee schedules set by

the allocation committees, the anesthesia department has been lagging behind. Certainly that has created a problem in terms of recruitment, because even if you look at the statistics, even the graduates who are getting training from this place, not more than 50 persons stay in Manitoba.

Manitoba's program is if not the best but one of the best programs in this country, and that has been recognized. I am not saying from a political point, that is very true. I think it is a shame that this incentive, if you do not provide it to them, they will leave. Especially if you look at the numbers of people who are going to retire next year, I guess about 10 or 12, and then the year after probably another five to six, we have to aim for at least 15 or 18 more persons who will settle. At the same time, people who are going to be trained will leave, 50 persons, that is a normal rate, that is if you follow the same pattern.

* (1440)

I think in a way it is absolutely crucial that the Minister of Health is going to come and make sure that the—I am going to take exception to one of his remarks earlier in the House that we said that we do not favour this special fund. That simply is not true. At any given record if the Minister can assure me that if I or any Member of our Party has said that we do not approve of this special fund, because I think the Minister has a responsibility and Government, from the taxpayers' point of view, have a major responsibility to make sure to oversee the funding allocation.

If that budget can be used to bring at par with some of the specialties, because some of these surgeons doing if not the same work but work which is at par in terms of risk, they are paid more than the anesthesiologists. I think that is a problem, but they may not have a major force in the organization so that may be one of the reasons, but I think their point of view I want the Minister to know that we never made that remark. We will stand by that. The special allocation of funds is extremely important, because that way the Minister will have some direct authority to make sure some of the services are provided.

Before I go further, because something is really bothering me, I want to clarify it today that as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, in the guideline issued by the Government of Manitoba, if he or she is a member of an organization—I am not in a conflict with any of my work. If I happen to ask

a question in the area of health, that does not mean that I am in the political association of the group or I get a special input. I think I take great offence to that comment.

I would like the Minister to clarify that because that means that I should not be raising any questions then. That means that people who are working in the farming community, are they not going to raise questions about what is important for the farming community? People who are working in insurance agencies, are they not going to talk about those things? I think if this Government wants to have more clear guidelines, they should approach the LAMC committee, whatever, to make sure that everything is clear.

As far as the law of this province is concerned, I am not in any conflict at all. I am not a member of any major committees. I am not taking any participation in terms of advocating for any group. I feel bad that such a comment was made. It makes good sense for a 20-second TV, but it does not make sense in the long run. I mean, nobody is twisting my arm to serve in this House, but I have decided I want to do my job, and it does create some problems for me in terms of my personal belief in what I think is right for the people of Manitoba. I want the Minister to retract those remarks from the record.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I realize my honourable friend was quite alarmed at one of my answers, but I did not reflect upon him personally. I did not accuse him of conflict of interest or any such concern. I never raised any such concern; but I did point out to my honourable friend, because you know I was absolutely frustrated during the negotiations with the MMA.

I have never been in quite a similar circumstance, because I approached it with a wide open mind trying to resolve problems including some of the shoring up monies, et cetera, et cetera. The executive of the MMA—and I believe they were totally out of touch with their membership at large when they did this—rejected a very, very good offer. They were driven by their non-medical advisers to do that.

My comment to my honourable friend in the House the other day was—and I believe and I will stand corrected if I am wrong—but I believe to practise medicine in Manitoba, you have got to pay your dues to the MMA. Hence, you are a member of the MMA. That does not reflect in any way that you

are representing their narrowed interest when you ask questions. The point I made to my honourable friend, so that he understands clearly what I was saying to him the other day, is that as a member of the MMA, I wished he and others who had the same kind of concerns would have made those concerns known to the executive of the MMA, the elected officials, and the non-elected officials who were providing the advice, which I think was bad advice, for the doctors of Manitoba; more importantly, bad advice to the people of Manitoba in the long haul.

That is where I was saying to my honourable friend as a member of MMA that he ought to get and try to shape some sanity into that organization, because at bargaining time they seem to have lost it. It was not reflecting and accusing my honourable friend of a conflict of interest. I made a speech the other day in the budget, in which I pointed out to the House that as a farmer—and I have benefitted as a farmer from a number of programs from previous and this Government—I laid out the peculiar financial circumstances we find ourselves in, where our grain prices are approximately \$1.30-some a bushel compared to \$6.50 in 1973.

That, I do not believe, placed me in a conflict of interest when I made those statements, nor do I consider, when my honourable friend asks questions in terms of how we are going to come to grips with some of the fee schedule inequities within the Manitoba system, that he is speaking from a vested interest—not at all. I never meant to leave that impression and never attempted to.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: I am going to ask the committee to revert to dealing with 1.(d) Policy and Planning Secretariat: 1.(d)(1) Salaries, \$504,300.00.

Mr. Cheema: With due respect, that is a part of the whole mandate of the Party. The planning and research is supposed to—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: We are dealing with 1.(d)(1) Policy and Planning Secretariat, \$504,300.00. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Cheema: I thank the Minister for those comments, and certainly that will help me to go to sleep tonight, because I think it is unfair that when a person is working from a non-biased view that he or she is being accused of something and left the impression on the record that was the case. I see it as a thought that I may not be then doing the Health

portfolio or something else, if that is going to come in the way of performing my duties.

My next question is to the Minister. Can the Minister tell us what his Government has achieved in terms of the shortage through the Standing Committee on Medical Manpower in the area of rheumatology?

Mr. Orchard: I do not think our numbers have changed. Our recruitment efforts have added new rheumatologists as specialists to the province of Manitoba. Let me tell my honourable friend that I expect that we ought to be able to. I say this with more confidence than I have had in the last year and a half or so because within the 3 percent monetary offer to the physicians of Manitoba that the MMA agreed to, we focused in on three specialist groups: pediatric cardiac surgery, rheumatology—the Deputy and I both have a temporary mind glitch here where we cannot remember the third.

We took three specialist disciplines that were in need of a recruitment boost, if you will, or whatever you want to call it. Within the 3 percent global settlement that the MMA agreed to, we insisted that a 20 percent increase be added to the visit fee, for instance, of rheumatologists in the province of Manitoba. We think that will, in part, help to recruit and retain rheumatologists to Manitoba. As I speak to you today, I do not believe that we have any successful candidates moving to the province as I speak.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister tell us what efforts have been made—and I think everyone knows that the shortage is not only here but throughout this country. Our numbers, at least in Manitoba as compared to the rest of the country, even though there are many factors, including the fee schedule, it is also going to have an impact on the teaching program, as I said last year. I would like the Minister to tell us what special steps they have taken to ensure that we would have the adequate numbers in the near future.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

* (1450)

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend, in his question, identified some of the challenges, and let me put another one more directly on the table. There are those who believe that the retirement climate in British Columbia has put a number of seniors in that province, particularly in Victoria. From an age group perspective, more seniors do suffer from an arthritic

condition which rheumatology, as a specialty, deals with.

We are fighting two quantities, if you will, in the Victoria attraction: numbers of people as potential patients and certainly what some would consider, I think quite inappropriately, a better climate. I mean, I much prefer the Manitoba climate, and I cannot understand the drive to that soggy climate out there in Victoria where they have maybe a few days of sunshine a year and the rest of the time cloud and rain. Nevertheless, we have that as a difficulty.

One of the issues that was brought to our attention consistently that we could not do anything about until we got into the new round of negotiations with the MMA was on the fee schedule side of it. We insisted as part of the agreement that there be the 20 percent increase—not 3 percent, but 20 percent—to the office visit for rheumatologists in Manitoba. I think that will help.

In terms of the training program, again I think that opportunity for compensation quite frankly may well make students more interested in rheumatology as a professional career.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the Minister tell us through his department or if they have the information through the University Grants Commission the amount of money given for the research for this department, which is very vital? Even the Department of Anesthesiology, the Department of Rheumatology and other departments, their viability for the training program depends upon the good research. How much money have they been given this year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am going to have to try and determine that through questioning my honourable friend the Minister of Education as well.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, will it be possible to have the information in the near future?

Mr. Orchard: Well, I will make every attempt to get that information.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the Minister tell us, because now they have a four-year mandate and it looks like there is a strong possibility that the present Minister of Health may be a Minister of Health for at least four years, what areas of shortage in the medical manpower or medical resources they have targeted to make sure that we do not have a problem in 1994 so that the Minister will not be able to say, whoever he or she may be,

that we did not know what problem was going to come? Now they have four years. What evaluation have they done in terms of the graduation time, in terms of the post-graduate programs, the aging age of the physicians and other factors which are having impact on the manpower in Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Chairman, an important question, I have made myself a little note here, because my honourable friend's preamble to the question stimulated some more information that I knew he would want to have, and doggone if it did not slip my mind. Ah, I know what it was.

On the research side we will attempt to do two things. The first I think we can do fairly quickly. That is give you the global figure of research support, but the internal allocation of that is, in my understanding, determined by the Faculty of Medicine. I do not know how quickly we can find out the internal reallocation, but we will attempt to provide that as well.

Now in terms of specialist groups, this is not as simple a question as simply answering to you the obvious one of anesthesiology and rheumatology. There are other disciplines, such as radiology and emergency medicine and pathologists that are, for a number of reasons, in pathology, not necessarily income, not in abundant supply, shall we say. The second dimension—and those are areas that we are attempting to work with, the professional association and the faculty there, to develop policies and actions which will help in the recruitment of retention.

The bigger issue, and this is one that is much more difficult to come around, and maybe we will at the end of four years have a solution to it, is in the maldistribution of physicians. That is still, above and beyond, probably the greatest challenge that any Government will face in this province, because it is being faced by every provincial jurisdiction. I mean, all you have to do is sit for 10 minutes, talk about physician distribution with any colleague, be it British Columbia or Quebec, and you will find that the major urban centres have little difficulty recruiting, retaining physicians in abundant supply, but our rural and remote areas continue to be plagued with difficulties.

We will no doubt get into that discussion, too, so I will leave further clarification of what we are targeting and how we are moving in that direction. For the time being, the professional specialists that I mentioned earlier are the ones that we see as

needing some facilitation by Government to enhance the recruitment retention efforts.

Mr. Cheema: The Minister has not recognized the areas of deficiency in terms of four years, because the data is there. Extensive work has been done, I do not know whether in this ministry, but the other part of this country. The statistics are available from Health and Welfare Canada plus the CMA, how many people we have and how many are going to retire in four or five years, which specialty we are going to be short in. I think that is what my question is. Are we going to have a specific look from the Manitoba perspective in four years' time or five years' time, which is going to be very crucial?

Mr. Orchard: I misunderstood my honourable friend's question there, but now, with more clarity, that is—the larger issue my honourable friend raised is the subject of the physician manpower study that has been undertaken by the ministries of Health across Canada. We should have that report available early in the new year. It will be a subject of discussion at future Minister of Health meetings, because it is an issue that affects all of us across Canada.

We have our difficulties with rheumatology in Manitoba; we have our difficulties with anesthesiologists, but we are not unique. With few exceptions, most provinces have those difficulties.

Mr. Cheema: I want to go back to the issue of physician maldistribution. When you talk about maldistribution, the walk-in clinic phenomena comes along with that. There were, interestingly, two studies. One study was done at least by this department, and that study raised more questions than it solved any of the other questions in the past. There were a number of factors. The Minister last year promised that they were going to look into more in terms of some sort of concrete ideas, which way this ministry is going to go.

Now, when they are thinking of addressing the physician maldistribution problem, can the Minister tell us, what is the Government's policy in terms of the walk-in clinics?

Mr. Orchard: Right now, there is neither a policy which limits or prevents expansion. It is within the fee-for-service billing system that one may operate a walk-in clinic in the City of Winnipeg.

I mentioned to my honourable friend earlier on that in terms of the recently signed agreement with the MMA, one of the components was fee schedule

reform study, which we hope would address some of the peculiarities that have grown into the system over previous distributions of Government's increased funding to physicians.

The second aspect of study under the new agreement was the study on volume or the factors affecting the volume of growth of physician billings in the Province of Manitoba. We are working with the MMA in providing that kind of information to the consultant which, hopefully, will lead us to a conclusion there that will tell both of us whether the walk-in clinic is truly the one that is driving volume of billings.

* (1500)

I will tell you straight out, I will sit down within a group of physicians, and if we have one-on-one conversations and go around a room of 20, I will get almost, well not 20 different opinions, but if I ask, are you in favour or against, I will get from vehemently against to vehemently in favour. There is no consensus of opinion amongst doctors as to the impact of walk-in clinics on the level of billing and the quality—and there is the important key—the quality of medical services.

Hopefully, that argument can be resolved, so we may have disagreement as to which is based on personal thought or vested interest in whether the walk-in is good or bad amongst physicians. With completion of the study on volume, we believe we ought to have some statistical evidence to draw conclusions from as to their impact on the system, so that we will not be arguing good or bad without proper information.

Mr. Cheema: I understand the situation is difficult in terms of even defining what is walk-in clinic and what is the other practice, but in a taxpayer's point of view, the question is very important. I mean, the perception is there. Whether their perception is right or wrong, I think with that data available through the Health Services Commission, it is not difficult to derive a conclusion how these services are being used, and one of the volume of overbilling—not overbilling—or whatever way you want to say it, that maybe the conclusion can be derived.

In terms of the physician maldistribution, that question is going to be very crucial, because the walk-in clinics, as many people have said, have come in the way of getting some young physicians to some of the other communities. If somebody can make the same amount of money working in a

walk-in clinic, it is very difficult for them, having all other conditions of life, whatever way they want to live, I suppose, in Winnipeg, if they like it, to force somebody. At the same time, the taxpayers have to be served in a more uniform way. Somebody living in Thompson is still paying the same amount of taxes, and they still expect the same amount of services.

I think this is going to be a tough battle for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and it is going to be a tough battle from various organizations, even from a human rights way at the end, and saying where you can or you cannot practise. Ultimately, the decision has to be made. I would like to see some progress made in that respect, so that the public would know which way their money is being spent and how the very limited medical resources are going to be rechanneled or reused.

The other question which comes to everyone's mind during the campaign, which is a very vital question, how when you are starting a practice that does not mean that you are paying for the medical fees? You are paying for all the other services like lab billing or the physiotherapy services. Every physician does cost a lot of money, not for his or her fee but the other resources.

What the perception was during the last one year that unfortunate incident at one of the lab clinics which ended up having overbilling which was perceived to be a misuse of services. Certainly, we would like the Minister to proceed in that direction and make sure that not only the billing practices of physicians are checked, the billing practices of labs are checked regularly, because for some lab or any person, it is going to take me five years to know which way my practice is going to be.

It is very unfortunate, because by the time you understand millions of dollars are gone down the drain. So who is paying for it? Each one of us is paying, but in that respect the image of a professional or image of the medical services creates a lot of problems for the public at large. We would like the Minister to proceed in that direction and make sure that some of the services are checked more regularly, because if the physicians are being checked, why not check the lab services.

I would like to know what specific measures this Minister has taken in view of the allegations of this particular lab clinic and one or two other clinics which were being investigated this year?

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Acting Chairman, I want to deal with the three issues that my honourable friend raised. Look, I accept a challenge. I mean, I have been faced with difficult choices and decisions in this ministry already. I am prepared to make the difficult, the unpopular choices if it means that we benefit the health care system over the long haul and provide more effective use of the resources. That is what I am here for.

One of the constraints on doing that—and I will deal specifically with the walk-in clinic issue—is twofold. First of all, I do not have at my disposal an analysis which clearly says they are the problem causing this and such as unnecessary expenditures, if you will, using that as an example. Without that kind of data to back up decision making, I have to refrain from maybe exercising some controls, licensing, whatever. It may be available as a policy option.

The second constraint I have, and this one is a much more temporary one, is that as part of the agreement with the MMA, we agreed to study the issue of factors driving the volume of physician billings. Specific to that is, naturally, an assessment of the impact of the walk-in clinic. It would be, I would suggest, viewed as bad faith if we were to unilaterally act, for instance in the next few months, without the advice of that committee. That is a temporary problem, because with the tabling of the study, I think we can come to fairly quick decision making given reasoned analysis.

My honourable friend is right when he indicates that it is not simply the fee-for-service billing of a physician that cost the system with every new physician that comes on line. The recent figure is that each doctor who hangs his or her shingle out in Manitoba costs the system \$250,000, and that is a combination of ordering of lab tests and other insured services, including admission to hospital. So that, you know, every time we bring a professional physician into the medicare system of Manitoba, we can expect to spend more money. There is no question about that.

Now, in terms of the specifics of the labs in their billing practices, my honourable friend might recall that a year and a half to two years ago we initiated the—is it called the menu, you know, of lab test ordering, instead of ticking off tests very simply so that the tendency, it was alleged, was that you would order more tests than were necessary. There was a much more definitive method of ordering tests. It

was resisted by the practitioners, but in the first full year of operation a budget on lab testing which normally went up by \$2 million on an annual basis in fact went down by a million dollars in that first year of operation. So we think that without compromising patient care one iota, we saved the taxpayers of Manitoba some significant dollars, which quite frankly we would have had to borrow and continue paying interest on forever, and denying services because we paid interest instead of service costs. So that is one.

The second one, shortly into my term as Minister of Health, I was given a rather interesting set of circumstances around which to make a decision. One of the major labs was investigated and it was pretty clear that they had overbilled us by just under a million dollars over a period of what—five or six years I guess? We chose to settle out of court and have them pay that money back to us, and they did.

Subsequent to that, I guess there has been some initiation of legal proceedings, because they believe that maybe what they agreed to in terms of overbilling, they should not have agreed to, et cetera. We are standing quite solidly behind, because one of the things that I asked very clearly before I gave direction to proceed with not going to court but settling on that repayment was that we were sure we were working on as good as possible information. If anything, I was assured that would be a sustainable figure if it went to court, and we are prepared to do that.

* (1510)

(Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair)

Other events have led us to, just recently, requesting a voluntary audit of all the private labs that are providing service to Manitobans. We expect full co-operation in that regard, because no one who is operating within the intent and the procedures in filling policies of Government would object to a voluntary audit.

The interesting and the curious thing about this whole lab services thing is that for over a number of years—and I mean, this is not a political comment because it started, I guess, under the Schreyer administration, carried on under the Lyon administration, carried on again under the Pawley administration. We operate very much on a trust and goodwill scenario where we trust that the billings are done appropriately, et cetera. That trust and that confidence, of course, was shaken with the one

recovery of just under a million dollars, so that stimulated us to move into a voluntary audit.

So far we have not had anyone refuse. If a lab does refuse, then we have some other decisions that we have to make, because it is my understanding that we may have to seek other recourse if we are refused the opportunity to audit.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the Minister tell us whether the voluntary auditing of all these labs, are they going to put in place a program which will automatically—if somebody is not following the normal variation of the particular lab or a particular test, are they going to be audited regularly?

Mr. Orchard: If I follow my honourable friend's question that if a procedure goes beyond what would be considered a normal billing for a practice group, will there be an automatic investigation, and the answer to that as I understand it is yes, that whenever—and this causes some concern.

You know, my honourable friend might recall the former Member for Transcona brought up an issue of a physician who was complaining that the Manitoba Health Services Commission was regulating his practice because he was not able to see his patients as he wished. That was investigated by the Medical Review Committee.

I do not want to get into the details of it, but the physician's practice patterns were a multiple over the normal. Even when reviewed by a two-individual panel where one physician was chosen by the Medical Review Committee and the physician being investigated chose a physician to represent him, the conclusion was still that the level of billing was inappropriate. Yes, those kinds of checks and balances are in place and continue to be in place.

The unfortunate circumstance with the Medical Review Committee is that it is a committee operated by appointments from the Manitoba Health Services Commission and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. The MMA for the last number of years have chosen not to participate. We believe that they will be quite likely participating in that review process in the near future.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that we are going to see more of those complaints in the future because of the aging population and the variations are changing according to the pattern of practices. With a narrow approach—and sometimes we get into trouble because you bring the issue

because somebody is very excited or worried or concerned, but if you do not look at the broader perspective you can always mislead the public.

I think still the lesson can be learned from both sides that the reviews are the normal variation. It does not mean a permanent fixture. It changes quite frequently depending upon the age distribution, depending upon the particular practice of the area of the city and the geographical distribution and the proximity of the lab or the proximity of the hospital, a lot of things depend.

I just wanted to ask the Minister to make sure that those normal variations are looked across the board and reviewed regularly so that the public does not suffer, because each and every interest group or particular individual may have their own interest, but ultimately the taxpayers are paying for all those bills.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, my honourable friend correctly identifies some legitimate reasons for a variation in billing by a given physician. I do not think there is any question that in a lot of one-, two- and three-physician practices outside of the city of Winnipeg that the billings by those rural and northern practitioners I would venture to say are significantly higher than their urban counterpart, but that is because there are, simply put, higher patient-to-physician ratio in rural areas.

Those are all taken into consideration so that when comparisons are made, comparisons are made with as close to the same practise methodology or the same practice by physician as possible, so that we are making an apples-to-apples comparison, not an apples-to-oranges comparison.

I simply tell my honourable friend that this committee is successful in recovering each year some fairly substantial amounts of dollars where those unjustifiable discrepancies in billing volumes are investigated, and they are voluntary reimbursements. Very few of them have ever gone to court.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to carry on where we left off at our last sitting on the issue of pay equity. When we adjourned I was asking the Minister where we were at with respect to the extension of pay equity beyond the 23 health care facilities that reached an interim settlement on July 13.

Mr. Orchard: Does my honourable friend mean extension beyond the 23 facilities specifically named in the legislation?

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Yes.

Mr. Orchard: That is under consideration, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the Minister elaborate in terms of what exactly is under consideration, what plans are being made, what recommendations he is looking at, what procedures, what process?

* (1520)

Mr. Orchard: Well, the simple process is to, because there have been some fairly substantial, how would I put this, glitches in the implementation process for those individuals involved in the compliance with the legislation, and we think that finally those glitches, difficulties have been substantially resolved. We now, we think, have a workable process, and it would be my anticipation that investigation and costing of that workable formula is the next logical step so that Government has some sense as to how much the full implementation of pay equity, how much additional tax dollars that would require. That is the process which is in process.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am wondering if I could ask a question specifically on the mechanism by which pay equity might be extended to all other facilities other than the 23 listed in the pay equity legislation.

The Minister has had strong representation from a number of organizations. I am thinking specifically of the Manitoba Council of Health Care Unions, who have asked and believe that the simplest, most cost-effective, straightforward manner to do this would be an administrative extension of the jointly negotiated process for the 23 facilities. Is that under active consideration by the Minister? Is he considering that route or is he looking at other options?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, as I said in my first answer to my honourable friend, getting this far has been a most onerous task. There were difficulties, and let me tell my honourable friend in case she does not know them. When pay equity was brought in first of all to the line departments of Government, the 1 percent of payroll goal was virtually no problem. It worked out extremely well. There were some pretty substantial increases.

When pay equity then moved to the outside agencies, since we are dealing specifically with 22 hospitals and St. Amant Centre, as specifically named in the legislation, when it moved outside of

Government, it became much more complex to identify target groups in occupations. The numbers increased significantly, quite significantly.

We had the anomaly of pay equity that a LPN working for Government, because there were relatively fewer recipient target groups in Government, received a fairly significant increase through pay equity at 1 percent of payroll, but when we hit the hospital scene that same LPN got significantly less. That was compounded even further by the fact that unless you were a LPN in one of 23 named facilities you got zero.

I do not know whether the previous Government, when they brought forward pay equity, realized that pay equity would cause inequity in terms of the benefit that a LPN, as the example, would have from that legislation because as it sits today there are three classes of LPNs: Government, generously treated; named institution, modestly treated; excluded LPN in excluded facilities with nothing.

I simply say as a general principle to my honourable friend that when we came into Government, one of the incredible inequities we ran into that the NDP—and my honourable friend was part of it—foisted upon health care facilities was differential funding for non-union facilities.

If you were not a unionized facility, your funding level was significantly below the funding level of a unionized facility which meant that those non-unionized facility workers were penalized by the funding formula of the NDP. On the other hand, they were saying, we believe in pay equity and we are going to bring this in. They would not even fund union and non-union facilities with individuals doing exactly the same thing in those respective facilities. The NDP chose to discriminate against that.

That was one of the very first initiatives that I took to Treasury Board and Cabinet. In over a two-and-a-half-year funding period, we have removed that inequity in funding, and it is being removed now with the exception of approximately \$30 per month union dues which we are not funding, and one would expect not to fund because if you are non-unionized, you are not paying the dues.

I simply say to my honourable friend that the principle we used in implementation of equal funding for union versus non-union—we removed the discriminatory policy of the NDP that we inherited.

I view this issue of pay equity, where you have NDP legislation naming 23 facilities only, to be discriminatory again. I simply indicate to my friend that as quickly as this Government can, we will attempt to rectify again that created inequity which we inherited.

The method by which we do that hopefully will be one which builds upon the experience of the negotiating and implementation process in the 23 facilities that were named in the legislation. Hopefully, the lessons learned there, the methodology learned there will guide us in the implementation, should Government be able to make that policy and funding decision because there is a fairly big dollar attachment to the taxpayers of Manitoba.

To make that decision I would suspect we would attempt to not create further discrimination, but rather to create an equitable application. If a successful formula exists, that is the one that my penchant, as I sit here today, would be to follow.

Ms. Wasylcia-Lels: I just want to put on the record that no one thought pay equity would be easy to accomplish. No one believed that there would not be some difficulties to deal with along the way. That is precisely why the whole process was staged originally and why the intention was to move first on the 23 facilities.

In fact, that was recognized quite clearly by the Minister's own colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) in his Estimates on November 19 when he said, that is why I think ultimately that the legislation, with respect to the nursing profession, was limited to initially 23 facilities in order to, with the involvement of the employee representatives, agreed to with that kind of understanding, provide a way of working out those problems in a manageable form. I think that needs to be kept in mind as we collectively deal with these difficult problems.

I would like to get a clarification from the Minister on this whole issue, since we are all pursuing this, because we do not want to see a system that perpetuates any kind of discrimination. Right now, with the system in place for 23 facilities, partial pay equity anyway in place for those 23 facilities, we have in place a two-tiered system, with one set of facilities getting a certain pay scale and another whole range of facilities not being able to enjoy the benefits of pay equity. That, as we all know in the Legislature, because we are getting calls every day

from nurses, is discrimination. It is a problem that has to be dealt with fairly urgently, in my view.

I would like to get a sense of the Minister's timetable with respect to moving to beyond the 23 facilities so that we can at least give some peace to those health care professionals, who are right now very concerned about the present state of affairs.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I really and genuinely appreciate my honourable friend's concern in this regard. I think she is very sincere in this regard in wanting it to be extended to the non-named facilities. I simply indicate to her, so am I.

I will tell my honourable friend, judge me by what we do. You see, Mr. Deputy Chairman, what I mean in that is that my honourable friend sat in a Cabinet and participated in discriminatory funding guidelines between union and non-union health care facilities with no qualms about those workers in non-unionized facilities being paid less than unionized workers, because her Government, the NDP of Manitoba, deliberately chose to follow a policy of lesser funding to non-unionized facilities. We said, that is wrong, and so did the Manitoba Health Organizations for five consecutive conventions from 1982 to 1987.

* (1530)

In 1988 we started solving it, because it blatantly discriminated against the employees in non-unionized facilities, discrimination that was closed by and large from 1977 to 1981, the last time the Progressive Conservative Government was in office, because we inherited that kind of discrimination in 1977 between union and non-union facilities. We inherited it again in 1988, and we closed the gap again because we do not believe that you ought to discriminate on the basis of union versus non-union membership. The NDP believed you should. We solved that problem.

Now we have a second NDP problem. That is inequitable application of pay equity. I suspect, with the fairness that the Progressive Conservative Party always brings to public policy, we will resolve that NDP discrimination as well.

Ms. Wasylcia-Lels: I hate to get into a debate at this level. I will just remind the Minister that negotiations, discussions were under way when he became the Minister of Health. When this Government took office they had ample time to consider the difficulties and resolve them. It was in

their term in office to follow the spirit of the legislation. It had the responsibility for following through the process and dealing with the difficulties and obstacles that I mentioned would come out of any pay equity process, that we recognized and knew would have to be dealt with.

This Government took from April of '88, when they took office, to July 13, 1990, before any kind of resolution was arrived at for the 23 facilities. Then it was only a partial resolution; then it was only partial pay equity forcing those health care facilities to take their case to the Labour Board and to try to seek justice in any avenue available to them.

I do not think it serves anybody's interest to distort the past, to suggest that the previous NDP administration had sorted out all of the difficulties that come with any pay equity process. In fact, I would like to remind the Minister that he has been the one in power to resolve these matters.

I would like to have from him, if he will not give me a firm time by which he hopes to have pay equity extended, would he give me a rough timetable, a vague understanding of when he hopes to have pay equity extended to all health care facilities?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am unable to do that as I sit here this afternoon because, as my honourable friend well knows if she is following closely the current negotiations with MNU, that is a topic that is on the table. I cannot give my honourable friend that kind of information as I sit here today.

I was almost concerned that my honourable friend was going to try and say that in 1988 when we came into Government that a plan was in place to remove the blatant discrimination of the NDP of funding levels between union and non-union facilities, because I would have gotten terribly upset with that. There was no such thing; that discrimination was continuing and it was widening the gap of discriminatory funding between those union versus non-union facilities.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I want to take and indicate directly to my honourable friend, because my honourable friend over a period of time of about a year and a half to two years has been saying that this Government is stalling the implementation of pay equity, nothing could be further from the truth.

My honourable friend identified an implementation starting point, which was April 1988. My honourable friend was Government during an

election campaign—no, the election campaign was over then, so that whole process started by legislation when we came into office. In two successive budgets I have set aside at the Manitoba Health Services Commission sufficient funds to fund completely and fully the 1 percent per year guideline of pay equity for health care facilities. That money has been sitting there.

That money will be flowed, but what happened to delay the process was absolutely nothing to do from a lack of will on myself as Minister of Health or this Government to implement the provisions of The Pay Equity Act. It was a very complex negotiation process between the bargaining agents for the unions whose members were involved as target groups in the implementation of pay equity and a number of administrators from the various named facilities. The two sides were sitting down working through the details.

There was a fundamental disagreement approximately 10 months ago wherein the group, the consortium if you will, and I know that is not the right term, but the group representing the unions said that we were not funding according to the legislation, that our 1 percent—and the administration made the case that yes, we have 1 percent on the table. That issue was taken to the Labour Board, Province of Manitoba. The Labour Board, in reviewing the case, concurred that management was providing the 1 percent funding. That decision did not come down until July of 1990.

Again, I simply say to my honourable friend, I know that she wants to leave some impression amongst nurses, particularly in Manitoba, that this Government does not want to implement pay equity. We have implemented, flowed the money and built it into successive years' salaries as quickly as we had the agreed-upon authority to do it, and we did not wish to proceed with a Labour Board challenge.

We would have preferred to start flowing the money nine months ago. I mean when you are into this kind of negotiations, one side can make a case; and if you cannot reach at a consensus an agreement, there is a vehicle that is provided in the legislation that the Labour Board shall be the body which decides disputes. They did just that. That process took another few months.

Since that point in time, we have been pro-actively moving to the implementation of the first two years and the third year of pay equity, and the monies will

flow. They have been set aside for two years. They are budgeted again this year and it is not this Minister, this Government, or any Member of this Government that is holding up the process.

As soon as the cheques can be cut and flowed, they will be. That is a commitment I have been giving to my honourable friend in answers in the House for approximately a year and a half. We are very close to being there, it is my understanding, and the monies will be flowing.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Is the Minister talking about the money for the October adjustments and the retroactive settlement?

Mr. Orchard: That is exactly what I am talking about. You know to even demonstrate further the sincerity of Government in trying to make this money flow, I communicated with the chief negotiator from the employees' side and offered, without prejudice knowing this was going to the Labour Board for consideration, to start the process of flowing the money well in advance of that decision.

Now it is a very complex procedure, but I have never done anything to inhibit the flow of that money. It has been set aside. We are desirous of having it go to those who, through the negotiation and legislation, ought to receive that money. We have done everything and, as I understand it, we have essentially a process in place now where the money will flow.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Obviously this is a sore spot for the Minister, because I did not even ask about the question of dollars flowing from the settlement arrived on July 13, which was going to be my next question. I am still not sure why it has taken five months for cheques to go out for the retroactive payments and for this year's adjustments that were scheduled to go out in September and October.

I am wondering if the Minister could give us some explanation why it is taking this long and which deadline is he living up to. Is it the one on October 18? Is it the one where he said on October 18 that cheques would be out by the end of the month? Or is it, as he said, later, before Christmas? Or is it now not until the New Year?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is as soon as everyone agrees, because the money is ready and I have told them to flow it.

Now my honourable friend asked the question, what happened from the July Labour Board decision? They forgot some people in the

calculation. Some part-time people were left out of the calculation. I know my honourable friend would like to say, oh, the Minister is at fault. He did it. He did it. That is not the case. There was a legitimate error wherein a group of part-time employees were not included in the calculation.

Now in my honourable friend's desire to see equity in the implementation of pay equity, I think there would have been criticism, and I would have levelled it at both sides doing the negotiations if they had left out a group of people. That is what took some additional time to identify and to redo the calculation.

* (1540)

It is my understanding that the latter time agenda of this month is the one that will now be met in flowing the dollars on pay equity.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I at no time said or would even imply that the Minister himself is holding up these cheques. In fact I think the root of the problem must rest somewhere in the administration. It still baffles the mind why it would take five months, even if a problem was identified, to get the cheques out so that by now they would be in the hands of health care workers in the province.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, my honourable friend indicates some bewilderment and puzzlement over the process. She is right. I just simply remind my honourable friend that earlier in the questioning, she indicated that this was a complex thing, that it was phased in. I believe she quoted some words from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) because it was such a complex and breaking-new-ground initiative that no doubt there would be a lot of problems encountered in its implementation. She is right. There was.

We think that we finally have all of the problems behind us, have a formula, have a dollars-per-hour, if you will, settlement which can be built into the current wage schedules as well as flow retroactively because that is the money that has been held in abeyance.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Just to go back to an earlier response from the Minister, he indicated to me that he could not give me a time table in terms of the extension beyond the 23 facilities because of present negotiations. Is the Minister saying that the issue of extending pay equity is part of the current negotiations between MHO and MNU?

Mr. Orchard: I will stand corrected, but I believe that is one of the positions brought to the table by the MNU.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the Minister give us any clarification of whether his negotiators are attempting to resolve this issue through regular negotiation process as opposed to an administrative extension that I referred to earlier?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I think when last we sat on a Friday afternoon some 10 days ago and my honourable friend got into the negotiation process with the MNU, I indicated that I would not bargain in public. I reiterate that answer to her. If you wish to continue posing the questions, feel free, be at liberty to do so, but when they involve current negotiations, I will not respond.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I will carry on then because it has been my understanding that the issue of extension of pay equity is an issue separate and apart from the current negotiations between MHO and MNU. In fact, I simply refer to MNU's own brochure on the issues of importance to them where it is clearly stated that they believe pay equity discussion should be separate and apart from these negotiations and that is the basis upon which I raise this question and continue to raise the question.

Is there a separate set of discussions going on pertaining to pay equity, or is it this Government's intention to roll this issue into the other concerns being brought to the table by the MNU?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I simply indicate to my honourable friend that it is, as my honourable friend correctly identifies, part of the negotiation process. I am sorry I am unable to satisfy her desire for information on issues that are currently being negotiated.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: That is fine, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I think that is an important clarification for all of us to know that the Minister has this issue before the broader negotiations with MNU. While we are on the topic of the negotiations, let me follow up a question I raised in the House and seek some clarification about why the Government has, through the MHO, indicated on Friday that a monetary position would not be put on the table until Friday, December 14. Even that date was not a firm commitment.

Mr. Orchard: Again, the issue of timing and of non-monetary issues are all in a substantial

negotiation currently ongoing with MNU. I would be very, very careful, if I was my honourable friend, in bringing information that she believes, or may believe is correct, to this committee about the negotiating process.

I again say to my honourable friend that as much as I would like to accede to her desire to bargain publicly with this professional group, I will resist that temptation, as I did when negotiations were protracted and ongoing with the MMA. I do not bargain in public. I do not believe that anyone benefits from such an exercise.

I participated in some, what would have been considered, I suppose, bargaining in public back when I was Opposition Critic, where I asked confirmation during Question Period of a supposed and alleged offer that the then New Democratic Party Government had before the MONA, the Manitoba organization of nurses. I was solidly and firmly rebuked by telephone, by the president of the MONA at that time. I would not want my honourable friend to receive a similar rebuke. That is why I would caution her in participating in this attempt to bargain in public.

Ms. Wasylcia-Lels: The Minister says he does not want to bargain in public which, of course, I have no intention of asking him to do. I am simply asking for information. Although I remind the Minister that it is he who has chosen to, in the past, make public statements around negotiations. I think specifically of his comments with respect to the doctors, and his calling of doctors, liars, in the middle of negotiations. I think he is quite familiar with public posturing in the middle of negotiations. I am not for a minute suggesting that he do that in this case. I am certainly not asking for information about the bargaining.

I am asking simply why, with December 14 scheduled as the last day of negotiations—a timetable which the Minister in the House said was agreed to by the two sides, by MHO and MNU—why at the last moment someone made the decision to delay placing a monetary position on the table?

Mr. Orchard: I want to take a little bit of umbrage with a statement made by my honourable friend, often repeated by her Leader, that I call the doctors of Manitoba, liars. I did no such thing. I never called any doctor anywhere in the Province of Manitoba a liar. I will tell my honourable friend exactly what I said which has stimulated her comment.

* (1550)

When we put the offer on the table to the MMA, it involved a shared responsibility on volume of billing. In their wisdom, the elected executive of the MMA, the then president and the executive director, came out with such wild and fantasizing statements that we were rationing physician services, that we were going to set a quota in a doctor's office, and once, under this Government's formula, you reached your quota for that day, you would turn patients away.

I simply observed to the members of the media that if any physician in Manitoba turned a patient away from their office on any day using the reasoning as explained publicly by the then president of the MMA or the executive director of the MMA, that they would not be telling their patient the truth, that they would not be telling Manitobans the truth, that in effect if they made that statement in turning away a patient, they would be lying to that patient. That was a statement of fact. I never called a doctor anywhere in the Province of Manitoba a liar.

They created a hypothetical straw man to whip up public sentiment against the Government, and they put to their membership, the doctors of Manitoba, and they put to the public of Manitoba a completely false interpretation—the president and the executive director of the MMA—on the offer and the proposal made to the MMA. They thereby raised the fears of Manitobans that doctors would physically turn away patients at the end of the day. It was a position that I know physicians had as a genuine concern because it was expressed to me directly by physicians who would come up to me and say, how could you do that? My simple answer was, we are not, nor would we. That was where I came from.

Getting back to my honourable friend's question, and I almost forget what it was now. My honourable friend is saying, the monetary offer. Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is our intention to make a monetary offer to the nurses of Manitoba. The timing of that will become evident to my honourable friend, and I think will be of such timeliness that it will provide ample opportunity for acceptance, for ratification, and prevention of a disruption of patient services through a strike or any other withdrawal of services.

All I say to my honourable friend is, do not necessarily buy into this rapid and quick argument that the Government is stalling, the Government is holding back, the Government ta-da, ta-da, ta-da. There is bargaining going on. Positions are taken to strengthen your bargaining position. I accept that. That happens whether it is us in Government, my

honourable friend in Government, or my honourable friend from the Liberal Party in Government. That is the nature of negotiations.

I simply indicate to my honourable friend that there will be financial offers placed, and we think they will be reasonable because we have often stated and concurred with some of the recent statements of the MNU and its presidency, as reported in the media, that nurses have a pretty reasonable case to put to Government.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I appreciate the Minister's clarification about the reports about him calling doctors liars.

I do want to though just spend a moment more on this question of the negotiations. The Minister has said his monetary position will be put on the table in a timely fashion, such to allow ample time for discussion and negotiation. I just have a hard time dealing with that statement when, in fact, the timely opportunity to put a monetary offer on the table was this past Monday when it was expected, when both sides had agreed to that kind of timetable.

To suggest that there will not be any kind of monetary position on the table before Friday and then maybe not even on Friday, December 14, causes a great deal of consternation on the part of the health care workers of the province. It throws a monkey wrench into, I think, what had been otherwise fairly peaceful, harmonious negotiations, and does not really do anything to create a co-operative climate where give and take is possible, where everyone's cards are out on the table, and where it can be a very productive, useful, fruitful exercise creating the best chance for a peaceful resolution of an otherwise difficult area.

I just find it very difficult to sit here and accept the Minister's statements that he will be making an offer in a very timely fashion. He has already created problems of requiring—at least by the nurses' own press release—forcing them to begin initiating a strike vote for this Saturday. That causes everyone a great deal of concern.

We are particularly concerned about the kind of agony that the people of Manitoba are going through, the patients, the elderly, the infirm of Manitoba who are not sure what to expect. They have only the experience of the recent long, drawn-out, protracted negotiations between the province and the doctors of the province which caused enormous uncertainty, agony, fear, worry

and resulted in the Government finally caving in and agreeing to basically what the doctors requested.

I think everyone is interested in avoiding that kind of situation. This is my last question on this issue, just simply to ask if the Minister would not consider moving up the date of whatever timely means and put a monetary offer on the table before tomorrow?

Mr. Orchard: I take my honourable friend's concerns and her advice very seriously and will be passing those on and giving them very diligent and serious consideration.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I just want to tell my honourable friend that, you know, she talks about the physician negotiations and, again, I think probably does herself a disservice in terms of putting allegations on the table, et cetera, et cetera, that I do not think will stand the test of time. Of course, I will not expect my honourable friend, when that is proven, to ever say, I am sorry, I was wrong.

As I remember, the doctors started out asking a significant amount more. We decided very deliberately, and the reason why we went through a protracted and—do you think I enjoyed standing up periodically and being questioned about the sincerity of my negotiations with the MMA and seeing billboards all across and letters go out, and all of the myriad of and the barrage of misinformation, partial information and some factual information, go out about the bargaining process? I did not enjoy that one little bit.

You know what we had as an agenda of Government? We said there are some achievables we need. We need to have some advice on what drives volume because any place you go in Canada, you will find ministries of health wrestling with the uncontrolled volume of billings by physicians because it drives significant cost. We got that. Previous Governments did not. We got that.

We wanted to have the fee schedule looked into with the whole and sole purpose of reforming it, because procedures for which we pay a 20-year-old rate with changing technology is not only bizarre, it is disgraceful. We got that as part of these negotiations.

Binding arbitration was the issue. The previous Government, of which my honourable friend was part, had binding arbitration with the Manitoba physicians. The difference was they had a wide-open formula. We agreed to binding arbitration with eight limited principles on the table, two of them

reflective of the province's ability to pay because we wanted to protect the taxpayers. That was the ultimate goal in any agreement involving binding arbitration. My honourable friends did not do that when they negotiated binding arbitration with the MMA, and then after the first year award, did not proceed with it.

Given the background of all of those, we had a monetary agenda on the line with the Manitoba physicians as well. I will tell you right now, and I do not think this is bargaining in public at all, but our agenda was that if we could save ourselves negotiating dollars in our agreement with the MMA, which we did, we will have those monies available for the negotiations upcoming with the nursing profession of Manitoba.

* (1600)

Those prolonged, protracted negotiations with the MMA, and finally getting binding arbitration that would reflect and have enforced consideration of the province's ability to pay and the cost of living in this province, the whole genesis behind those was not giving away, not backing up the Brinks truck to the solution so that we would have some resource and fiscal capacity for what we knew were going to be strenuous negotiations with the nursing profession of Manitoba.

We have those dollars that we did not give away in the MMA negotiations. I do not think my honourable friend would want to leave the impression that we should have given more to the doctors of Manitoba and less to the nurses. I do not think so. That is exactly the position we took in opposite.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Not directly on the negotiations, just related, since the notion of using the notwithstanding clause with workers in this province has been hinted at by the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Filmon), I would like to know if that idea has been thought about at all by the Minister? Has it been part of any of the discussions around these negotiations or any other labour-management bargaining?

Mr. Orchard: I guess I would have to seek clarification from my honourable friends under which circumstances she would recommend using the notwithstanding clause.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I am seeking clarification from the Minister since it was not I who suggested using the notwithstanding clause, it was the Premier, the

Minister's Leader, who referenced this in his own Estimates, leaving the implications quite vague, but still leaving the suggestion that it might be used in the event of requiring, forcing workers back to work.

I am simply asking the Minister if this is anywhere in his thinking, thought processes, any part of any discussions around this or any other labour-management dispute?

Mr. Orchard: No, we have not discussed that, Mr. Deputy Chairman. I have not discussed that.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: On to another matter entirely and that has to do with the MNU brief, All in a Day's Work. This is further to the question I raised in the House, and it relates to a letter written to the Minister on November 12, a concern from the MNU that the sub-committee had tabled its report to the Funding Guidelines Review Committee and the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Health Services Commission without addressing two of the major issues of concern by the Manitoba Nurses' Union: one being the whole question of a funding system that reflects the complexity of patients needs; and the other being input by health care workers into decision making and representation on facility boards of directors.

I am wondering if the Minister could give us an update on the whole review process of the MNU brief, All in a Day's Work, why those two areas were not dealt with by the subcommittee. Has in fact the subcommittee tabled its report to those two bodies I have mentioned? What decisions are being made in terms of that process?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, the committee that was reviewing All in a Day's Work created a draft report which was reviewed, revised and accepted by all members of the review committee. It did not deal with a couple of issues, and it did not deal with those issues for the very reason that they did not believe they had the mandate respectively, and particularly from representatives of the commission side, to deal with the issues because they were policy issues.

As well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am a little bit prophetic because the issues that were not dealt with have subsequently been part of the nonmonetary proposals made by the MNU in this current contract negotiation.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I would like a further clarification.

The Minister has suggested that the report of the subcommittee was accepted by all representatives of the subcommittee. The letter that I referred to from the MNU surely indicates that there was a strong concern, grave concern, about the fact that the subcommittee kept refusing to address two very important issues, all of which I believe is seen as—this whole process is seen as quite separate and apart from the negotiations that the Minister has referred to.

My question is: Why set up a committee to review a report as major and significant as this one, All in a Day's Work, then ignore two of the major recommendations, areas of concern, out of that report? It is my understanding that all of the recommendations have to do with policy. All of them have to do with policy recommendations. Why two were singled out? Does this mean the Government would like to delay acting on those areas, that they are not prepared to meet or at least are discussing with the health care professionals in this province those two areas of concern? I am still seeking a clarification, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I do not have the letter, which my honourable friend received before I did, outlining those concerns.

The impression left by my honourable friend the day of her questioning was that big, bad Government was refusing to go along with the recommendations of the committee. In fact that was not an accurate statement by my honourable friend, that the committee reviewed extensively, worked around a number of issues in the All in a Day's Work report and came to a unanimous agreement of recommendations that they would forward to their respective parties, namely the Manitoba Health Services Commission and namely the executive of the MNU.

The subcommittee agreed unanimously. There was no one who disagreed, contrary to what my honourable friend said. When that committee report reached the MNU there were concerns expressed, but Government did not refuse anything, because Government has not had the recommendation come from the Manitoba Health Services Commission on the unanimous report to date. We expect that shortly. The process does not happen instantly and overnight, because the subcommittee members from the commission side report to the commission board, and they discuss the issue and

forward recommendations to Government. That has not happened yet.

So my honourable friend's statement that Government refused to act upon unanimous agreements, or whatever her allegations were, was not accurate.

* (1610)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am asking about what has been left out of the report, not what is in the report. That is the essence of the concern raised by the Manitoba Nurses' Union. It seems to me that if you set up a committee to study the recommendations of a significant report, as is All in a Day's Work, then that committee should be looking at all the recommendations. MNU has expressed grave concern that consistently throughout the committee proceedings the two major areas of concern to them were not dealt with, were not dealt with, were not discussed and, as a result, were not part of that final interim report or final report of the subcommittee that went to the funding guidelines review committee and the board of directors of the Manitoba Health Services Commission.

It seems to me that is a very major issue that the Minister, although he may not be directly involved in this process, would not want to see dealt with and in fact an error corrected. I would ask him if, given the seriousness of the concerns expressed, he would not in fact ask the subcommittee or send the report back to the subcommittee and ask that committee to look at all recommendations in full as presented in the report All in a Day's Work.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, do not let my honourable friend forget that the issues agreed to were agreed to unanimously. The representatives from the MNU first of all suggested there ought to be four. We agreed. They suggested individuals who would fill the positions. We agreed. Those four individuals at the subcommittee level decided that they would deal with the issues that they could resolve, and they passed a unanimous recommendation to their respective executives.

That was contained in minutes, et cetera, and I presume reports back to the executive, but it was when the subcommittee, and I do not know what the process is, because I do not know the internal workings. When it was discovered by the executive, however, I can put this so it is understandable of the

MNU that a couple of issues were not dealt with, they stimulated the letter.

Those issues were not dealt with by agreement, so I cannot answer for the workings of the subcommittee, which came to unanimous agreement on a number of issues. I can simply say that they chose not to deal with issues because they believe they were issues of policy to Government. They left them out of the discussions deliberately, but they did come to grips with a number of issues that were in All in a Day's Report and made a unanimous report. That is where I took issue early in a response to my honourable friend. She left the impression that we were refusing to accept a report; not so, it has not even come to myself yet because the Board of the Commission is dealing with it.

Now on the issues that were not unanimously agreed to, certainly there is substantially more discussion around those issues, and decisions will no doubt be made over a course of time. I reiterate to my honourable friend that in at least two instances, of which I have knowledge, those are subject to requests in the non-monetary portion of the MNU's bargaining position. Now, again, my honourable friend may wish to go through her bargaining in public but, when they are before the negotiators at the bargaining table, I choose not to.

I do not know whether that stimulated the committee to agree not to try and come to grips with those. I do not know. I was not there, but I simply say to my honourable friend that a number of issues were thoroughly discussed, reviewed, modified and agreed to unanimously, others were not considered by that committee and no doubt will be considered over the course of time.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: First of all, let me again say that the issues I am raising are separate and apart from any of the negotiations; in fact, that position is re-enforced by the Minister's own statement in the House yesterday, in response to my question, when he said, and I quote: We have undertaken a number of initiatives which, outside of the negotiation process, we believe are valuable to the professional career of nursing in Manitoba, not exclusive of a number of issues.

Let me indicate to you nursing education, nursing's role in the workplace, through analysis of All in a Day's Work, et cetera, is precisely in that same context that I raise these issues. They are seen as separate and apart by the nurses in terms

of the negotiation process, and I would hope that the Minister would recognize the light in which I am raising these questions, and that is a significant amount of work went into the preparation of this report All in a Day's Work.

A process was put in place through the Department of Health that the Minister had something to do about and do with, and I am asking about how that process broke down, because I believe it broken down. In fact, the Minister has presented one view of what happened, of what transpired; the Manitoba Nurses' Union has an altogether different view of what transpired, and I quote from their letter of November 12: To begin with, as I had previously communicated to you, the subcommittee addressed other areas of the brief than the ones our representatives on the subcommittee and the union felt should have been addressed. Our intent, when their appointment was made, was to review funding of health care facilities in relation to the increased severity of illness of the patients from a nurse's care. However, it seems that other areas of concern in the brief were always placed on the agenda for discussion.

Now here is the key paragraph: When the final report was written the subcommittee met and could not reach consensus on two very important areas of concern in the brief. The first was on issues related to appropriate funding of health care facilities and, second, regarding input and decision making and representation on facility boards of directors.

So it is clear that there are two conflicting views about what happened with respect to the subcommittee. I think given that confusion, given the obvious different impressions, I think it is time for the Minister to perhaps look into the whole issue and perhaps recommend that the subcommittee take back—if that is an appropriate procedure—their so-called final report and resubmit it when it has looked at all recommendations.

Mr. Orchard: I am at a loss to provide any greater clarity to my honourable friend.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Does the Minister then deny, dispute, the view of this process as presented by the Manitoba Nurses' Union on November 12?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, it is not a question of denying allegations or positions taken. It is simply stating to my honourable friend that Monday, August 27, 1990, meeting subcommittee—the same subcommittee we are

talking to—review of draft report, and following a lengthy discussion, the draft report of the subcommittee was reviewed, revised and accepted by all.

(Mrs. Shirley Render, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

I mean, these minutes were circulated. They were not corrected, because that is an accurate indication of what took place at the committee meeting. I was not there. The executive of the MNU was not there, but four of their representatives were, representatives from the commission were. They all agreed to accept a report.

* (1620)

Now there are further minutes that say exactly the same thing. It was agreed by all committee members the terms of reference be accepted. You know, there was substantial agreement. It was on the understanding that if other issues develop as these issues are reviewed, such issues will be noted and addressed as well, substantial agreement, including in the final report.

I simply tell my honourable friend that when the report that everybody agreed to on the subcommittee reached the executive of the MNU, they had expressed some concerns. They did not express those concerns so that the members would not agree unanimously to the report.

I do not know what my honourable friend wants in further clarification. I am telling her the process we went through. We did not argue with numbers of MNU appointments. We did not argue with the individuals suggested. We set up terms of reference that were agreed to by all. They went through a substantial discussion period, and they recommended a unanimous report. We are dealing with it at the commission side. The MNU has expressed concerns that issues were not addressed. That is right.

I have explained to my honourable friend that those issues were viewed to be policy issues that the committee would not deal with, but they would deal with a number of issues and present a unanimous report. I can offer no further clarification except to indicate to my honourable friend that the issues not dealt with—and this is about the third time that I repeated this answer—are issues which have been identified by the MNU as non-monetary issues in the negotiating process.

My honourable friend, as I have cautioned her before, is not going to get any more information from me than she has already by continuing to pose the questions about what if, and what should, and how about, and let us do, and oh golly. Over a period of time, we will resolve some of those issues, including the nurses' role in the workplace. They will resolve that.

It is a problem we inherited. We will resolve it. We tend to do that as Conservative Governments. We tend to resolve problems in a way involving meaningful input and consultation with all those involved. We have done it in the past, and we will continue to do it in the future.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I have just a final question on this matter. Could the Minister respond to two different questions? On the report of the subcommittee—a two-part question—which dealt with some of the recommendations in All in a Day's Work, where is that now? What is the process, the timetable, for dealing with those recommendations? On the unaddressed issues, separate and apart from the negotiating process, what process does the Minister have in place for dealing with those two very significant major issues facing the nursing profession?

Mr. Orchard: The first answer is, for the fourth time, to the board of the Manitoba Health Services Commission and thereby to Government. I do not know whether it will reach my desk this month or whether it will be next month. The second question: with discussion.

Mr. Cheema: Madam Acting Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us about the breast cancer screening program and what state this program is in now? It has been two years since the announcement was made.

Mr. Orchard: Madam Acting Chairman, as my honourable friend knows, we have undertaken a fairly significant study as to how we might implement a targeted screening program. We have identified cost and had some suggestions in terms of how we might proceed if we make the decision that it is the appropriate thing to do, where equipment, et cetera, would go.

One of the things that I have to tell you that is troublesome and I am seeking further clarification on is some recent concerns that have come out of analysis of mass mammography screening programs in terms of, there is some indication, and

there appears to be a growing body of data which would indicate that this process is not as safe as it was once considered to be. That is causing some of the experts if you will to caution Government, and we are seeking further clarification and expansion on that issue. That is certainly something that is new and quite different from what we originally had envisioned as being a beneficial program without medical concern.

Mr. Cheema: Madam Acting Chairperson, can the Minister of Health tell us, what have they learned about this specific program from British Columbia? The program has been in force at least for the last two and a half years.

Mr. Orchard: I cannot give my honourable friend direct information, but apparently they are having expressed similar concerns. I do not understand the physiology or the medicine behind it, but we are using X-rays. Apparently there is some concern in terms of—is it an epidemiological study that would have pulled these out—where in fact it may be not reducing the risk but in fact may be contributing to the risk. That is a very serious concern. Just to help—I do not come from a medical background, so I have to depend on best advice before I can implement a program, et cetera, et cetera.

(Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair)

I do remember about a year and a half to two years ago, it was by happenstance, because I do not get to watch that much television, but there was a program on breast screening, and that was probably a year and a half or two years ago. One of the programs that was touted as being potentially a very successful one, if my memory serves me correctly, was a Japanese-developed technology which did not involve X-ray or anything like that but rather used a very precise measuring device which would duplicate, simulate a physical inspection. That seemed to hold great promise at that time. I sort of thought at the time that was pretty interesting, but it seemed to me that the low-energy X-ray was probably much more effective, et cetera, et cetera.

It appears as if there are reasons to second-guess that, that conclusion that would never have been second-guessed even a year ago or two years ago.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do not mean to rush the Minister on such an important issue. If there is substantial evidence not in favour of the program, then we would like to know what will be that deadline. There are a lot of these people who

are waiting for this program, so the information, at least, can be given to them rather than have this Government proceed for a special program or a modified program. Some money was allocated in the last budget. So can the Minister of Health tell us then where did they spend that amount which was especially allocated for this program?

* (1630)

Mr. Orchard: Yes, I can give you those. We had some dollars set aside, I believe, last year. I will provide those. Let me tell you, I concur with my honourable friend because, as he well knows, there are a number of organizations throughout the province that are actively fund raising for mammography screening programs. I mean the Kinette and other women's service organizations are doing just that because they want to be partners with Government in this screening program which I was quite enthused about, I tell you straight out. I am concerned when I received recent indication that it may not be the most appropriate method.

I will give my honourable friend this commitment because this is for everybody's benefit to have this kind of information. As soon as I receive further clarification, I will provide my honourable friend with that information, because I want his professional advice as well as his political advice on it.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I understand the Minister has a committee who is advising him on this issue. Is the committee actively considering those recommendations? Is there any possibility that the Minister will share with us the recent information they have on this particular subject?

Mr. Orchard: The answer to both of those questions is yes. The committee is studying this, and I will give my honourable friend a copy of the letter so that he has it for his information.

Mr. Cheema: One of the roles in the Policy and Planning Department is to play a leading role in the nursing shortage and recruitment. I do not want to go into the bargaining position right now because I think it may have some negative impact, or it could be taken as taking sides in the very important issue which is being discussed right now. Can the Minister tell us what areas they have identified in terms of the nursing shortage? What specialty of nurses have they identified, and who is the individual from the department who is playing an active role on this particular issue?

Mr. Orchard: I do not want to denigrate the concern that many people have that we are going to have ourselves a dilemma in terms of recruitment of nursing. I simply want to say to my honourable friend that in most areas, with few exceptions, we are better off than a lot of our counterpart provinces in terms of our ability to retain our nursing professionals.

We do have difficulties, for instance, still in Thompson of intensive care nursing. Those specific disciplines from time to time are in short supply. We do have a fairly pro-active, and maybe one can always say not pro-active enough, training policy so that we are not caught short of certain nursing specialists.

Let me tell my honourable friend that in the larger picture, we are doing two things for the nursing recruitment. We started out last May with television, poster and print ads really extolling the virtues of nursing. I think a very good television ad was produced to try and see if we could influence Manitobans, either young Manitobans coming out of high school or young Manitobans who are seeking a career change, whether we could through advertising influence their application to nursing school. There appears to be some positive benefit from the advertising, greater stimulated interest. We have a repeat of that under consideration. Budget, of course, is going to have to be required, et cetera.

We did this very deliberately because, you know, without being critical, and I do not intend to be critical, when any professional group approaches the bargaining table you naturally have to paint a pretty severe and difficult situation. That makes for a reasonable bargaining environment. I mean, that is just part of the dynamics of bargaining.

Unfortunately, sometimes you can talk yourself into a bigger problem than what you had. Now if you make nursing sound like a terrible career, overworked, underpaid and all of the other concerns, you may potentially discourage people from entering the nursing profession. I do not think anybody in any way deliberately does that. That is just a natural offshoot of the whole bargaining process.

So that is why we took and attempted with the professional associations of nursing and the schools of nursing to put an advertising program up. We think it was a success.

Second, we have taken the whole issue of nursing education. We have a fairly large committee of people investigating what the training programs in the '90s ought to be for nursing in the province of Manitoba, registered nursing first and then, with success, we hope to maybe provide guidance to other disciplines as well. We think that will help to keep Manitoba in a lead position, because over the years Manitoba has been a national leader in terms of the quality of our training programs and nursing.

Then of course most recently, to really put a focus on nursing as a profession which can offer a very, very excellent career, we hosted the National Nursing Symposium in Winnipeg. The genesis behind that National Nursing Symposium was a Victoria meeting of Ministers of Health wherein I proposed that Manitoba host this, because all of my confreres across Canada, as Ministers of Health, are facing the same kind of dilemma in terms of recruitment, retention of nursing training, et cetera, and the same kind of concerns about their role in the workplace and other issues that seemed to have a common theme across Canada.

So I suggested a National Nursing Symposium in Winnipeg, which occurred last month. It was attended very, very generously by nurses across the length and breadth of this province and the Ministers of Health across this province. We had few exceptions where the Ministers were not there. That was a success. I think it was a success from the standpoint that it raised the self worth of the profession if you will, because that is the first time that Ministers of Health have singled out a professional discipline in health care and hosted a national symposium to try and come around issues that they believe are relevant to the profession of nursing.

So I have taken a long time to give my honourable friend some direction as to where we are heading and what we are attempting to do. One is ever hopeful that these initiatives will bear fruit and have some successful outcome. I simply say that nursing traditionally in Manitoba has been a profession of strength and I think will continue to be so.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Minister has raised a number of interesting points. One of them is, he has set the role of nurses in terms of the management positions and boards and commissions and, more specifically, they have raised this issue many times in terms of the Health Advisory Network. There even is a member who

was the past president of the organization, who is an active member of the network.

Can the Minister tell us how many other specifications have been allocated for the nursing profession on the Health Advisory Network, and what particular other groups in terms of the Minister's advisory councils the nurses are playing a role?

Mr. Orchard: I simply indicate to you that we have not set any quotas, because within the Health Advisory Network, I struck the steering committee. The steering committee has selected the various task force memberships, but out of the number of task forces that are currently operating, we have a total of 23 nurses, part of that process. That is what I always found to be a little bit distressing when, not my honourable friend, but particularly the other Opposition Party used to stand up and rant and rave that we did not have nurses on our task force of committees, and in fact they were there in fairly substantive numbers.

I also took particular offence to the accusation by, upon occasion, members of the MNU that we did not value the input of nurses, because in one of the more important committees, and certainly one of the more important directions of reform in health care, namely the Health Services Development Fund, we have a small committee which reviews and recommends for approval applications in that health services development fund.

There are five members on it. One of the five members is none other than the president of the MNU. I have to be blunt. I used to get a little exercised when the accusation was made, we do not listen to union nurses. If you cannot listen to the president on an important thing like the Health Services Development Fund, I think that here opinion has been valued and her work has been good to the workings of that committee. Again, I guess when you are setting up for negotiations, you make positions that maybe are taken more for the posture rather than for the reality of it, because in fact we have a number of nurses on the Health Advisory Network and certainly nurses participating in a number of other committees of Government.

* (1640)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, today the Minister announced the province-wide war on drugs. Can the Minister of Health tell us now, he has appointed four Members of his caucus, and they are

going to go throughout the province, how much it is going to cost? Are these Members going to get extra funding while they are working?

Mr. Orchard: My colleagues, the MLAs, will only have reimbursement of meals and if they perchance stay overnight, but they are not receiving a per diem. They are doing this as part of their duties and responsibilities as Members of Government caucus.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister tell us why he has not chosen the Health Advisory Network to address this issue? While they were going around last year, in the past few months around this province to various small communities to look at various issues, why you have to have a separate committee?

Mr. Orchard: The Health Advisory Network has undertaken certain pragmatic tasks in terms of the existing program. This issue of substance abuse, alcohol and drug, is considered to be a very important initiative under the healthy public policy initiative of Government, where we are not narrowing it to a Department of Health role and responsibility, but broadening the issue to include three of my colleagues' departments, Family Services, Justice and Education. We are following up on the announcement the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made in August of the four-point program for the war on drugs.

Not that I want to get into the rhetorical debate as my honourable friend's Leader did today in Question Period, but I simply remind my honourable friend that the Premier's four-point program was initiatives under Education in terms of policy and education; programs under Justice involving enforcement and whatever changes to regulation legislation, et cetera, would be workable in the Manitoba context; Health in terms of the role the AFM provides in service delivery and certainly other organizations funded in part by Health, funded in part by Family Services; and then of course Family Services, because that ministry has a number of funded agencies that deal in part, if not in whole, with problems that children have and others have with substance abuse and their addiction to substance abuse.

So with the Premier's announcement on consultation, this was a natural follow-through, because construction has started on the treatment side. This consultation process is one that is a Government initiative, does not require anything less than the profile of Government by putting this

forward as an issue of Government and general public concern. We think it provides a greater profile to the issue and will invite greater public interest and greater public input into the consultation process and thereby, we hope, guide Government with some more common-sense solutions to the problem.

Mr. Cheema: We have a problem with this one, because it looks like the Members of the Government are going to promote their own four Members. We have a Health Advisory Network where people from a non-political background, from very expert opinions and very non-biased opinions, who do not have any political affiliations, and they have been working for the last two years. The Minister has always said the Health Advisory Network has been the best thing to happen in Manitoba. Why such an important issue was not given to the Health Advisory Network is difficult to understand.

I do not want to reflect on these four people, who may have excellent qualities, but we are talking about the issue, these four people, who is going to teach them first to learn about this issue first and then go across the province? My second question is: Why, when we have the data available in the hands of this commission and the AFM, can we not use the same data?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, maybe a Liberal consultation process would go out and tell the people what they should do. This task force, if one looks at the discussion paper, I just searched for one, I erred significantly in not providing my honourable friend with one, because he would be impressed with the openness of consultation that is there. We are inviting the public to identify areas that they have of concern and to suggest to us where they think Government can effectively and creatively participate in creating solutions.

There is not the opportunity for unlimited funding on this issue. That does not exist anywhere in Government today. I think the public of Manitoba, given the opportunity to participate and indicate to Government what sort of directions are already happening in their community, will be able to tell Government that there is a significant amount of activity out there by community groups, service clubs, school divisions, ministerial associations, all of which are providing on their own, in isolation from greater support of Government, a significant amount of service in the community.

I think we will find that when the community at large understands that one of the challenges is not narrowed only to treatment, but rather the follow-up after treatment, we will find that the community will be able to offer, I think, some pretty positive ideas on how the community can offer that kind of support in the community, so that you intervene at the return to the abuse of either the alcohol, the drug or the substance.

I do not have any problem with the process we have undertaken. The individuals are very committed to the process. They represent urban and rural ridings, and they have had experience. I would offer my honourable friend to sit and talk with each of them and find out what they have done and how significant their interest is in this issue.

I think they bring to the issue a great deal of understanding. They are not going out there to lecture Manitobans. They are out there to listen to Manitobans' suggestions, because I have found that listening is one of the great unused skills in political life, and that one can learn a significant amount if one chooses and creates forms and opportunities to listen and seek public input. That is what we are doing on this one. We think that we will all be well served by the process.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we completely disagree with the Minister. We have a Health Advisory Network on one angle. We have the Health Services Commission on the other. We have Manitoba Health, AFM, various boards and commissions.

Everyone has worked on this issue. You have the data. Now you have appointed these four Members, and we have no problem with their personal capabilities. They may be the best persons in the whole world, but why do you have to go through that same process again? You had the opportunity and you still have the opportunity with the Network to complete the same thing. It is basically a political structure to raise their profile. That is what it is.

Mr. Orchard: With all the kindness I can muster to my honourable friend, I disagree. I cannot agree in any way with what he is saying. Everything this Government does—you know, I just wish we had Thursday night's Hansard because the opening remarks of my honourable friend—and they followed upon my other honourable friend's opening remarks. They urged this Government to reform the health care system, to get more into

community-based services, to consult with the people of Manitoba, to get their ideas and put them into action.

* (1650)

When we do that, and the method of consultation involves Government MLAs, and we are Government, and we have the opportunity, the role, the responsibility to do that, all of a sudden the process is flawed. It is political.

We are only doing what you suggested. I want to tell my honourable friend that I have great expectations of outcome on this. I think there is going to be a tremendous amount of common sense approach come out of this consultation process with the people of Manitoba. You put the focus of a problem to Manitobans, and generally, coming around to understand the issue and the challenge, they will put their minds to work and they will create the solutions.

The additional strength of this consultation process is in the mailing list. My honourable friend makes the point that the AFM has studied, they have got statistics, the Commission has studies, they have the statistics, and why do we not just bring them all together? A reasonable point.

I do not know whether it would guide you as well as having the focus of four departments come onto the issue because the mailing list has been one created by four Ministers. The mailing list is as diverse as Manitoba school trustees to service clubs to police forces to ministerial associations to funded agencies in child and family services. It is a very, very diverse mailing list. It is a major undertaking. That is going to be one of the major costs, is the distribution of the discussion paper.

By bringing all of that diverse group of people in the Manitoba society focusing on that one issue over an eight- to 10-week period of time, I think we are going to see some substantially beneficial advice come to Government, because that is not a role that AFM narrowly by itself can undertake; that is not a role that my ministry narrowly by itself can undertake, or the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) or the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach).

It is an initiative of Government, as announced by the Premier (Mr. Filmon). Furthermore, as it becomes part of our healthy public policy initiative, where we cross the jurisdictional lines of the Department of Health to come to grips with what has normally and traditionally been considered a

"Health" issue, the process follows what this Government is trying to do in moving Health beyond the narrowed boundaries of Health and its funded agencies to a community and a citizens awareness problem.

I think the process is just excellent. I have no doubt in my mind that the four Members will have a substantially higher profile after the consultation than before it, no question about that.

That ought not to be reason not to do it. Good heavens, if my honourable friend wanted to be part of it there is a way he could do that. He could take about four steps to the left and become part of the process if he wanted, if he thinks there is that much profile involved. I happen to think there are a lot of good people involved in that and more good people will become involved.

I thank my honourable friend for his caution. I do not agree with his criticism, however.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Assuming we only have a few minutes remaining, let me go to just some questions for basic information on staff in the Policy and Planning Secretariat.

Could the Minister give us a breakdown of the three managerial staff, who they are and what they do?

Mr. Orchard: I believe I can do that. I have an executive director position, which is currently vacant. I have two directors, one of the Health Economics unit, one of the Program Evaluation unit, which are filled. Would you like the individuals' names?

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Sure.

Mr. Orchard: Kathleen Scherer, who is with us this afternoon, is the director of the Health Economics unit. Connie Becker is the Program Evaluation unit director.

I have a senior economist, Jim Tsitanidis; a senior analyst, Brian Gudmundson, who is attached to the Health Advisory Network and spends a fair bit of time there. I have another senior program analyst position which is vacant; a program analyst in the Health Economics unit again, Barbara Millar; a research assistant, which is vacant; administrative officer, Jan Weedon; two admin secretaries, Lucienne Stadnyk and Diane Karpenic; a senior analyst, Program Evaluation unit, Marion Harrison; and a senior legislative analyst, Health Economics unit, which is currently vacant.

We are in the process of advertising for the vacancies.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: In terms of those positions that are now filled, are any of them new or have they been there for a while and, how were they filled, if so?

Mr. Orchard: Connie Becker is new in director of the Program Evaluation unit. Jim Tsitanidis is new in terms of the Health Economics unit as a senior economist.

The other positions I believe have been filled for some time.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Were competitions held for those two that were just filled?

Mr. Orchard: One, Tsitanidis, was; Connie Becker's was not.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Again, how many vacancies are we talking about?

Mr. Orchard: Four.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: When is the time line for putting out those bulletins, or have they already gone out?

Mr. Orchard: Two are currently out, two will go out by the end of the month.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I will just return to an issue that was mentioned by my friend, the Liberal Critic for Health, on the whole question of mammography.

The Minister indicated that he is aware of some concerns with the use of mammography. I am wondering if he could elaborate a bit on that and also address a concern that I have heard from some doctors, and that is that we are facing not so much a problem of mammography services in general being inadequate, although I think the Minister is referring to the risk of exposure to ionizing radiation, but that there is another concern unique to Manitoba, and that is that our services are not up to national standards, that there is concern about the technology being used and regulations in place for employing the technology. I am wondering if the Minister has heard any of that and if he can enlighten us in terms of those concerns.

Mr. Orchard: No, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I have no indication of the latter concern about our equipment. As far as I know, our equipment meets all standards. I do not know where that concern comes from. I simply indicate to my honourable friend that on top of her buff file folder is the letter which indicates

some of the concerns re mass mammography. My honourable friend might want to review that.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I am wondering if the Minister could check through whatever source he uses in this context, perhaps the MMA, in terms of their assessment of the present state of mammography services in Manitoba, whether there is a concern with respect to our services meeting national standards, whether there are concerns with respect to the technology or the regulations governing the mammography services.

Mr. Orchard: I cannot accede to my honourable friend's request because I would not ask the MMA about standards. That is an issue of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and I will take that concern to them.

I simply want to say that I think on an issue like that, that would have been raised with me. I do not know from whence my honourable friend is receiving these concerns, but I will certainly check them with the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Thank you, I would appreciate that. I apologize for not exactly knowing which body one would refer such a matter to. I am still new to the whole area. Do I gather that the Minister will check with, make inquiries with the College of Physicians and Surgeons about these concerns?

Mr. Orchard: I will definitely check that out. I guess I have some concerns about the potential alarm one might have should my honourable friend's statement be reported as fact.

I just want to read to you the members of the committee, the Ad Hoc Technical Advisory Committee which was struck to study breast cancer screening. We had the Assistant Deputy Minister of Community Health Services who chaired it. We had the Advisory Council on the Status of Women there. We had Cadham Provincial Laboratory there. We had the Cancer Society of Manitoba there. We had the College of Physicians and Surgeons represented, the Manitoba Medical Association, the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, the society of radiologists, the Women's Directorate of the department, the Manitoba Health Services Commission, the Maternal and Child Health Directorate and Research and Planning from the Commission.

Outside of the last four which were departmental staff, we had in my estimation the best minds in Manitoba focused on the issue. If there was some

concern about inadequate standards, that group would be the ones that would know it and would have so advised. I just want to caution my honourable friend that I am going to check that out, but I would not take that indication as anywhere near factual.

* (1700)

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The time is now 5 p.m. and time for private Members' hour. Committee rise.

The committee took recess at 5:01 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 5:11 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Call the committee to order. The committee at the last sitting was reviewing item 1. Administration and Finance (d) Policy and Planning Secretariat: (1) Salaries \$504,300.00.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Just let me wrap up that issue we were just on with respect to mammography services. I just want to clarify; I am not trying to stir up anything or create any unnecessary fears, but I have heard this concern. I do not know if it is well-founded or not. I am assuming from the Minister's answer that he will initiate an inquiry with the college or someone in terms of that whole question.

Mr. Orchard: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairman. As I indicated, the committee that is studying it has been composed of probably the best minds on the issue in Manitoba and that certainly was not anything that they drew to our attention.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Let me now just carry on with an issue that my friend, the Liberal Critic, was just getting into and that has to do with the whole question of drug and alcohol abuse and the announcement today by the Minister which announces a consultation process.

Let me ask the Minister—we share some of those concerns of the Liberal Party about the need for another consultation process, no one questions the need to consult with Manitobans on a regular basis on all serious matters before us. However, that consultation strategy appears to us not to make sense in the context of inaction or cutbacks on other fronts pertaining to the same issue, pertaining to drug, alcohol and substance abuse.

I asked the Minister in the House today about the very serious issue of the future of the Youth Intervention Strategy which is, as I said to the Minister today, sponsored by the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. It is clear from all reports that the future of that pilot project is dubious. We have the report showing its effectiveness. The Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba has said that it does not believe it can continue on with that kind of program due to a lack of resources.

I note now, as I noted in Question Period today, that there is some basis in fact for that statement given the reduction in funds to the Alcoholism Foundation in this year's budget particularly in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse, information and education and in the area of program service delivery.

My question to the Minister is: Is he prepared, given his commitment to combatting drug and alcohol and substance abuse in our society today, is he committed to finding the means, the wherewithal to ensure that this very successful Youth Intervention Strategy program is able to continue?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am going to take issue with some of the statements my honourable friend made because, first of all, my honourable friend always comes at these questions and issues and makes statements which from time to time are not correct. I will stand corrected if I did not hear properly today and tomorrow's Hansard will demonstrate.

* (1720)

I distinctly recall my honourable friend indicating that this Youth Intervention Strategy had its funding cut back this year. Well, if that was what my honourable friend said, that is a factual inexactitude. In parliamentary language that means it is an untruth. -(interjection)- Would you like to say something?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Orchard: Because it is a pilot project of two years duration, the evaluation report that my honourable friend tabled is the evaluation of the first year's operation. It was initiated and commenced as a two-year program. The second year of the program is ongoing. There is no cutback as alleged by my honourable friend. That was not an accurate statement, but yet my honourable friend made it

because my honourable friend wants not to deal with the issue but make politics of the issue.

Now I cannot answer my honourable friend as to whether the AFM will consider the program worthy of funding at the end of the analysis, presumably in July 1991, of the second year of the program. I cannot answer that. I cannot presuppose what they are saying. They have left clear indication with the participant school divisions that this is a pilot project to test its effectiveness and that the pilot project shall have a duration of two years.

My honourable friend no doubt will say that when a pilot project is over that is a cutback. I mean that is the kind of language we hear from the New Democratic Party from time to time. If we then carry that logic to its conclusion, we would never try a pilot project, if anything, because if it did not work and we did not fund it after the predetermined pilot project time line, we would be accused of a cutback, because that is the only language my honourable friend knows when it comes to dealing with Government funding issues.

I just want to tell my honourable friend, No. 1, there was no cutback as she alleged in the House today; and No. 2, that I cannot answer the question as to whether the program will be continued after its two-year pilot project time line has expired.

What I will tell my honourable friend is that if it is as effective as she alleges, it would be certainly a candidate for prioritized funding because that is the whole purpose I believe of pilot projects to determine what may be a more effective use of existing resource to undertake new initiatives.

That coincidentally is what I anticipate to be one of the major advantages of a public consultation process that was announced today, so that we can receive ideas from the community on how to make more effective use of existing resource budget and community-supported initiatives in drug, alcohol and substance abuse.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lois: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the information before us, in my view, clearly falls within a definition of the word cutback. We have documented information—the Minister is probably no doubt aware of it—indicating that this pilot project is being scaled down.

I refer specifically to a recent article November 12, in the Free Press Weekly wherein it is reported and I will quote, a unique pilot program on drug and alcohol intervention in its second year at Kildonan

East Regional Secondary School will be scaled down next fall, says an Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba youth counsellor. That person goes on to say that the AFM simply does not have the resources to continue offering this program.

Now I do not see the difference, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, between the words scaled down and cut back. It is a reduction of a program. It means reduced services for a community. It means a change in the original intentions of the pilot project.

I am asking the Minister if he will ensure that this pilot project is able to continue according to its original intentions at full pace for the two years and then give us some indication? If the pilot project continues to be as successful as the evaluation of the first year indicates it is, will he ensure that a program like this is supported, encouraged and in fact expanded to the point where it is available through all of our education system?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, with all the decency that I can muster, my honourable friend is silly, absolutely silly. You have a two-year pilot project announced, with everybody understanding it is a two-year pilot project. At the end of the two years, it is indicated that the pilot project will no longer go on as was described in the pilot project in its undertaking and the understanding those schools had and my honourable friend calls it a cutback. I mean that is not even an intelligent correlation to make.

I realize my honourable friend's political agenda because New Democrats can only talk in one direction that everything is a cutback. Even when there is more money and more service, it is a cutback, because someone said well maybe we could do more. It is a two-year pilot project, or does my honourable friend understand that, that it was a two-year pilot project? Well, I cannot get any reaction from my honourable friend so maybe she will clarify it when next she is here.

A two-year pilot project means it starts the beginning of one year and ends at the end of the second year—two years. It is not ongoing funding. Hence subject to the analogy that she so quickly makes of everything, that it is a cutback.

It is a pilot project for evaluation and the decision-making process that the AFM has made, as an autonomous organization, is that if they believe this to be the most effective use of their dollars or one of the more effective uses, they have

the complete ability and liberty to prioritize that budget and make the project: (a) continue in those schools that it was piloted in, or indeed expand it.

What my honourable friend is saying about cutbacks is simply not accurate as it applies to this program and she knows that. If you want to talk about cutbacks, we will revisit on this issue River House. We will revisit on this issue the decision by the Government that she sat around Cabinet on of administrative positions in Brandon with the AFM, where the NDP were cutting back the service and curtailing the service. That is not the case here.

The AFM, I tell you, undertakes a number of pilot projects to test new theories, to test new concepts and new ideas. They fund them, organization them and deliver them for finite periods of time and they have done that—well, I would not want to put a time guess on that record, but they have done that well before I became Minister. Probably while my honourable friend sat around Cabinet and you know when those pilot projects ended when she was Government, I guess the AFM cutback and she allowed it to happen. Well, that is just the silliest statement that I have just made as my honourable friend's original accusation.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I will try not to engage in that kind of debating style that the Minister is well known for. I think it is clear that an organization such as the AFM will have a difficult time considering the expansion of a pilot project that has proven to be effective if it is faced with a cutback of its own budget by the Province of Manitoba, by this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). We see that in this year's Estimates, and we will I am sure go into that in more detail whenever we get to the Estimates for the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba.

Clearly, when there are reduced resources available to an organization, it has no choice but to scale down projects, but to think twice about initiating innovative projects in this area. I think all of that flies in the face and really questions the Minister's intentions and agenda in establishing this consultation process as announced today.

One wonders where he has been for the last three years. One wonders why in fact he did not move immediately on the plan in place that he inherited in the spring of 1988, a plan that had already put in place, called for an alcohol and drug service review committee with specific terms of reference, had been put in place and announced in the last few

months of the previous NDP administration. All that was remaining was for this Government to give the word "go," to be in the process then, to review policies, legislation, programs and recommend action and strategies to deal with the very serious and growing problem in our society today.

* (1730)

However, the Minister has obviously chosen to simply ignore the work that had been done to begin such a process and has now waited three years to put in place a mechanism by which he can hear the views of Manitobans and organizations in order to give him the basis for supposedly some action in the future.

I want to ask the Minister why he did not act then in the spring of 1988, give the word "go" to the established alcohol and drug service review committee with its terms of reference and ensure that kind of review and actions had been forthcoming by now so that some sort of plan of action was in place to deal with this very serious problem.

Mr. Orchard: You know, I am rather intrigued with my honourable friend's dissertation three Estimates processes later about this grand plan of the New Democratic Party in its dying days in Government. Now my honourable friend made the accusation again that I cancelled this or did not continue with this. This is the first time I have heard of this. It did not come to me as any plan that was ready to go and was all set and running. It was never given to me as an initiative of Government that I had to make a decision on, because it did not exist except in the three-year-later mind of my honourable friend from St. John's.

I mean when you carry your record, as my honourable friend does, as a woman and as an advocate of women's rights, when you carry into an election defeat in 1988 the cancellation of River House as the first and probably the best women's treatment centre for alcoholism in western Canada and the first in western Canada, and you carry that record to Opposition, I suppose you are not very proud and you do not want to talk about addiction and drug services problems.

This is the first time I have heard of this grandiose scheme of the NDP in their dying days in Government, and I simply want to tell my honourable friend, it was not presented to me as a plan which was ready to go and ready for decision

making. I do not know why it was not other than to speculate very politically that it did not exist in the mature form that my honourable friend alleges three years later.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I think the Minister has just probably forgotten that was part of his briefing book when he first became Minister. I fail to understand how, if I have that briefing information, he was not made aware of it.

However, let me leave that and go on to another related issue in this area, and that is the future and the timetable of this Government for the proclamation of Bill 91, amendments to the Manitoba health Act to curb solvent abuse. I know that the Minister in the House today said simply yes, he was moving on proclamation, but I would like if he could give us some more specifics with respect to the exact date and what steps are being taken now to ensure that retailers in the Province of Manitoba are prepared and ready for the proclamation of Bill 91.

Mr. Orchard: We anticipate proclamation in January, and a committee is putting those varied touches to the process of proclamation.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: In anticipation of that proclamation date, has the Minister sent out information to all retailers in the province so that they can be prepared and ready to meet the requirements of this legislation?

Mr. Orchard: No, that has not been done.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Can I ask the Minister if he plans to do that in the very near future?

Mr. Orchard: Should that be a recommendation by the implementation committee, I would certainly give it very serious consideration.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the Minister tell me how it would be possible to move on proclamation without having done the homework first, without having provided the necessary information to the retailers of the Province of Manitoba, since this legislation clearly makes requirements on their part and will ensure that they have a little time to prepare for the proclamation which was always the intentions of the delay in proclamation as stated by his colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), who indicated to me and to others in the House back in the middle of March 1990 that proclamation would occur within a two- or three-month period, pending the information being forwarded to businesses and retailers of the province?

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that is exactly what the implementation committee will structure in terms of the proclamation of the Bill, the information package, the communications structure and strategy necessary for that targeted January implementation and proclamation.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: How long has the implementation team been meeting?

Mr. Orchard: I beg your pardon.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Has the implementation team been meeting, how long, what have they decided to date?

Mr. Orchard: They have been meeting over the last several weeks, and I cannot tell you what they have decided to date because they have not given me an interim report.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Can I ask why then at least seven months passed without some action being taken on this legislation agreed to by all Parties in the Legislature?

Mr. Orchard: It is not as if there has been no action taken. The issue has been discussed at a number of different levels within Government in terms of the implications of the Bill, the enforcement of the Bill, et cetera, and the committee will be able to very quickly synthesize that information as collected and as ascertained over the last time period and has indicated to me as recently as a couple of weeks ago that the January proclamation date is certainly achievable.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Can the Minister give us any specific date in January when the Bill might be proclaimed?

Mr. Orchard: Between the second and the 31st.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I would like to ask just a couple of general questions on the Minister's consultation process on drug and alcohol abuse. Could he tell us when he might anticipate the plan of action being forthcoming as a result of this consultation process?

Mr. Orchard: I am going to give my honourable friend exactly the question that was very intelligently posed to me by the media, along the same lines. I congratulate her on asking the question.

We have about 5,000—and I apologize to my honourable friend for not having one here for her—of the consultation papers. It is a two-part consultation paper where the last half is a tear-away so that questionnaires can be returned to the ministry.

Public participation can be in one of two forms or both. One can merely—merely is not the right word—one can fill in and return their thoughts to the questionnaire and additional comments directly to the ministry, or bring the consultation paper and use it as part of a presentation at the public hearing.

If we receive 50 replies, I would say we would be able to develop an action plan quite quickly. If we receive substantially more replies, in the 1,000 or 2,000 range, that is going to delay the development of an action plan. I think my honourable friend can understand why. We would want to give serious consideration to each of those replies and the suggestions contained therein.

* (1740)

I simply say that I cannot be definitive as to how quickly we would develop an action plan, other than to give my honourable friend the indication that by announcing today, by the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) announcement in August of the four point strategy, this is a Government initiative upon which we place some substantial value. We wish to receive and hopefully use the common sense suggestions of Manitobans as quickly as possible.

On the other hand, if that process is delayed by a month or two because of an overwhelming return of the questionnaire, then I would feel pretty happy about that and the cause of that delay. We would have been assured of pretty substantial input by Manitobans which I think all Parties would like to have.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I have just a last question on this. Why did the Minister not consider perhaps adding to the membership of his committee the names of representatives from organizations like the AFM and other organizations actively involved in combatting drug, alcohol and substance abuse?

Mr. Orchard: This is a committee of caucus which is to provide the opportunity, the forum for consultation of the public. Because we could conceivably and probably will run up to four concurrent hearings at the same time, staffing of that hearing process will be by AFM staff so that they are attached to the process from a staffing standpoint, so they have a flavour and a feel for what the public is saying.

In addition to that, we have a staff resource regionally, as well as one individual attached to this policy consultation out of the Deputy's office which will provide the departmental staffing backup to the

initiative. There is no exclusion. Those people are there as part of resource to the committee, as well as providing the opportunity to take down the suggestions as made by verbal presentation, say we do not get written ones at the consultation process. We want to be very open. We are not insisting on only written presentations. We want the public to come in and converse freely with us.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I would like to move on to a few other areas that I believe fall under the Policy and Planning Secretariat. The first has to do with health care and our aboriginal community. I am wondering generally where the state of discussions, policy development is with respect to aboriginal control, responsibility in the whole area of health care. That is one question.

Related to that, I am wondering if the Minister has responded to the questions raised by my colleague, the Member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), that were taken as notice by the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) on November 21, concerning the Swampy Cree Tribal Council concerns.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I want to deal with this. I think this is an issue that is worthy of some fairly substantial discussion at this Estimates process.

I want to tell my honourable friend that I know, and I understand—this has been a long-standing problem—that the health status of our aboriginal peoples is, and continues to be, significantly below that of other groups in Manitoba society. That is not unique to Manitoba. That is a circumstance that troubles them across Canada. In part, it is an access issue; in part, it is a funding issue; in part, it is a jurisdictional issue—very complex.

I have no concern, in terms of very open discussions with Native groups, on their direct involvement in health care delivery. Again, let me go back to a founding and underpinning principle. The more you involve the community and the more you empower individuals, the more they take ownership of an issue and treat it not as if someone else is doing it, therefore we do not have to worry about it. With ownership of issues comes, I think, pretty responsible program delivery. We have attempted to do that in a number of areas throughout the health care system and indeed throughout Government in general since we have come into office.

In the issue of Native health—I will tell you straight out what the difficulty is—and that is I believe we

have no ulterior motives to undertake those discussions. I cannot say that the federal Government has the same pure motivations. I sense, as my honourable friend probably would share with us, that the federal Government would approach this issue as yet another method of offloading their jurisdictional responsibility, their legal responsibility, without commensurate replacement of funds. I am not wanting to get around the issue that health care solely revolves for the Native community around the money issue.

With all of the demands that are on the health care system in Manitoba, as it exists today, I cannot take on additional responsibilities which are by legislation, by past practice and every other quantifier you want to put on the table, a federal Government responsibility without their clear commitment that, along with a joint process or any process of changing the jurisdiction in Native health issues, commensurate funding follows. Around that issue, we have no clear—and we are not unique here again—no province has a clear consensus idea from the federal Government as to how they might approach the issue.

Let me tell you a couple of things that we are doing on the national level so you understand how we are approaching this issue. In Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, this fall, we had the conference of Health Ministers. We met with a Native delegation after the formal proceedings of the meeting. One of the issues that we agreed to at the national meeting was to initiate discussions with the federal Government, with the national Minister of Health in terms of the jurisdiction, the funding issue.

We are awaiting, as a council of Ministers, for a reply from the federal Government as to when and how they wish to approach that issue. We have not received a reply on that, and that is all Ministers that were there. There were, I guess, three Ministers missing. Quebec does not participate anymore, the Ontario Minister was not there, and Nova Scotia was not there; but the other Ministers were there, and that was the approach that we took. I do not think that the absence of the other Ministers affected that decision. I think it would have been a decision that they agreed to.

Internally in Government we are attempting through a couple of means, again cross-departmental, involving Northern Affairs, trying to come to grips with how we approach the issue, how we negotiate the issue, how we unravel

this issue with the federal Government. We have ongoing discussions which, I guess, if things go well, we might have some sense and some further briefing or further information that will be available to me by say the end of February, middle of March on how we ought to approach the issue with the federal Government.

After saying all of that, I think my honourable friend would probably recognize that this is going to be one tough set of negotiations with the federal Government, given their current position on a number of issues that they have taken with provinces across this nation of ours, I think this is going to be a very difficult one.

I and this Government are caught, as your Government was caught, in trying to provide a mechanism for service delivery without being given the sole responsibility for the funding, because it is pretty easy for Ottawa to sit in Ottawa and make grandiose announcements and then expect provincial responsibility and jurisdiction to pick them up. We want to avoid that and have a pretty clear sense of the federal Government's involvement in any discussions of jurisdictional change and responsibility for health care amongst aboriginals and Native people in Manitoba.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Have there been any tripartite discussions to date, or have they been talked about at all? Was that a recommendation coming out of the Ministers' meeting?

* (1750)

Mr. Orchard: No, there has not been any tripartite—the federal Government simply has not been there, so that our approach on the issue was to approach the federal Minister and to have as part of the agenda discussion between the provincial Ministers and the federal Government on the issue.

As well, I guess, part of the conference, we had fully anticipated that the Native leadership would participate as well, and like, you see again, not wanting to exclude anybody, but sometimes the federal Government might be reticent to come there if they think it is a gang up of the provinces and the Native organizations against the lowly federal Government. So we are willing to explore half the conference, you know, as a federal/provincial/territorial Ministers' conference, and then a latter half with Native representation there to make their case. I mean, all we want to do is get on with the discussion, and we have not received to date a reply

from the federal Minister as to whether he will accede to having that issue discussed at a federal/provincial-territorial meeting.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Has the Assembly of Chiefs presented any kind of position to you in terms of a possible position?

Mr. Orchard: No, not the Assembly of Chiefs, Mr. Deputy Chairman, but that does not mean to say that some Native organizations have not approached and had discussions directly with me and with my colleague, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), in terms of individual tribal council jurisdictions and health issues. But again here is the difficulty, I do not feel comfortable in dealing on an individual basis, not out of no desire to try and further what may well be a laudable goal, but I cannot accede to anything without having that major hurdle crossed with the federal Government. I have made that clear with the individual Native groups who have approached me on the issue of self-government and health care delivery.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I appreciate that. I am just wondering though if it did not make sense for the province to sit down with the aboriginal communities and develop, at least begin to sort out some of the issues and try to develop a position and see where the common areas are and go with a united position to the federal Government, anticipating the difficulties down the road?

Mr. Orchard: By and large that is the process that is undergoing that may well be providing me some guidance by March or February. Again I have run into the circumstance where a Native community has not wanted to be part of discussions without the federal Government there and the federal Government has not wanted to—I mean it is the old three-cornered hat. How you are wearing it depends on how you look at it. No reflection on Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Gee, I do not know, that could be, you know.

Mr. Orchard: It was no reflection on Mr. Speaker. He is the only one I know of who wears a three-cornered hat yet, and that is just a straight statement of fact but, at any rate, to answer my honourable friend's questions, those are the nature of some of the discussions that are going on right now.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I am wondering if I could ask the questions that my colleague the Member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) raised in the House and were taken

as notice by the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) pertaining to the Swampy Cree Tribal Council. His first question was, what is the time frame for transferring control of those services that this ministry has been proposing to the tribal council?

Mr. Orchard: That is again the discussions that are ongoing in the February-March time frame.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Okay, I do not know all the background on this issue but, as I understand it, at least based on my colleague's comments when the Health ministry or officials in your ministry have been meeting for quite some time specifically with Swampy Cree Tribal Council, what you are telling me is that you are looking at February-March in terms of some resolution?

Mr. Orchard: Not that I want to quell optimism or anything, but by February or March we think we will have a report. Whether it is a report that is actionable in isolation, or whether it is one that we use to further our discussions with the federal Government, I simply cannot prejudge right now. It is safe to say that the process is ongoing, and the discussions are leading us certainly further down the decision-making path than we were two years ago.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Is it possible that out of that process will come a provincial position on recognizing the authority of local tribal councils, which is a supplementary of my colleague's questioning?

Mr. Orchard: Possibly, but not necessarily. That is the whole nub of where the federal Government—the federal Government would love nothing better than for us to say, we will have responsibility, and they say, fine, you pay for it.

Again, I do not want to get into the narrowed issue only and solely and exclusively of the financial side of it. The federal Government is not going to be able to offload their responsibility on us. That is the only caution I put in place on that one. Quite frankly, I think that is why this hesitancy may be on the federal Government's part to participate in discussions with provincial territorial Ministers.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I have a final question on this whole area. As my colleague, the Member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) asked on November 21, are there discussions going on or meetings taking place as well with the communities of Grand Rapids, Easterville, Shoal River and Indian Birch in terms of their interests in talking about the transfer of control of health services to those communities?

Mr. Orchard: I do not think there are specific discussions ongoing with those individual band councils at this time.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I would like to proceed to another area that I touched on earlier but left. I had raised it under the Health Advisory Network, but it belongs more appropriately in this area. That is the whole question of the future policies around the issue of midwifery.

The Minister indicated that this was under review. I wonder if he could just clarify again, who is looking into this policy area and what is the timetable with respect to possible future recommendations?

Mr. Orchard: When the issue came up, there was agreement reached between the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses. They would strike a committee, review the issue of midwifery, and provide to Government their recommendations which the Government would then either take to further discussion, or at least have a basis under which we might consider an action plan.

I am not sure of the time frame of when we might expect that report. Probably by mid-year next year we expect to have the report from the College and MARN.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Could the Minister tell us whatever happened to the advisory council on the status of women's report on midwifery?

Mr. Orchard: It has been referred to the college and MARN. Right or wrong, one of the criticisms of that report is that there was no input from the professional side in its development. That is why the two professional groups volunteered.

I have to say that is the first time that the College of Physicians and Surgeons and MARN, the professional association of registered nurses, have—not the first time—but it is certainly a very pro-active joint approach they have taken to the issue of midwifery.

I think it is a sign of good intent, and future well-being in terms of professional relationships in the province. It was solely because there was no professional input into the—maybe "no" is not the right word—insufficient professional input on the original status of women's report, that they proposed to do the investigation and report and give a report to Government.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The time being 6 p.m., committee rise with the understanding that at 8 p.m. the House will reconvene with Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

Committee rise.

SUPPLY—NATURAL RESOURCES

Madam Chairman (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Would the Committee of Supply to deal with the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources please come to order. We will now have the introductory statement by the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Chairman, it is a privilege for me to introduce the Estimates of the department that I have had some considerable dealings with over a number of years. It came as a surprise to me when I realized that, while I have had the privilege of being Minister of this department now for the third time, it is in fact four decades that I have been involved with the Estimates of this department.

The department, in its Estimates placed before you, will continue to indicate to the Province of Manitoba that the Department of Natural Resources, along with the industry of the good people of Manitoba, continues to provide a very firm basis for the kind of growth and expansion that we have enjoyed in this province. Members opposite will have an opportunity to examine the affairs of the nine individual branches that make up the Department of Natural Resources, along with the Administration branch. Members might note with some surprise a very substantial reduction in the request for monies to operate in the coming year, a reduction that I know all Members will applaud. The reduction is, of course, made up in the difference between those monies required in the previous year in our extensive firefighting efforts to contain one of the worst fire seasons on record.

That accounts for the fundamental or the major difference in the monies being asked for by this department. The Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit that has operated and become part and parcel of this Government's way of doing business is implementing its co-ordination throughout the department. We hope that the principle that has been adopted by this Government of sustainable development will, in fact, become an

everyday guide and a natural part of our strategy as we embark in the different affairs of the department.

You will note there were some additional resources found to improve roads in our parks, improve the maintenance of our recreational facilities. Substantial progress has been made in providing for that 100-year flood protection for all our communities in Manitoba. There are some communities that are still on the waiting list. It is our hope that we can steadily move towards providing that protection that is now afforded to some 18 communities, principally those, of course, within the Red River Valley. Other communities like Ste. Rose du Lac have been added and completed to that list of protected communities, most notably, the start of the Carman diversion project which will provide that thriving community with long-sought relief from the periodic flooding that the community has been subjected to.

It is my firm belief that we are very close to concluding a new five-year forestry agreement with the federal Government that will enable that branch to carry on in the important work that it is involved. A major substantial portion of that forestry agreement makes it possible for the department to continue with an aggressive reforestation program, a program that in fact has enabled me to say as the Minister responsible for Forestry that we are not adding to the backlog of reforestation problems.

We are, in fact, through various methods used—natural regeneration, plantation, reforestation—are in effect ensuring that future Manitobans will enjoy forests for them to enjoy both from a recreational point of view and from a commercial point of view in terms of putting the whole forestry industry on a sustainable development yield basis.

I am pleased to say, and I would be delighted to discuss with Honourable Members, the program that was new to the department last year, a half million dollar special conservation program that is made possible by the provision of those monies from the Lotteries revenues. Once again, a number of volunteer organizations throughout the province and a wide spectrum of projects were helped and assisted with some monies, often monies that in turn leveraged other sources to make some pretty substantial programs at the local level that were important to various organizations throughout the province.

I would have to comment, Madam Chairman, that it is a hallmark year for the department. The Department of Natural Resources notes and celebrates its 60th anniversary this year. The department was formed back in 1930 in anticipation of the major change in constitutional realignment of responsibilities, that is the transfer of resources from the federal Government to the province in 1930. At that time, the Department of Natural Resources was created.

I am truly privileged to be the Minister responsible of the department. It is one of the most senior departments of Government staffed with a complement of very capable public servants that the people of Manitoba can indeed be proud of. I am very proud to be the Minister for the department at this particular time.

There are two major initiatives. Honourable Members will note when they look through the Estimates of the department that unlike some of my sister departments, the department has seen very little growth in terms of new monies made available to it. What that means is that individual managers, directors are under considerable pressure to innovate and find new ways of making the same dollars stretch.

* (1430)

The department is responsible for matters that, at the same time, have become increasingly important to growing numbers of Manitobans. More and more people are making use of our park systems. More and more people are concerned about how we manage our wildlife resources. More and more people enjoy these resources in their travels throughout the Province of Manitoba.

Members will note that the officers, whether they are resource officers who are responsible for the maintenance of the game laws that we have, officers who are responsible for the maintenance of our park system, the officers who are responsible for monitoring the preservation of our water resources, all of these people who are involved in this department are being asked to do that responsibility with little or no increase in funds.

Those of my colleagues opposite who have shared the responsibility of being Minister of this department, or indeed of any other ministry, will appreciate that puts an additional burden on the department. It calls for new and innovative ways of reaching out and finding new funding partners for

the department to, nonetheless, do some new and exciting things. I want to in closing, Madam Chairman, just touch on two specific areas.

One of the most exciting programs that the department is involved in, and indeed that this Government is involved in, is the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. Madam Chairman, that is a program of major proportions. It is not a short-term program. It is a program that reaches out some 15 years. It calls for a very substantial expenditure of money, some \$134 million. It is an example of what I just said, of leveraging relatively few Manitoba dollars into very significant dollars. These partners in this program are Canadian Wildlife Service, the federal department of Canada, North American sponsors, principally sponsors in the United States of America. Ducks Unlimited are a major contributor and partner in this program.

We in fact have chosen Ducks Unlimited to merge their program in with the program, a very successful program that was piloted by the department in the area of my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), in the Shoal Lake municipality. It was called HELP, Habitat Enhancement Land-Use Program. We have merged those two programs into a program called Prairie CARE, to be delivered essentially by Ducks Unlimited. We are setting up four offices in the southwest portion of the province, in Virden, in Killarney, in Shoal Lake and in Minnedosa, I believe. There are people being hired.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): The pothole country.

Mr. Enns: That is right. The Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says the pothole country. This program is essentially geared to that area of the province that has the greatest potential for improving the waterfowl productions, which is the pothole country, the Minnedosa country, the southwest, but it is not exclusive to that. It certainly covers the heritage marshes that we have in the province. It includes areas such as the potential developments at Lake Dauphin, as we move forward in the overall development program in that area. It is my hope that the impact of this program will fundamentally alter the landscape for the benefit of our wildlife, for the benefit of our soil conservation program that my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) is actively involved in, and in a very real way, for the benefit of a depressed farm economy with whom we are making contractual arrangements for lease, rent or purchase of some

of these submarginal lands, that quite frankly ought not to have been put into agriculture in the first instance. Significant financial support will be paid out during the lifetime of this program to the hard-pressed farmers of this province.

Madam Chairman, I make mention of the other new initiative because it has been a subject of some discussion. It has involved myself and it involves others, even though Honourable Members will not find an Estimates line for it. That is the other initiative that I am very pleased and very delighted to discuss with Honourable Members—the proposed project at Oak Hammock Marsh, again, involving the partnership of this Department of Natural Resources with Ducks Unlimited of Canada.

Madam Chairman, I can understand that in the electoral process, particularly in the heat of an election, I suppose many things are fair. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) has made particular note of the fact about my position on the project. Again, it may be excusable for some of the newer Members to have some misunderstanding about this subject but surely not for anybody who has served on the Treasury Benches to fully understand that it is not possible that my department, the Department of Natural Resources, could be a partner in a project, could be committing funds to it to the tune of \$250,000 a year and then have the Minister responsible of that department be ambivalent about the project or to pretend to stand back and say, look, I have no opinion about the project. That is not the way ministerial responsibility works.

I have to take responsibility for everything that takes place in this department, some of the things that I have no control over, some of the actions of the 1,200 to 1,400 employees who from time to time work in the department. It is not necessarily that I wanted it, but that is the way the system works. That is the only way that, on a parliamentary system, accountability to the people of Manitoba works. The Minister has to accept responsibility. I certainly accept full responsibility for my department's involvement with the proposed project at Oak Hammock.

I think it is a sound project for the department, sound environmentally, sound for the future of good public education for the appreciation of our growing urban population of all things having to do with nature, with wildlife, the ecosystems involved in a marsh setting. I think it is a golden opportunity for

Manitoba, along with such other organizations such as the Fort Whyte Centre, which we support as well and have over the many years, as I know other Governments have, to put together an education opportunity within the 20-minute confines of the large urban centre of Winnipeg that is so attractive to such growing numbers of our students particularly.

I applaud our teachers, our teachers who take children out on field days in their nature studies. Very often their first stop will be the Fort Whyte Centre where they have an opportunity in a more classroom-like setting, to in a close-up but yet very artificial—of course, in a sense, they have done a marvelous job in reclaiming old gravel pits and clay pits in that setting. They provide a particular educational opportunity and experience for the children, who then are often invited to carry on or for their next field trip take that visitation out to Oak Hammock, see and experience that kind of wildlife and nature experience in a marsh setting of some 7,000 to 8,000 acres of land, land which, I must say, was reclaimed by the '60s, worked on by the '70s by the previous administration, finally developed to the point that it now attracts some 80,000 to 85,000 visitors annually.

* (1440)

Madam Chairman, those visitors will come with or without Ducks Unlimited's presence there. There will be 90,000 visitors come next year; 100,000 visitors will come five years from now and possibly more. The department's problem is that with our limited resources, our limited interpretive centre there, we are having difficulty to properly provide, in an orderly way, for those visitors there.

I see it as a good marriage of private and public sector effort in a one-building complex to use the resources and the manpower and the financial support of an organization like Ducks Unlimited to enable us to provide a world-class facility on that marsh, that biologists have acceded will do no environmental damage, wildlife speaking, to the wildlife at the marsh. Canadian Wildlife Service acknowledged that. Certainly the wildlife specialists within my own department have acknowledged it—because it was a matter for my department to debate at some length before they made that recommendation to their Minister, that it was a project the department should consider.

Certainly the wildlife biologists working for an organization like Ducks Unlimited would not willfully do something that was damaging wildlife that they, as an organization, have a total commitment to sustain and to enhance.

Madam Chairman, I welcome any debate on the subject that Honourable Members may wish to have. It is of course just one relatively small portion of the overall functions of the department.

Madam Chairman, I appreciate there are many, many interests that this department holds for Members opposite. It is a department that spans a very wide range of activities, from wildlife interests to harvesting of commercial timber to the lack of harvesting of commercial fish in Lake Winnipegosis to the running and the operation of our park systems to the management of our Crown lands.

With those few remarks I invite the Honourable Members' questions. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: We will now hear from the critic for the official Opposition Party, the Honourable Member for Interlake.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Madam Chairman, I welcome the Minister and my colleagues here this afternoon for these Estimates. I am glad to see we are finally getting at them and getting going so we can proceed with the business in the House.

Being of course new at this, I will have many questions to ask the Minister. I will probably be jumping around from point to point. I would like his dedication to be patient and -(interjection)- That is right, that is right.

Again, I will be raising issues and questions throughout this afternoon's session. I would like to continue and proceed with the Estimates as such. If any other Members have any comments, I would appreciate that. I would like to get into this right now.

Madam Chairman: We will now hear from the critic for the Second Opposition Party, the Honourable Member for St. James.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Chairperson, it is with some pleasure that I, too, see that we are coming to these Estimates. I have looked forward to them. As the Member has indicated, my Opposition colleague, these being the first Estimates for myself and, indeed, for himself as the critics for our Parties while this Minister has been in his office for some time now, I think there will be a certain amount of just learning the details which

are not afforded in the public documents. I look forward to going through that process. I am sure the Minister will accommodate us in that.

I want to say that the reason I am particularly happy to have this as my critic portfolio is that it meshes for me well with the environment area which I also am the critic for our Party on. I think that there is a link. Our Natural Resources as well as the Environment portfolios have overlap areas. They have common goals.

One, perhaps, has a different focus than another, but we seek to achieve I think the same goal and that is to preserve and enhance our natural resources which, indeed, are our environment, our natural environment for future generations. That does not mean necessarily that we cannot as well harness them for our own use when appropriate and when in keeping with the theory of sustainable development as a society.

Sustainability is the catchword, obviously, of the '90s. It is one that is easy to say, but I think harder to put into practice. The Natural Resources Department, I believe, has an integral role to play in sustainable development. All areas of Government do, but it strikes me that Natural Resources has a particular role to play.

We have seen some changes in the last Government, specifically the Repap deal which, of course, dealt extensively with cutting rights in this province—a key natural resource, our forests—as the Minister has indicated in his opening comments. We have other concerns about the effects of development.

Of course, there is Conawapa coming up. There is the impact of the Rafferty-Alameda dam project. There is the Pelican Lake project, the Pembina Valley Water Task Force. There are many things going on in this province, many of which are controversial. I do not think we should shy from that controversy. In fact, I would suggest that in this day and age we should welcome it.

It is important to have a full debate on all of these issues, and I am sure the Minister would agree. It is sometimes not convenient for the Government of the Day. It has a tendency to inevitably frustrate. Everybody understands that at the end of the day a decision has to be made, but it is encouraging to me to see the levels of expertise and the numbers of people who are willing to come forward and give their time and effort on important issues regarding

our natural environment which we seek to make our heritage to future generations.

Madam Chairperson, I want to simply indicate to the Minister that some of my specific concerns which I will hope to touch on are the role of Natural Resources officers. This coincides with another critic portfolio which I have which is that of Justice. I see a link between our Natural Resources officers and our police officers.

I think that all too often urbanites in this province, such as myself, do not fully appreciate the need for Natural Resources officers to preserve the law with respect to hunting and fishing. We tend to see crime as crimes against people, crimes against property, but it is a crime against society to poach, to fish beyond the limits, to take what is not allowed the average citizen of this province. No one, including myself, denies Manitobans the right to participate in hunting and fishing activities, which many of us cherish as recreational activities, and many indeed do to feed themselves and to sustain life, but we all must be aware that for some of us to abuse will be for all of us to lose. That is a key aspect of what I hope to bring to the fore in these discussions which are to come.

I look forward, as I have said, to educating myself, and I plead ignorance on many of these issues as we head into this first Estimates process, as indeed I am sure my friend would as well. We have much work to do and time is short. With that, I look forward to getting into the detailed Estimates. Thank you.

Madam Chairman: At this time I would request that the Minister's staff enter the Chamber, please.

* (1450)

Mr. Enns: Allow me to, for the benefit of some Members who may not be familiar with some of the senior staff or who have not had an occasion to meet them, to introduce them. Mr. Dale Stewart, my Deputy Minister, Mr. Harvey Boyle, the Director of Regional Services, Mr. Bill Podolsky on the outside, Administrative Director, Financial Services, and Mr. Larry Whitney, Director of our Water Resources.

Madam Chairman: The Estimates are on page 136. 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$252,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$107,700—(pass).

(c) Resource Integration: (1) Salaries \$624,300.00.

Mr. Edwards: I see that one of the objectives of the Resource Integration branch is to integrate and co-ordinate departmental natural resources policy analysis. Can the Minister indicate what—flesh that statement out and give us some detail on what the specific projects that are being worked on in that branch are, if indeed he can produce that information today?

Mr. Enns: I can identify a number of activities involved by this group of people under this appropriation. They are involved in the Crown land planning for northern and Agro-Manitoba, natural resources plans for municipalities and planning districts. We get requests from different planning districts that my colleague, the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), sets up from time to time, and we are asked to provide resource bases with respect to the land and the types of land non-suitable for agriculture, suitable for recreational and so forth.

This unit is involved in the recommendations that lead to municipal by-laws, planning by-laws and indeed legislation with respect to land use that then gets applied in other committees, such as the Provincial Land Use Committee known as PLUC, when they make determinations as to the suitability of a particular request for a use on a particular piece of land.

They are also involved in the development of outdoor recreation, tourism, sustainable development strategies, plans that include environmental planning and providing the information that could lead to the licensing of projects that would have some form or some environmental impact.

They are the organization that help us in the establishment of ecological reserves. We expect they will become more involved now that we have an endangered species legislation that this House passed just last year. These are the kinds of things that this group of people is involved with.

They bring together the various disciplines within the department from wildlife, fish, as well as from other departments, notably Agriculture and Rural Development, and provide, hopefully as the name implies, an integrated overall overview with respect to any issue that this department or indeed other departments have to deal with from time to time.

Mr. Edwards: In the Green Plan, which was announced today federally, one of the things which

was mentioned is that there are going to be five new national parks in the short term and I believe another 13 in the longer term. One of those, I believe, was stated to have been or people are hopeful that it will be, in Manitoba.

Has the Minister and the department been involved in that consultation process? Can he give us any details as to when that will come to fruition?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, it is very topical. We were in discussion with this issue just this morning with our Parks director. Churchill is indeed being viewed as a potential addition to the national parks system.

The former federal Minister responsible, Mr. Lucien Bouchard, prior to his leaving the federal Cabinet in fact paid a visit to Manitoba and to myself—I believe it was last February or during the wintertime—and it is certainly our impression from the federal officials that they are serious about this planned addition to the Canada parks system.

It fills a gap in the system which is, of course, the Parks Canada plan to have over the next period of years the various different geographic ecosystems represented in their overall parks systems and we believe that Churchill offers very unique opportunities to do just that.

We have had more specifically for the Members' information an active committee involving senior people from within my department, the Parks Branch. We have had the good co-operation of local representative, which is always an important part.

The Member will appreciate that while it may be deemed a good idea on the part of the Parks planners or the distant planners in Ottawa, we are not talking about an absolute wilderness. We are talking about an area that has some aboriginal communities involved. We are talking about an area that has a struggling northern community involved, namely, the town of Churchill itself, and it is obvious that there has to be a considerable amount of understanding, appreciation, and in the final analysis support from our own local people who are currently residing in or about that area that has been potentially designated as a park.

I am advised by my Parks Director, Mr. Gordon Prouse, that the negotiations are going well. We are pleased that it has made the short list, if you like, in the Green Plan announcement this morning. We see that as a positive indication from the federal Government that we stand an excellent chance, if

we can get our negotiations in place to a point where we can formally request Canada to enter into serious negotiations for the establishment of Churchill as a new national park.

Mr. Edwards: Of course, the major goal in a park like that is to preserve and enhance the natural attributes of that area. I too am pleased and I am sure my friend in the other Opposition Party agrees that it is a positive move. It is good for Manitoba to have that federal commitment in the Churchill area.

Is there going to be any attempt to increase the accessibility of that area to tourists? It is not an area that is exactly on the beaten track, but I think many of us believe that it has enormous tourist potential which has not been fully exploited perhaps. I use exploited in a guided sense. I do not mean in any way to the desecration of the natural beauty of the area.

There is an interest in the international community, in the United States, and indeed within this province in the natural wilderness and beauty and the wildlife of that area. Is that a part of this package that the federal Government assists in developing an infrastructure to help us and the Tourism Department to bring resources to the Churchill area which, of course, has been hurting badly in the last number of years?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, I would believe that the acceptability of the whole proposal, firstly, to the local people involved and indeed to us as the provincial jurisdiction, would to a large extent be aided by the kind of potential benefits that we see generally ensuing from the creation of a national park. There is no question that Parks Canada has in the course of the last number of years created an enviable record and profile for being acknowledged as a highly desirable area for tourists to come and visit from around the world.

* (1500)

We have the opportunity with the uniqueness that Churchill park would develop. It is being conceived as a combination of a marine park as well, with the existence of the beluga whaling grounds in that area, along with the polar bear that, of course, are in and off the ice, and on the sea and on the land.

Parks Canada, some critics would say, is only restrictive in its care and concern for the preservation of whether it is the Arctic tundra or the actual species of wildlife, the polar bear and so forth involved, in terms of access to it by interested

visitors. I, for one, would have a pretty high level of confidence in that access to the area would be thought out very carefully. There are, of course, different adjacent developments that may well provide us with some indicators as to how that might happen. The continued development of the Nelson, for instance, into the next power site—I know that my colleague, the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger), has a reasonably accessible road to the Conawapa station that is getting very close to providing road access into that area that up to now has only, of course, been accessible by plane.

I would think that there will be a whole host of long negotiations that would begin to spell out the kinds of opportunities, the manner and way in which the area could be accessed, the manner and the way in which it could be accessed that would be acceptable to the standards that Parks Canada places and poses upon itself, which, as I said, in the main are adhered to a pretty high standard of environmental protection to the land itself that becomes part of the park and or to the natural resources in and around the newly created park.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, the Endangered Spaces campaign, which this Minister is no doubt familiar with, strikes me as something which we should perhaps touch on at this stage in that this branch talks about ecological reserves.

There was a recent letter from the Sierra Club which suggested that the Government of Manitoba, despite its spoken commitment, was not living up to those commitments with respect to the objectives of the Endangered Spaces campaign. Can the Minister give us an update as to Manitoba's progress to meet the goals set forward by that program? In particular, perhaps this new park is part of that agenda, I do not know. I wonder if the Minister could comment on our progress so far to reach the goals established under the Endangered Spaces Program?

Mr. Enns: I do not wish to enter into discussion or arguments with how a particular group, in this case the Sierra group, interprets our situation with respect to where we stand in meeting some of the objectives, objectives that the Members will be aware of, that we have embraced. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province has committed this Government in accepting the principle of the Endangered Spaces Program, and has done so in a very public way. I have instructed my departmental people, and principally our Parks people, to present

to me in the first instance, and then indeed I will be presenting them to Government, different ways that we can from our point of view meet this commitment.

I believe that in many ways it calls for a confirmation of certain lands that are currently set aside as to their designation, and it calls for us to examine most fully and completely the conditions, the criteria, that are set out by the organization in terms of what in effect qualifies under the Program of Endangered Spaces. As I understand it, it is not a simple matter of setting aside 12 percent of X number of acres. It is of greater importance that the kind and quality representative of what it is, the different spaces of land representing the different geography of our great and beautiful country, that is the heart and objective of this program.

It may be, when it comes out in the final wash, that we have more acres of a particular type to add to this program that adds to the national inventory of this program to which we as a nation are committed, but perhaps are short of some acres that are not that representative in our jurisdiction in our province. It is understandable, I think, and I do not pretend to be expert in this, but that an island in some parts of Canada, in the provinces of the Maritimes, cannot contribute their share of Arctic tundra land that we have, and we can, and vice versa.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

It will be a matter of the Parks department developing programs that, if need be, will find their way into legislation or into regulatory changes that will, in the course of the next few years, demonstrate the commitment that this Government, this Premier, and myself as Minister have towards this program.

Mr. Edwards: I see that one of the expected results of this branch is that a Crown land policy and procedures manual is developed. Specifically on that issue, what is the policy of the department with respect to offering cottage properties for sale each year. We see that come up at least once a year, and that certain properties are allocated. How is that decision made as to what properties are going to be allowed to be developed with respect to waterfront as well as non-waterfront?

* (1510)

Mr. Enns: There are different categories of Crown lands, of course. We do not offer additional lots, nor cottaging, nor sale of Crown lots in provincial parks, which is a form of Crown lands. We still have currently some inventory of subdivided land

available for cottaging opportunities within the Crown Lands branch on Crown land that is available to people now if they come to us, and some are sold. We have more aggressively, perhaps in the last few years, agreed to make recreational land available for development, but we foresee that this will be done essentially by the private sector in adhering to the conditions laid down by the Crown with respect to the kind of development, the kind of land use that would be permitted in a given area.

There have been several applications and several contracts entered into with private developers by our Crown Lands branch. They have varied from an outright sale, or more frequently an operator has entered into a lease with the department and we have agreed to that lease with an option to purchase, provided that the developer conforms to the conditions he proposed at the time the lease was entered into.

We, on some occasions, ask for a deposit to be put down as a measure of good faith. In all circumstances the lease is for a precise period, not a long period, three to five years, so that it is not possible for a person, for instance, to tie up a piece of recreational Crown land for a long period of time in the hope that somewhere down the line an opportunity will come to him.

We are really only interested in making these arrangements with somebody that comes to us with a reasonably sound proposal for either a subdivision, cottage development, or in some cases a combination of some additional recreational facilities. I think we have entered into an arrangement in the Lac du Bonnet area with somebody who has a proposal with respect to a combination of a golf course along with a fairly major subdivision of cottaging opportunities. Generally speaking then, those are the three categories.

We do not want to make any further cottaging sale arrangements of Crown lands in our provincial parks systems. We have a decreasing inventory of some cottage sites, subdivided land available as of now. Usually what happens is the person is very site specific. He wants a cottage lot in a particular area. What we are saying to him—if he can, together with somebody else perhaps, find a developer who is prepared to expend the necessary development money in developing a recreational area, provided it meets the other criteria of the land classification people, that group we were talking about a little while ago—that land has been so identified by our

resource group, that land is classified for that kind of use.

Mr. Edwards: Did the department do an environmental impact report on the proposed Conawapa project?

Mr. Enns: I am sorry, I missed the first part of the question.

Mr. Edwards: I see at the bottom here, another expected result is that this branch will do environmental impact reports, or participate in them. Did the department do an environmental impact report with respect to the proposed Conawapa Hydro project?

Mr. Enns: No, Mr. Acting Chairman, to answer the Honourable Member for St. James directly, what our department is called upon to do, we find ourselves providing the resource back-up material, if you like, for our sister department, the Department of Environment and for other departments, for Hydro, for agencies of Government that are contemplating or that are in fact the proponents of the project. We are not the proponents of the Conawapa project, as such. We have been asked by different departments to supply resource information for them.

Specifically, for instance, we have done and continue to do considerable work through our Fisheries branch with respect to potential impacts of any kind of development on the fisheries in that portion of the Nelson River. That information is either purchased from us, if it is an outside agency like Manitoba Hydro, or is provided to the Department of Environment if they, in their preparing for a review process, need specific information that my department has expertise in providing.

Mr. Edwards: In keeping with that, did the department sell any such information, or give any such information, to any of the parties involved in the Rafferty-Alameda project?

Mr. Enns: I may want to retract the word "sell." It is not a bad word, really. What I mean by that is that, for instance, more specifically Manitoba Hydro, in its preparation for its lengthy comprehensive hearings that they know they will do, wanted some specific resource information relative to the fisheries in the Nelson River. They contracted from our department, our Fisheries branch, the necessary expertise. We made an arrangement whereby we had some people doing extensive fisheries investigation. In effect, Manitoba Hydro rebated the department for

the work that was done specifically for them, through the department.

With respect to the Rafferty-Alameda, firstly of course, the Honourable Member has asked me of a situation that may or may not have occurred prior to my becoming the Minister of this department. We have an ongoing involvement in the Rafferty-Alameda through the one person within the branch, Mr. Bob Clarkson, who is used by the department to monitor, to take part in various committees, wherever we have international water concerns. He is currently in Washington, for instance, with respect to keeping an ever watchful eye on whatever may or may not develop on the Garrison, and there are some developments on the Garrison which bear watching at this time.

Mr. Clarkson is also our designated person who will be sitting on the three-party committee representing Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Manitoba that will regulate the Rafferty-Alameda dam to some extent in terms of ensuring that Manitoba's interests are at the table, that determines just how that facility will be operated, just as we are currently meeting presently with our American friends who operate the Darlingford dam in North Dakota. It is not an ongoing thing, but periodically when we wish for a change, we want the Americans to release a bit more water down the Darlingford structure, this is the vehicle that is used. So to this extent we are involved in the Rafferty-Alameda project.

I can further say and I am so advised that we have of course, as a branch, particularly in the Water Resources end of it, had an ongoing involvement in data collection involving the entire Souris River basin. As such, we have shared our information, as Saskatchewan has shared with us.

There is a reasonably close association involving the prairie provinces in these kind of matters. There are treaties for instance that regulate the amount of water that each provincial jurisdiction has to pass through across the provincial borders, not just on the Souris but on such major rivers such as the Saskatchewan, which have a serious impact for us and for our hydro resources in the North. We are governed by these treaties.

We have a long association of different kinds of prairie water committees that sit, meet and discuss these issues. As such, we would have provided to the planners of the Rafferty-Alameda project the

data that we over the years have collected on the Souris River basin.

* (1520)

Mr. Edwards: Did the department draw a conclusion about the potential effect of the Rafferty-Alameda project, specifically whether or not there is a potential for downstream hazardous effects in Manitoba?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Chairman, I am aware that it has become a much more sophisticated question as to what constitutes a disbenefit and what constitutes a benefit. I suppose as a cattle rancher, I can quickly assess a reservoir of water as being beneficial to a point of it is there, and it serves a beneficial purpose to me as an immediate benefit in the provision of needed additional water supplies for that kind of an agricultural operation.

I am not unmindful, however, that in a more sophisticated way, one has to examine what qualitative changes that might occur with respect to the quality of the water, both with the new reservoir or downstream from the changed regime which that kind of an artificial manipulation of water entails. I think there is no point in being self-critical about the fact; we begin with a situation on Manitoba's side of the Souris River. As my friend, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), who resides in that area, describes it, the trouble with the Souris is that it is—how did he say it?—too thick to drink and too thin to plow, or something like that, in too many periods of its time.

When we talk of water quality, we have very little bench mark information to begin with because of these tremendous varying degrees from flood stage to drought conditions in the water. We do not have a situation that has a stable supply of water there, that over a number of years quality standards have been monitored, have been developed, and from which we can in coming years, after the downstream effects of Rafferty-Alameda are in place, measure in the way that the Member suggests.

What we are immediately concerned about—and we are being satisfied both by the type of international control that can be brought to bear and does in fact control the cross-boundary flows of the Souris River water because of its international implications—that we will get adequate supplies of water commensurate with what we believe has been the norm, if you like. There have been no real conclusions that my branch has available to them

with respect to quality or perceived changes in quality.

Quite frankly, I look to our presence on that board and our active presence with the department of Water Resources, that we will as part of our natural responsibilities much as it is the responsibility, although they sometimes overlap, of the Department of Environment—that we may have to come to terms with whether I send somebody from Mr. Whitney's shop out to test the water on Tuesday, and Mr. Cummings sends somebody from his shop to test the water on Thursday in succeeding years.

There no doubt will be a monitoring process set up to keep us informed as to what is happening to the quality of the water that is coming downstream after the impoundment of the water is in place, after the dam is functioning. I am satisfied that written into the kind of agreement, that we have an opportunity at least—I cannot foresee that we will succeed—to do several things.

We will perhaps be able to influence how that dam is operated that is favourable to us, if we are in an emergency situation and we require some additional waters to help us out through a difficult period, that we can influence our partners on that board to help just as we do that now. We have a situation virtually every other year, particularly in these drought years on one of these dams—is it on the Pipestone stream?—where we request the Saskatchewan Government, at the request of our people on this side of the border. It is the Moosomin dam where, generally speaking, in late August or early September we get a request through Mr. Whitney's shop that we make representation to the Government of Saskatchewan, would they allow additional waters over to replenish some stocks prior to freeze-up, particularly as it is again cattle country and enables dugouts and some restocking of water reservoirs in that area. Generally speaking, they comply if they can do it. Likewise, I would expect that kind of co-operation to develop over the years with the Rafferty-Alameda.

In addition to that, I think both from the American side, which is also downstream from Rafferty-Alameda, and ourselves, if we are concerned five or eight or ten years from now that we are noticing certain undesirable elements that are affecting the water quality, that they call for perhaps a stiffer regime of control, whether it is the use of agricultural pesticides or agricultural fertilizers within the drainage basin of the upper

sources, the collection sources that fill the reservoir behind the Rafferty-Alameda.

They may well be the kinds of things that have to be worked out between the three co-operating jurisdictions. That board is in place because it is not just our interests that are at stake here. The North Dakotans have behind their Darlingford structure a fairly substantial wildlife refuge involved that is very near and dear to them. They are not going to want to see any bad effects affect that. You can expect the same people, whether it is the Sierra Club or the Audubon club or others to make their voices known.

I am satisfied with, although I do not have—this is part of the problem in some of these environmental questions. We are often being kind of challenged to have every base covered, and quite frankly one does not always know what balls are being hit or what bases there are that need to be covered. There is a measure of common sense that has to apply.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it simply strikes me, and I do not want to belabour this issue because we have been through it with the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), but there are four jurisdictions involved in the Rafferty-Alameda project, Saskatchewan, United States, Manitoba and the federal jurisdiction by virtue of the fact that at least two provinces were involved. Of those four jurisdictions, Saskatchewan purported to do an environmental review, the U.S. Corps of Engineers did an environmental review, the federal Government of Canada purported to do an environmental review in the end. Manitoba was the only jurisdiction that did not undertake an environmental review process.

* (1530)

Does the Minister of Natural Resources not feel, given what he has already said and I accept the difficulty that is being imposed in this day and age on this type of project on all jurisdictions, that we who suffer or benefit from the ultimate downstream effects, and I am willing to accept either, should have done our own environmental assessment? From a Natural Resources point of view, I would think that would be particularly important to do.

There is no question, water quality may be improved, water quantity may be improved. I do not say that is not necessarily true. What I say is, until we know that, we should not be lying idly by. Now we are participating in a committee, but the fact is the decisions are being made by persons other than

us. The studies which are saying we are going to benefit are being done by people other than us who have a vested interest in our co-operation. That worries me. Does the Minister not think that we should not have done our own environmental assessment of some sort before with complicity going along with the stated intention of the Premier of Saskatchewan to build this dam whatever the cost, politically or otherwise?

Mr. Enns: I am not one for avoiding my fair share of responsibility for anything that transpires during the course of my administration of the department, but the simple fact of the matter is that the initial commitment, the initial decisions, with respect to Rafferty-Alameda were made in 1985. By the time this little minister came into the current responsibility, the fundamental decisions had long been made.

Manitoba did—I say that to the benefit of the previous administration—participate fully in the international agreements that were important to us and that developed into the participation that I described a moment ago of Manitoba. We have a full seat around the committee table, a table that consists of three principal actors: Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Manitoba. That was assured for Manitobans by the by the previous administration.

You are suggesting—and I will not quarrel with the Honourable Member for St. James—that we ought to have at that same time entered into and began environmental assessment studies with respect to our portion of the river. I can only say that I think the Honourable Member reflects the heightened kind of concern that he mentioned in his opening few remarks that is increasing year by year, virtually.

It obviously was not there, or the need was not felt to be there, in '85. I must say, I have some empathy for that decision by the previous administration. I personally believe that, inasmuch as there was no physical disruption within the jurisdiction of Manitoba—we were not building a dam, we were not creating a reservoir, we were not expropriating land—we were party, though, to international discussions that kept assuring us that we would be no worse off with respect to water flows. Well, -(interjection)- and studies were being done. Particularly speaking for my Government, we have enough Members of my Government, notably, as I said before, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), who are only too well aware of the shortfall of water in the Souris River and who quite frankly

believe and welcome the opportunity that we see in a more controlled flow.

It is possible in this circumstance to accept less water, but if we can have it at a time we want it and need it, it ends up being a net benefit to Manitoba.

The Souris River far too often whooshes 80 percent of its total capacity through in two short weeks in spring, and then for the rest of the time it is thick, gooey mud that you cannot plow properly. Is that not right?

An Honourable Member: Too thick to drink but not thick enough to plow.

Mr. Enns: There it is—too thick to drink and not thick enough to plow.

It is the opinion of some of our people and our experts that even accepting what could be demonstrated, an overall reduction in the amount of water, need not be a disbenefit to Manitoba, if we can get an assured steady flow of what is available.

I am not satisfying the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). The fact of the matter is an environmental assessment study was not done at that time, and I have to leave it at that.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not—(interjection)—I feel obliged, given the comments across the floor from the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), a former Cabinet Minister in the former administration, to remind him of the, I think, very enlightening words of the New Democrat M.P. for Transcona, Mr. Blaikie. He set a new standard really in candidness I believe for elected politicians, did a fine job some weeks ago illustrating the absolute incompetence of the prior NDP administration in this province and did not seek to try and explain how they let the people of this province down on the Rafferty-Alameda issue.

I certainly appreciated that honesty on his part, which he reflected in the committee stage in the House of Commons. I do not have the exact words here, or I would read them into the record for the edification of the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). I should have them, and I regret I do not. I have read them into the record, however, on occasion. If the Member for Dauphin looks back, I am sure he will be able to find them.

The Member for Transcona did us all, I think, a service by bringing that to light. However, I do think that this Government as well could have acted and did not.

Moving beyond the Rafferty-Alameda issue, the Minister indicated that there are developments worth monitoring on the Garrison project. Can he tell us what those developments are?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Chairman, our friends in North Dakota continue to wish to proceed with further expansion of the project that has become internationally famous as the Garrison project.

They are currently seeking permission to build a 22-mile channel called the Sykeston Canal from the McCluskey Canal to an area that will eventually go into the Cheyenne River.

We have some concerns about that, because it is 22 miles of channel that is within the Hudson Bay river basin, from both the fact that it is, after all, to be transporting Missouri River basin water through that channel. There can be mechanical failures, difficulties. There is always the problem of the bucket transfer, bait transfer, that concerns our fisheries people even though I have to report that the Honourable Member may or may not be aware that these species of rainbow smelt have been located in our lakes, here in Lake Winnipeg, in this past summer. That was one of the species that was of particular concern to us.

What Mr. Clarkson is currently doing—he again is serving on that committee more so in a monitoring role to make sure that we are not surprised at some action. As a matter of comfort, President Bush has made some rather strong statements and declined to sign additional expropriation monies in the American Government. Dreams die slowly, I say to the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). The forces behind the Garrison project are powerful and strongly held by the proponents in the State of North Dakota. We will have to continue watching that from time to time to ensure we are kept abreast of what is happening.

* (1540)

Mr. Edwards: Is our federal Government involved with us in that monitoring and the ultimate lobbying which may be necessary to ensure that our rights are protected?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Chairman, our federal Government has always been extremely supportive of Manitoba's concerns. This is certainly true of the previous Liberal administration. This is a matter that spans some decades, as the Honourable Members will be aware of. I want to say that I have and certainly want to continue that tradition. I suppose

that, although a potentially high controversial issue in the environmental field, controversial international field in terms of our relations with the Americans on this subject matter, from the very outset dates back to Premier Schreyer's days to the Lyon administration days through the Pawley administration days, we have managed, in a very commendable way, to keep partisan politics at bay on this issue and have acted in an all-Party way.

We felt when it was necessary to send representations directly from this House, they were always done on an all-Party basis. Our federal Government shared on that basis, sending federal Ministers and Members from both sides of the House to lobby and to present Canada's and essentially Manitoba's point of view in Washington on these issues. I think part of that was possible by being absolutely forthright and open with respect to information regarding Garrison whenever there were any new changes that concerned Manitoba.

We would set up a Garrison information office in this building that all Members of the House, Opposition, Government, media and interests groups would have access to, so that there was a very deliberate attempt on the part of whoever was in Government, whoever was the Minister at the time, to make that information wholly available.

I attribute that commitment to information sharing very much to the fact that we have kept it out of the partisan political battlefield, if you like. Should there be any information that is new, that is changing, I certainly will undertake to Honourable Members opposite that upon Mr. Clarkson's return from his attendance of this committee, that I referred to just a moment ago, that I would be more than willing to share that with Honourable Members opposite.

Mr. Plohan: Mr. Acting Chair, I want to just follow up briefly. I was in a conversation and did not hear all of the Member for St. James' (Mr. Edwards) comments regarding the actions taken with regard to Rafferty-Alameda. Of course, the Hansard will come out in about two or three weeks, probably well after Christmas, and the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), at that time, will not even be interested in reading it.

So we have to clarify it at this time for his edification, as well as my own, and that is the issue of an environmental study.

I think the Minister did a pretty good job of putting in perspective why it was not a need whether he

expressed agreement or not, whether he went that far in his statement to the fact that there was no environmental study done at that time by Manitoba or not. The fact is he put in perspective the fact that there were other jurisdictions who were undertaking to provide Manitoba with certain information about the impact on the quality and quantity of water as a result of any construction that would take place in the future and was not taking place at that time.

We were assured at that time, and the letters on record show clearly—I do not know if the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has bothered to read those letters as well as he has read the transcripts from the Member for Transcona, the Member of Parliament, who made some comments about the previous Government's record on this issue, I might add, in the absence of some of the facts. He subsequently was given those facts and retracted some of the statements, but the Member for St. James has not referenced those in his comments.

The fact is at that time the letters demonstrate that the federal Government gave assurances to the Government, to the provincial Government, our Government at the time, that Manitoba's interests would be protected both from External Affairs Minister Clark and Environmental Minister McMillan at that time.

Those letters gave us assurances that there would be no licence granted on the project until such time as all the concerns raised by Manitoba were addressed.

Initially, we had to take that at its value, face value. The assurances were there and obviously if the licences were granted, if the questions were not answered to our satisfaction, we would have taken this one step further and escalated the issue with the Government of Saskatchewan and with North Dakota.

The Army Corps of Engineers was supposed to be providing us with the information since the water flows from North Dakota into Manitoba. On that basis, we were to evaluate as a result of the information provided and determine where there were concerns. I was by no means at ease with this issue. We established a committee that was made up of members from the Department of Natural Resources as well as the Environment and Executive Council, I believe, to monitor developments of Rafferty-Alameda, which was also included. As I mentioned for the Minister of

Consumer Affairs, there was representation from the Environment, senior people on that committee to form the working group that would monitor this issue.

Of course, Mr. Clarkson was assigned the task with his experience gathered through his involvement with Garrison, the task of also heading up this team on behalf of Manitoba and with regard to Rafferty-Alameda. This was all done in late 1987 and early '88 prior to any licence being issued and any construction work being undertaken by the Province of Manitoba.

It is important to put this in context, and I wanted to make those comments, because I felt at the time uneasy about the commitment of Saskatchewan and the federal Government to Manitoba's interest, but I had assurances. Until such action was taken that demonstrated that they were not going to act in Manitoba's best interests, we had to accept what they were saying. There was no other action that would show that, in fact, things would develop differently until the actions were taken. Then we were prepared to escalate this in every way possible if Manitoba's interests were not protected.

As history intervened with the election, we were not able to demonstrate that we would have taken the action at the highest level and very aggressively on behalf of Manitoba.

* (1550)

I want to ask the Minister a couple of questions regarding a couple of other issues that are raised in resource integration. One of them deals with the issue of Sustainable Development Strategy as outlined in the Supplementary Estimates. Can the Minister provide us with the status of the development of a sustainable development strategy? What is his department's involvement—I would take it this is an interdepartmental initiative, and who is heading it up, and what is the role of his department? Does he have a report that he could provide us, whether it be an interim report or an interim strategy or a final strategy that he could share with the House, and with the Members of the Legislature?

Mr. Enns: I can share with the Honourable Member the fact that we have what we refer to as a Sustainable Development Unit. It is a relatively small unit of people that is chaired or under the direction of one Robert Sopuck. Although attached to my department, salarywise, it is really an

interagency department operating fairly directly out of the Premier's Office and the senior policy branch of Government. Mr. Acting Chairman, there is no report as yet available. I suspect there may well be one coming in the future. This is all relatively new, of course.

The Honourable Member may wish to refer to page 190 of the Supplementary Information book for some further information with respect to this unit. Let me also say that in the overall development of Sustainable Development Strategy we are systematically approaching the different areas of concern. My predecessor was involved in an intensive set of public hearings that spanned the length and breadth of this province with respect to water resources. That has developed into a number of principles that have been adopted for the sustainable use, continued use and development of our water resources, that are now in the process of being implemented into our approach, into our strategy that will materially affect the conduct of how Mr. Whitney, Mr. Mital, and others conduct themselves with respect to the development and anything they do with our water resources. We are just in that process with respect to forestry resources.

It is a format that we intend to follow through on a number of different resource sector areas, a series of public hearings. A format is developed, the kind of people are found to chair and to conduct a series of public meetings in different parts of the province. Various interested groups, those involved directly in the forestry industry, forestry business, those who view forestry matters more from a recreational point of view, parks planners, parks people, individuals are invited and have come to these meetings.

These meetings have been held both in the city and different parts of the province, and a collation of all that information is then put together, and the Sustainable Development Unit processes this. Out of that will come a set of principles to guide us in the development of future forest strategy.

I am told, I believe, the next resource that is being considered is the mining industry, if I am correct. I am looking for some acknowledgment from my officials, and I am told that is correct. In this way we hope to have in such fundamental areas of agriculture, soil and water conservation, forestry, the kind of opportunity for a fairly thorough grass-roots review of what it is that Manitobans in the 1990s want their Governments to do with

respect to the management of resources brought together into a common theme of, if these resources are to be extracted, that they be done so in a sustainable way. The various departments, functional line departments like mine and others, begin to implement and build these right into their program.

Mr. Acting Chairman, I take this opportunity to speak to a matter that I know the Honourable Member is more than familiar with. It is precisely this kind of integrated resource approach that is being developed with respect to an area that is near and dear to the heart of the Honourable Member. I refer to Lake Dauphin and the surrounding basin that we have seen for these 20, 30, 40 years steadily decreasing in terms of quality of the lake, quality of the recreational opportunities, qualities of the resource extraction available from that lake as a result of poor land husbandry, of poor agricultural practices, of poor—a lot of conditions that have led to the deterioration of what we refer to as Lake Dauphin and surrounding basin area.

We are hopefully—and I must say I have appreciated the Honourable Member's support for what this department, what this Government is attempting to do. Again, we are not going to resolve an issue that took 40 years to create in a few short years, but perhaps in 10 years—as I told that well-attended meeting which included the Honourable Member, that it is my hope that in 10 years time a future Minister of Natural Resources will be able to stand up to a similar audience and acknowledge that some considerable progress has been made. It is the application of various programs in an integrated way: of land management, of soil management, of water management and then eventually of the resource management with respect to, if we have improved the water quality in the lake, what we can do in terms of the fisheries on Lake Dauphin.

We can then consider raising the level of the lake perhaps, as has been suggested by a number of people around that area. That means that we will likely create a substantial area of wetlands, and that means that we have to look at the other program that I mentioned in the introduction, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan program, to help us purchase those wetlands from the farmers. It comes together like a ring.

Mr. Acting Chairman, should it be my good fortune to be that Minister 10 or 20 years from now to be

able to make that speech in Dauphin, then I will be happy to do that.

Mr. Plohma: Mr. Acting Chairman, we are getting into a lot of areas here. I guess we could discuss the whole department right here and then just pass it later on.

I was intending to raise the issue of Lake Dauphin in Water Resources so as not to deviate from some of the issues that I wanted to raise at this point in time. The Minister has very skillfully got us onto another issue so that I perhaps will leave some of the other ones around that he is not as familiar with, leave them alone, but I will get back to them.

I just want to indicate that some of the vision that the Minister has enunciated here on Dauphin Lake has been the kind of vision that I felt we were moving toward, realizing at the time that I had the opportunity for the brief interlude in time to be Minister of Natural Resources along with many others over a period of years.

I at that time was having an interesting discussion with the staff because it seemed that they had to train and break in a new Minister every few months, and this continued even with this Government with the short period of the previous Minister.

Now that the present Minister has been in his portfolio for, what is it now? Two years almost, a year and a half. I think he is starting to become a seasoned veteran in this portfolio, of course, having been a seasoned veteran of the Legislature many years prior to that.

* (1600)

I would want to just indicate that, yes, I think that, depending on the degree of action that takes place on Dauphin Lake, the framework and the basis for action has been laid, it was with the advisory committee and the assignment of staff to support their work, I think that there is a future on that project depending on how much financial resources are allocated in the future. A lot of interest may be lost if it is just planning, and talking and not action.

There is an opportunity for the Minister to access many other dollars from outside sources, and I think that is the beauty of this kind of a project because it involves so many other organizations and potential contributors of financial resources.

I think that we will obviously be watching this closely and intervening with the Minister from time to time and supporting any action that is taken

toward reviving the lake as a resource that it once was many years ago.

As a matter of fact, Lake Dauphin was one of the most productive lakes in the province, if not in western Canada or in Canada, in terms of the yield, the number of pounds of fish that were harvested from it per square mile of water. Those are some facts that lead us all to have some hope for the future.

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) is making some comments from his seat—(interjection)—no, I do not. The Minister is assuming that I have a cabin on Lake Dauphin. I do not have to have one there to know about the problems. It does help though when you actually live and experience some of the situations first-hand to get a better grasp of the issues, but I have talked with many people about this issue.

I would want to ask the Minister about the statement dealing with the Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit. I see no SYs allocated to it, so I guess these are people who also do other things that are included as the unit. Maybe the Minister can clarify that.

He did indicate in his Supplementary Information that there will be a sustainable development final document dealing with the public sector by April 1991. Is that still the projected timetable? Could the Minister indicate—it is a final document—will that document be made public, and what is the timetable for the private sector if there is one for a similar document on sustainable development?

(Madam Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, the staff complements, to answer the Honourable Member's question, are not available in any—my information is that they are at this point found in several different departments. As I mentioned initially, it is a relatively small unit comprising of I believe no more than six or seven, but at the outset, six maybe seven with Mr. Sopuck acting as director. I would—(interjection)—pardon? Mr. Bob—Robert Sopuck, fine gentlemen, outstanding gentlemen. He will have the opportunity, no doubt, to respond to the Honourable Member's question at some point in time.

The subject matter that is worth bringing in at this point in the debate—this unit works very largely with and receives direction from the Round Table. The Round Table in Manitoba—I must say, and it comes from my relatively brief experience of dealing with

other Ministers at different provincial conferences meeting with forestry Ministers, not so long ago, wildlife ministries, it is not for me to pass judgment as to what degree or to what extent the introduction of round tables as kind of a senate of environmental and sustainable development concerns across this nation, which my understanding is being adopted across this nation. The national round table, my understanding, most provinces have instituted them and are off and running. My limited experience would lead me to believe that in Manitoba, by far, we have really taken a lead role in this area. It is the Round Table that, for instance, will give direction to the Sustainable Development Unit as to how and by what deadline it reaches out into the private sector which the Honourable Member referred to a moment ago. It is the Round Table to which the Sustainable Development Unit reports with respect to the targeting of dates, the April 1 publication of its report.

I am a member of the Round Table. I am aware that we have set into place a process whereby we will be searching out and acknowledging private sector activity that embraces in a laudable, acceptable manner, the principles of sustainable development of an environmentally sensitive way of doing things.

We have worked out a series of awards and recognitions that will be made to different types of organizations and individuals both in the public and the private sector that meet these standards. In the past year, a considerable time has been taken up by the Round Table and by the staff to do precisely this.

We have visited, on site, different operations that have been commended to us by staff research as being examples of the kind of activity that ought to be encouraged and ought to be recognized in some way by Government for proceeding in an environmentally friendly way, in their continued economic activity in the province.

So we hope to have in place, on or about April 1, a process that will become, hopefully, an annual event, a recognition that will be sought after by business both in the public and the private sector as being a desirable designation, as being environmentally friendly, as being cognizant of the concerns that all of us ought to have about our environment and still manage to do something that provides economic activity in the province and provides for the wealth-generation that is so important to this province.

That is a whole area of work that is largely the realm of the Round Table. The kind of support staff, if you like, or units of a good portion of the Sustainable Development Unit, works in conjunction with the Round Table. The Round Table is chaired by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and has four or five of my colleagues, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst), myself, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) on it, so it is a fairly heavy Cabinet-represented committee.

It is through the development of the sustainable development principles and policies that are accepted at the Round Table, which get imposed or get recommended to the various departments after having first received Cabinet approval, that a proposal comes from the Round Table that is applicable to the affairs of a Government. It is adopted by Cabinet and then departments are asked to adhere to those newly-adopted principles or guidelines.

* (1610)

Mr. Plozman: Madam Chairperson, the Minister is obviously very supportive and high on the concept of round tables. He has talked about how other provinces have also initiated the Round Table and the environment.

This came about, as the Minister may recall—and it is worth mentioning for the record—as a result of the Council of Environment Ministers that was chaired by the Minister from Manitoba, the former Minister, Gerald Lecuyer. At that time, as a result of the work that they did and the report that they issued, the Round Table was recommended as a way to deal with environmental issues in the province.

Of course, we are anxious to see how it is, in fact, working at this time. The Minister has outlined that he believes it is serving a very worthwhile function in its present form. We would want to see what comes out of this, and certainly we would like to see the reports that are developed on Sustainable Development Strategy.

I asked the Minister whether this was to be a public report that would be issued and tabled in this Legislature. Perhaps he could answer that—he got away from that original question I had—and whether he could shed some light on that for me.

Also, if he can remember to deal with the issue of the tabling of a report or information to us here, but also dealing with the issue of another question I wanted to ask him with regard to the land use policies that are currently in place. The Minister talks about water, forestry, mining and so on under the Sustainable Development Strategy. Is it correct to assume that the current land use policies will all be integrated into this Sustainable Development Strategy as well?

Mr. Enns: To answer the Honourable Member's question with respect to tabling of reports to the House, I would venture to say that the reports of this kind would be tabled in the House as a matter of course. I would also quickly add that the Premier takes a very direct and personal interest in this matter, and it would likely be his desire to do so as chairman of the Round Table or simply from Executive Council, because while the Sustainable Development Unit is partially housed in my department—it is because they want our money, John. It is one of these intergovernmental agencies that answers more specifically to the Round Table, which in turn is chaired by the Premier, so I cannot presume to answer on that score.

The Honourable Member asks with respect to land use policies—the land use criteria, conditions, as set down from time to time that govern land use in this province change from time to time. They are a fairly extended and complicated procedure that come to bear with respect to land use. There are numerous jurisdictions that have an interest, whose interests have to be heard prior to decisions made with respect to allocation of land or allocation to a particular use.

We have continued, what the Honourable Member will recall, with the land classification process that is in place, which essentially deals with 80 percent or 90 percent of the decisions with respect to land use. Those that are appealed, and there is an appeal process, will come to a further committee, the Provincial Land Use planning group, the committee known as PLUC.

The hope would be, I think, or the intention would be, that the kind of policies that result, the kind of principles that come out of the kind of hearings and determinations that I referred to earlier, the land and water use hearings that lead to the adoption of the Department of Agriculture, my department, of certain land and water policies as appropriate for the direction of sustainable development that we have

all been asked to adhere to, those principles would reflect in the decisions that the senior planners apply to their decision with respect to an allocation of a particular use for a land.

In other words, if a request came in for a specific type of resource extraction from a piece of land, does it meet, the kind of adhered to, the principles that have been developed under the forced strategy meetings that are currently under way that will eventually come to the adaptation by Forestry branch, my department, of certain practices as fundamental principles of acceptable behaviour, if you like, and if that developer, or something like that, makes application to harvest timber or to do something with that resource, that it has to meet these criteria. I think that will be a natural evolution of our resource planners in the different disciplines acceptable and firm principles are first of all worked at by the different branches, by the departments, and then in the final analysis approved by Cabinet.

This is the final step that the department—you know, a set of principles will be approved by Cabinet, which then become the policy of the day.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, in the interest of time, I would move on to other issues. That is certainly an issue that could be discussed in depth perhaps for many hours in Estimates.

However, because of the time and fact that our critic has a number of questions as well, I wanted to just ask the Minister whether he could, in the interest of time, table with us a copy of all of the recent contract proposals with the private sector for development of recreational locations, parks, whatever they might be, that are currently ongoing in the department or over the past year for example? Does the Minister have a list of some of the locations that have been contracted out to the private sector, and the functions that have been contracted out? The Minister talked earlier about this, and he said that they have several contracts with the public sector for operation of Crown lands, parks, recreation, et cetera, and I recall that we had—and he mentioned lease and sales, as long as they adhere to certain guidelines.

I would indicate to the Minister, for example, in 1987, Bakers Lake, Bakers Narrows, there was a park there that we had contracted out and the private developer—I do not know how that has gone since that time, but that was one initiative we took. I am not asking the Minister to divulge all of the

details of the financial arrangement with the private contractor if we can call him or her that. I am saying I would like to get a list of the locations and the type of function that they are carrying out and that the Minister has entered into and is in the stage of entering into at the present time.

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, I think the information the Honourable Member requests is certainly available. It would take a bit of time to put that together. I remind the Honourable Member, of course, that kind of information is available to him through other means such as an Address for Papers and Order for Return in the House.

I simply ask, and he alluded to it himself, that in some instances there are development proposals attached to the lease, and I think there would be some question of confidentiality that he would appreciate. It would be questionable whether it would be appropriate to release that kind of information, but certainly in terms of who and what arrangements, what time frame has been entered with whom, that could be done. It will take a bit of time, and I undertake to provide that information to the Honourable Member.

* (1620)

Mr. Plohman: I appreciate the undertaking to provide that information. I know that his colleague, the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger), for example, regularly provides that kind of information once it has been put together by the department.

We are certainly not asking for any confidential information, but it would be useful to get a better idea of how extensive this is at the present time and the kinds of locations and activities that are being undertaken by the private sector, I might add in many cases perhaps to a much greater service to the public than the department is able to carry out because of the limited resources that are available for this kind of thing.

I understand that in some instances the services are just not being provided because we do not have the dollars to develop. It was a similar case when we were in Government. I know the Minister has alluded to that when he made his opening remarks that the department has had to live within a rather restricted budget over the years and continues to do so.

I would just like to have a better idea from the Minister as to the extent of this practice and what types of services and locations, and if he wants to

deal with those that have already been engaged in, rather than those that are in the process to protect the confidentiality of any business arrangements that are currently being negotiated. That is perfectly acceptable to us. If he would give us that commitment to do that as quickly as possible, we would appreciate that.

As well, I wanted to ask one more question before I turn the floor over to other critics, and that is The Endangered Species Act that has been put in place. Is the Ecological Reserves board serving the function of the Endangered Species board as well or is there going to be a separate group put in place, or has there been? What is the status of that?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, there will be a separate board as called for under The Endangered Species Act. I am advised that board will be appointed very shortly. It has taken some time to sort out the kind of persons that would be acceptable to serve on that board. It calls for assuring that a relatively high degree of expertise and professional background on that board, but I am advised by one Grant Baker—a fine, upstanding young gentleman who provides me service in the department from time to time—that board is about to be announced in the next very short period of time.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, I am familiar with the individual named. I understand that he has been delegated to undertake the initiative to get this board in place. Is that correct? He is doing the research on the various people at the present time and bringing it forward to the Minister, I would think. In that regard, why did the Minister—(interjection)—Yes, I will give you some names to give to Grant.

Can the Minister indicate why he did not go with largely the same people? Will there be any overlap? I know that they had indicated, the Ecological Reserves board, that they would be prepared to take on this function. Obviously, very competent people are involved with a great deal of expertise in the area of ecological reserves. Perhaps the overlap there would have been natural. He could have had basically the same board, only that it would be called the Endangered Species board or whatever the name is for this Act, and it would be called the Ecological Reserves board for the other Act.

Mr. Enns: I am always prepared to accept counsel from the Honourable Members opposite. The Act, though, specifically calls for establishment of a board. I think the Honourable Member will certainly

agree with me that there is an abundance of competent people to choose from and who would be prepared to serve on that kind of a board. If time, indeed, demonstrates to Government that perhaps a consolidation of the activities of the two Acts under one board is deemed desirable, that can always be looked at on some future date.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I just wanted to clarify some of the statements and elaborate on some of the statements I had made earlier about Rafferty-Alameda.

The Member for Dauphin, a former Minister, took some umbrage with some of the comments I made, and I think showed some sensitivity on this issue which I completely understand given his role in the prior administration. To be perfectly—

Mr. Plohman: I will just clarify this for you. To be clarified for the record, nothing more needed to be said.

Mr. Edwards: Well, the Member for Dauphin says he clarified it for the record. I appreciate his attempt to exonerate his actions. I do, however, want to support some of the allegations which I have made. I did not make them frivolously, and I do not think that they can be made better than by the federal New Democrat Member for Transcona. Mr. Blaikie said on October 16, 1990: "But the fact remains that I have no desire to defend the passivity with which this issue was dealt by the NDP Government of that time. It was far too passive on a variety of environmental issues."

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, I was not going to rise on a point of order, but since you have recognized me anyway—I was just about to exchange some of my books—I would point out that this is not dealing with the Minister's Estimates in any shape or form. You might want to call the Member to order in that regard, because he is not dealing with a Member of this Legislature in terms of the remarks made nor is he dealing with the issues that we are here to discuss with the Minister. He is discussing some actions of a Member of Parliament who has nothing to do with the actions of this Minister. That is what he is here to answer for.

Mr. Edwards: The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) only wishes these comments were not relevant. We can all learn from the gross failures of the New Democratic Party.

Madam Chairman: The Honourable Member for Dauphin did not have a point of order. It was a dispute over facts.

* * *

Mr. Edwards: For his own edification, as well as for the other Members of his Party whom, I think, will also learn—and I think this Minister can learn, should he ever be so unfortunate as to have a colleague at another level reflect on his actions in this manner—the Member for Transcona went on to state that he could spend a lot more time documenting the way in which the Government of the Day, which was the former New Democratic Government, “in my judgment, did not pay enough attention, and did not have the political will I was just talking about that is necessary to deal with the tough environmental questions that has to be dealt with.

“For example, with respect to returnable containers, the availability of returnable containers actually declined under an NDP Government This is the kind of thing that the Manitoba NDP Government should have done and did not do. I was one of the ones who was always on its case asking it to do it. If the Honourable Members talk to any of the Cabinet Ministers”—I presume he was including the Member for Dauphin—“they will verify what I have just said.”

I regret that we will not hear today that verification from the Member for Dauphin, but I do ask his colleagues in the House to bring those comments to his attention. I eagerly look forward to finding out who is correct: the Member for Transcona who claims to have been very active in those days or the Member for Dauphin who was indeed in charge of the department at that time.

My final question to the Minister on this issue with respect to Rafferty-Alameda is what he anticipates to be the effective date for the Rafferty dam will be with respect to its going into actual use and potentially having some downstream impact on Manitoba? We know it is built. When is it his advice that the Saskatchewan Government will actually be putting that dam into use such that it creates a water reservoir?

* (1630)

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, the Honourable Member will understand that it is difficult for me to speculate on when that date would be. I understand it may have something to do with the construction of

a power station for which they require water to cool the plant with. It may have a great deal more to do as, if I listen to some of my environmental friends, to whether the good Lord will bring down enough moisture to fill the reservoir. There are those who say that it will take a decade for that reservoir to fill in the first instance.

I really cannot comment on that. I suspect, and I hope and trust, quite frankly, that we get adequate moisture supplies, not for the sake of Rafferty-Alameda in isolation, but for the sake of all our farm communities across the prairies; that we get the kind of moisture that could well see that reservoir filled a lot faster than perhaps some people believe; that we could, in fact, be feeling some effects of the dam as early as this coming spring.

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(c) Resource Integration: (1) Salaries \$624,300—(pass); (2) Other Expenditures \$55,500—pass.

Item 1.(d) Financial Services: (1) Salaries—

Mr. Cliff Evans: I just have a few small questions on Financial Services, and relating to Activity Identification and to Expected Results. “Maintains a province-wide vendor system for the distribution and sale of all hunting and fishing licences.” Under Expected Results, “Timely and convenient sale of hunting and fishing licences to the public.”

I ask the Minister if he may advise this House on the system that they have. I question this on a personal basis. For the last two years in our area, there has been a lack of availability of hunting licences made available to the public and to tourists. I would like the Minister to expand on what the system does entail.

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, we attempt to have available to the general public and our visitors, our tourists—the people that come and look forward to a fishing or a hunting experience in Manitoba—vendors throughout the province that make available to them the necessary licences and pertinent information with respect to wildlife regulations and hunting regulations in force at the time. I am advised that we have some 900 vendors across the province. The Honourable Member will appreciate that there is always a possibility of a particular vendor not doing the job as best he can or, through neglect, not having his premises available to the general public at times convenient to them.

I invite the Honourable Member to make us aware of situations that he feels require better service. My most capable Director of Wildlife Services, Mr. Arthur Hoole, is listening to this debate at this time. I would ask him to directly avail himself of the information and circumstances that are applicable to your area. There are, in some cases, difficulties. Where the amount of sales is very low, it is understandable that the particular vendor—he is often doing us as a department a favour by having these licences available in a given area, particularly if it is a somewhat remote or isolated area. Understandably, it is not a major portion of his business, enough so that it will determine, for instance, his hours of operating his business that may make access to the licences more acceptable, but difficult for the individual to do.

We certainly invite suggestions from time to time as to the performance of those vendors in your area that currently have the distribution rights to the various forms of licences. We will certainly undertake the request for additions and/or a review of those vendors against whom complaints are being lodged for lack of attention to the general public in this area.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I thank the Minister for his comments on that. I am sure he understands and realizes I brought the point up because of the situation that when a tourist, or someone from out of province, does come to our area looking for a licence and has to travel 20 or 30 minutes to get the proper licence because a vendor does not have one available, it affects the whole industry and the area.

I would also like to ask the Minister on Expected Results: "Prompt and accurate payment of approximately 300,000 accounts payable annually." I ask the Minister on these accounts payable if he can tell us whether any of these accounts payable are people who perhaps are still waiting to be paid for using their fire equipment or anything related to the fire in our previous year that we had. Have these payments been made to anybody who is still waiting for them?

Mr. Enns: I am advised that if the Honourable Member has a specific concern, I would be more than happy, with the staff available here, to immediately address it. It is difficult to respond to a general question of that kind. With the size and scale of operations involved, Director of Regional Services—we are forever renting equipment, buying certain equipment. Parks Branch is involved

in many different operations. It is simply too general for us to respond to. I am aware that, for one reason or other—sometimes it is delay in getting paperwork processed from a regional office to the central office—that delays occur. Again, I would ask the Member, and I would invite the Member to, when incidents like this occur, feel free to bring them either directly to my attention, or to the attention of senior staff of the Deputy Minister. He certainly has access to the department in this way for redress and for attention.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I thank the Minister, and I will bring specifics to him and his Deputy and his staff perhaps as soon as Thursday.

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(d) Financial Services: (1) Salaries \$941,300—pass; 1.(d)(2) Other Expenditures \$220,500—pass.

Item 1.(e) Human Resource Management: (1) Salaries—

Mr. Cliff Evans: I would like to inquire on Human Resource Management from the Minister. If I am in the right category here for decentralization, can he indicate now whether there has been, and how many and where from his department that are being decentralized throughout the province?

* (1640)

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, I anticipated that question would be asked of us—however, not until we had reached further down. I wonder if the Honourable Member will agree to my taking that question as notice, and I will have that information for you when next we meet. It is an important question.

The Department of Natural Resources was singled out as being a major contributing department to the Decentralization Program. A number of our employees are affected, and I will be pleased, perhaps later on as we get into Regional Services. It is in the various regions that people are being deployed to, as well as in one instance, of course, the land titles people that are being deployed. But, if Honourable Members will accept that assurance from me, I will ask staff perhaps if—I do not know what the disposition of the House is, whether we are sitting after the supper hour or not, but in any event when next we meet I will have—we have that list; it is just not immediately available to us at this time.

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(e) Human Resource Management: (1) Salaries \$977,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$169,400—pass.

Item 1.(f) Computer Services: (1) Salaries \$267,600—(pass); (2) Other Expenditures \$40,600—pass.

Item 1.(g) Administrative Services: (1) Salaries \$747,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$122,400—pass.

Item 1.(h) Internal Audit: (1) Salaries \$159,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$9,400—pass.

Item 1.(j) Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I would like to refer back, just for a second, to Financial Services related to Venture Manitoba Tours. Under Expected Results of Financial Services, "Timely completion of the department's Estimates information, ministerial Session material, detailed budget quarterly cash flow reports, and other financial reports." Seeing that we are now upon Estimates and I have been attempting to receive a budget regarding Venture Manitoba Tours now for a few weeks, I ask this Minister and his department why I have not had the opportunity to receive a budget for the 1990 fiscal year.

Mr. Enns: I appreciate the Honourable Member asking me that question. I believe just the other day, yesterday, I had hoped that we would be in a position to provide Honourable Members with that report. Regrettably, it simply is not available as yet. I am looking at my financial administrator here, who tells me that they have had some difficulty in the final preparation of the report. It should be available, he tells me, within the next week. It does not do a great deal of good for the process of these Estimates, but that is the best I can do. You will have that next year on this.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I would like to expand on a few things with Venture Manitoba here. I am sure we will be able to get into a more detailed committee meeting, I hope, on Venture Manitoba Tours when we do get the budget and it is made available.

Can the Minister give me an overview of what has been occurring in the past year at Venture Manitoba and at Gull Harbour specifically?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, the affairs at Gull Harbour Resort are proceeding in a reasonably satisfactory manner. They have had fairly good

visitations. Their occupancy rate, by and large, has increased to a fairly significant level ranging in the 70 percent to 74 percent range, I am told. I have reasonably kept close contact with the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Mickey Levine, and the different board members from time to time.

A year ago they approached the Treasury Board of the Government for some additional capital monies to enable them to carry out some very necessary capital renovations to the building and that was received. I might tell the Honourable Member the additional \$25,000 he sees in the Estimates line is interest payment on that \$250,000 that was provided to Venture Tours specifically to carry out the improvements to the building. They were of critical importance to the water system. The pool area was apparently deteriorating quite badly and these were carried out.

Venture Tours reports a reasonably good financial situation, approaching the break-even point. It is a position, of course, taken by the board of directors and very strongly by the chairman that they are encumbered with a pretty serious debt load, and carrying that accumulated debt of previous years makes it increasingly difficult for the resort to show a better bottom-line profit picture.

Certainly the inclusion into their operations of the excellent golf course at Hecla was beneficial to the overall financial picture of the resort to the detriment of our Parks revenue which operated the golf course prior to this, but certainly it was helpful and the board members acknowledge the appropriateness of operating the two facilities together.

Many visitors coming to Gull Harbour Resort are attracted, quite frankly, to the area in the first place because of the excellent golfing opportunities presented by what has rapidly become one of Manitoba's premier golf courses. Enabling to have the two facilities under one management, they are attempting to maximize the marketing of that golf course together with the resort and, in total, doing a pretty admirable job in improving the overall financial performance of these two facilities.

* (1650)

Now, I might say that—and I hold out to the Honourable Members opposite—there is an additional opportunity for a fuller and wider debate on Venture Tours. It is included as a Crown corporation and would appear at a standing committee of the Legislature at different times, that

being the Committee of Economic Development, Natural Resources. It appears in the same manner that Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Telephone System, Channel Area Loggers and so forth. Even while the Honourable Members may feel that they are being somewhat shortchanged by not having the report in front of them to deal with in more detail the specific financial questions that maybe that they are interested in, I want to assure Honourable Members that report will be made available to them. It will be on the agenda of the Economic Development Committee of the Standing Committee of this Legislature at some point in time, likely in the new year, for consideration. At that time the Honourable Members will have had that report in their hands for some time to make themselves familiar with it.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I appreciate the Minister's comment in that we can discuss Venture Manitoba at a later date with the budget. I do understand that—and also asking for a mandate and a policy of Venture Manitoba, that I was informed there was one being reviewed. Can the Minister enhance me from Mr. Podolsky as far as what are we expecting in this policy change?

Mr. Enns: The Honourable Member is correct. There is a review being undertaken by the board. As yet, they have not reported to me as Minister.

Again, I remind the Honourable Member that when Venture Tours as a Crown corporation presents itself for review by the Standing Committee of this Legislature, the senior officials of the Crown corporation, the chairman of the board along with the managing director would be present, just as my officials are present here, to answer specifically the kind of questions that the Honourable Member is currently directing at me.

Mr. Cliff Evans: Thank you to the Minister. I will ask a question that does not relate anything to the budget, expenditures or policy; but I would like to ask the Minister, and it has been asked before, and it is a concern: Does this Minister have any plans, or does this Government have any plans, to divest itself of Manitoba Venture Tours in Gull Harbour?

Mr. Enns: The Government will in the fullness of time make its plans known to Honourable Members opposite and, indeed, to the general public. I can honestly tell the Member that there are no such plans under contemplation at this particular time, but that is not to say that the divestiture is not a possible alternative some time in the future.

I might point out to the Honourable Member that the Government views favourably on privatization of certain Crown corporations. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has dealt with these in a very open and public way, whether it involves a major corporation like the Manfor forestry complex that was divested earlier on in the lifetime of this administration, more recently the divestiture of the Manitoba Data Services. Certainly there have been suggestions made to us, to this Government, that we hear from time to time, that the Government should avail itself of the opportunities to divest itself of this kind of facility.

I have no philosophical hangup about whether it is important to the well-being of the people of Manitoba that the bar at Gull Harbour Resort has to be a Government-owned facility or whether it should be a private facility, or whether the complex in itself should be a private facility or public facility. I am concerned, certainly I am concerned, that the facility operates in such a manner that it does not further take away public monies that are hard enough for this department and indeed for Government to get.

I would be extremely concerned that, in times of public monies which are hard to come by, to have to go to Treasury Board and ask for a half a million or a million or \$2 million to cover off losses of an operation of this kind. I think that spectre always looms in the backs of some of our minds, and the potential for divestiture certainly is one that will be actively considered by this Government at some point in time. It is not at this moment. It is not at this time.

I am awaiting some deliberations that the board is undertaking at this time. They have some plans that they are currently investing in with respect to the greater utilization of the resort. It involves some expansion of current facilities through the better utilization of some of the resort. Certain older portions of the resort are being, in the board's opinion, not fully utilized. I understand that they are contemplating some fairly significant renovations or improvements to the resort. So there are a number of things that are being talked about and planned with respect to Venture Tours.

When we speak of Venture Tours, of course, we are talking the Gull Harbour Resort. At this time, I cannot provide the Member with any further information other than that which I have put on the record.

Mr. Cliff Evans: The new manager of Gull Harbour, a few weeks ago, I believe, went on a trip to Japan, if I may be corrected if I am wrong on that. Can I ask the Minister what purpose the manager of Gull Harbour had of going to Japan, and did any of the other board members go with him? Was it a trip to enhance the possibility of tourism to Gull Harbour? What did they have in mind when the manager of Gull Harbour went over to Japan?

Mr. Enns: The manager of Gull Harbour Resort was invited to participate in this trip, sponsored by the Department of Tourism and a consortium of travel agencies within the province. This is part of an ongoing bid, I suppose, of those interested in the tourism industry in the province of Manitoba to encourage and to attract tourists to this province.

We ought to perhaps take that as a compliment, that the manager of the Gull Harbour Resort from Hecla Island was invited to be part of this group. It certainly indicates some recognition on the part of the Department of Tourism and that of the private travel agents throughout the province as to the stature and the quality of service and the attraction of Hecla Island and Gull Harbour Resort.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I thank the Minister for his comment.

I would like to continue on Venture Manitoba Tours, but I see because of time that we not pass this at present and continue with it next session.

Mr. Enns: Oh, I take it with the presence of the Speaker that you are about to vacate your Chair, Madam Chairman. Pity, I was getting accustomed to your face, as the song goes.

I tell the Honourable Member for Interlake, I remind him again that there will be further opportunity to discuss the affairs of Venture Tours at the standing committee of the Legislature.

Mr. Cliff Evans: I thank the Minister for that. I do look forward to that, but as long as we can get the budget fairly soon, perhaps within this week if possible, and this new policy that Venture Manitoba has going, I mean we cannot discuss the problem if we do not know any of the answers.

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(j) Venture Manitoba Tours Ltd., \$75,000—pass.

Item 2. Regional Services: 2.(a) Administration: 2.(a)(1) Salaries, \$1,285,500—pass.

* (1700)

The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private Members' hour, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for private Members' hour.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, is there a willingness of the House to waive private Members' hour?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private Members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Point of Order

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

I would suggest that we take a 10-minute recess so we have an opportunity to hear from the House Leaders on their discussions and then make a decision at that time.

Mr. Cummings: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The House therefore accordingly will be recessed till 10 after five, at which time I will ring the buzzers for one minute.

* * *

The House took recess at 5:01 p.m.

After Recess

The House resumed at 5:11 p.m.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there have been some discussions amongst House Leaders. I believe there is a desire that private Members' hour be waived, and, accordingly, after I have announced some further House business, I will again move the Supply Motion so that we might go into Supply until six o'clock in the same committees that we were previous to five o'clock. Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a wish by the House Leaders that you assume the Chair at eight o'clock tonight, at which time further directions will be provided by myself at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. By leave, Mr. Speaker; that is by leave.

Mr. Speaker: I remind the Honourable Government House Leader that the motion to go into Supply was adopted and was disposed of at that time which was on the Order Paper now. Now, I believe we are going to ask for leave to put the motion back on.

Would there be leave to allow the Honourable Government House Leader to move that motion again?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, there will be leave.

Is there leave to waive private Members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Therefore, it has been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Manness), seconded by the Honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into Committee to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. I will return at 8 p.m. this evening as Mr. Speaker in the Chair. Madam Deputy Speaker, take the Chair, please.

SUPPLY—NATURAL RESOURCES

Madam Chairman (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply will continue to consider the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources.

Item 2. Regional Services (a) Administration: (2) Other Expenditures \$917,900—pass; (3) Problem Wildlife Control \$204,600.00.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Chair, I believe you are on Other Expenditures, are you not? Because you had 2.(a)(1) Salaries. Is that not the one that was passed? Clarification, and now we are on 2.(a)(2).

Madam Chairman: We are on page 137, No. 2. Regional Services (a) Administration: (3) Problem Wildlife Control \$204,600.00.

Mr. Plohman: I have one on Other Expenditures, that section anyway, Madam Chair.

I just wanted to ask the Minister if he could indicate the total number of conservation officers that are employed at this time, and how has that changed over the last year in that particular area?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Chairman, I am advised that there has been little change. The component of our resource officers is maintained for the past number of years at the 150 to 155 level. We have two vacancies, I am advised by my Deputy Minister, at this time, and 150 resource officers.

Mr. Plohman: Just for clarification. Are they classified as professional/technical in the various regions?

Mr. Enns: Yes.

Mr. Plohman: Could the Minister indicate whether there has been any increase in the workload and the experience with the TIPs program that has been put in place? Has it been well received in all regions, and has it increased the workload of the officers?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, I am advised that the program is operating at a level of about 600 to 650 registrations of complaints. It has the tendency of making the work of our officers more efficient in the sense that our officers are being directed, deployed, if you like, in specific problem areas. Neighbours, other alert Manitobans tend to use this program to get at situations where there have been repeat offenders operating in an area, and it enables Regional Services to target or zero in on these areas. In that way it makes their work, generally speaking, more efficient.

As a matter of record, for the Member's interest, I can put the following information on the record. Since the inception of the program in '85-86, in that first year, for instance, some 417 calls were registered. That compares to the 604 of this year; '87-88 was a higher year when we had upward of 706 calls being registered. We have had out of those 604 calls that were registered 102 prosecutions; 35 were deemed where a warning was sufficient. In some other instances it was just a matter of providing information.

* (1720)

I should point out to the Honourable Member who no doubt will point out to me of his own volition or perhaps his colleague, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), will, because I am aware that it may have been brought to his attention, that the department has this year for the first time introduced the use of decoys. We anticipate—in fact, our initial experiences have shown that is a program that certainly is effective in terms of getting at people

who persist in breaking regulations with respect to hunting.

I am speaking about the deer hunt principally. We have in use in our program four deer decoys, one moose and one elk. These are sophisticated decoys. I tell Honourable Members opposite, they actually blink at you if you are driving past them. We have had situations where people have shot not once, but twice at them, and then finally realized that the animal was still standing and blinking at them, that there was something wrong; they were consequently apprehended. The situation even has led to apprehending an archer who fired several arrows into a decoy; and, when the animal ceased to go down, he was apprehended.

On the other hand, the question comes to mind whether this is a form of entrapment, and there are those, I suppose, in the general public that may want to view it that way.

Madam Chairman, I simply have to say that we have to be very serious about the enforcing of those game regulations that we have in place. They are there, after all, to ensure that we have wildlife resources available not just to this generation, but to succeeding generations. It is a serious offence to take game illegally. It is, of course, particularly effective in the dangerous business of night-lighting. Members will recall that it was only a year ago that this department lost a young officer in the Interlake area, Keith Bartley, who was a well-respected officer of this department, highly regarded, highly respected in the community.

As a result of investigations following that unfortunate incident, greater pressures were put on the department to rethink some of its policies with respect to the apprehension of poachers, particularly operating at night. It is very difficult to apprehend these people with our officers being required to drive with their lights on, so the practice had been used in the past to run with running lights or with no lights. That, regrettably, as borne out by the subsequent inquest, was pointed out to us.

It is now the policy of the department, in the interests of officers' safety, not to have vehicles operating without lights. That is our policy today. At the same time, I had to take into serious consideration a request that resource officers, for some time, had made to the department and to the ministry, to consider the use of decoys and to enable

them to use that tool, which has been proven very successful in other jurisdictions.

A number of other jurisdictions, Ontario, Saskatchewan, I believe, and certainly a number of American jurisdictions, have been using decoys for a number of years. I was eager to endorse that requested policy change in Manitoba. I make no apologies for the use of decoys. There have been some representations made to my office that it is not sporting, and that it is not fair.

It is not fair to be out there in the dark of night with spotlights taking animals illegally. It is also not fair, and it is illegal, after we have passed laws, to be shooting off the road and road allowances. Those changes have been put into effect because of different concerns, concerns that parents had, particularly in the deer season. In rural Manitoba our children are waiting for their school buses to pick them up early in the mornings, and for these and other safety reasons, it was deemed to put in effect the regulation prohibiting the shooting from road allowances.

In some instances, decoys have been used in broad daylight and offenders have been caught pulling their vehicles to a stop and jumping out and taking a shot at what they thought was a deer, but, again, they were breaking a well-publicized law. So, Madam Chairman, I am pleased to have this opportunity to make Members aware of this change in the practices by the Natural Resources officers.

I would like to correct a comment that I left on the record just a moment ago. I made reference to an inquest with respect to Mr. Bartley's death. That inquest has not yet been held, but we have done internal investigations, reviewed our practices of how we operate in the pursuit and in the chasing of night-lighters particularly and have come to our own conclusion and have been so advised as well by the Attorney General's department that we should change our practice.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Chair, just to the Minister, has the issue of sidearms by the officers been put to rest in terms of an issue or is it something that is still being pursued with the Minister and the Government?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, the Member for Dauphin is aware that this is an issue that continues to be debated amongst the resource officers. There is now a majority of the officers who have at their association meetings come to the conclusion that

they would like to have, or at least those requesting would like to have, the opportunity to wear sidearms. That is a decision that has been brought forward to me by the executive of the Natural Resources officers within the department. I have to date not acceded to that wish. I have some difficulty in believing that the addition of weapons provides for a safer environment.

* (1730)

On the other hand, I have to say to the Honourable Member that I have some understanding, some empathy, and I am troubled with the position that we put our Natural Resources officers into. These are people whom we are asking to on our behalf undertake what I am prepared to believe are ever increasingly dangerous situations. They are being made more dangerous by some new, disturbing and undesirable elements that are out there in the woods. That has to do with the increasing demand for and the sale of animal parts for a variety of reasons. In some instances this becomes a pretty big business.

It is a matter of considerable concern to this department, but it also injects a different element into the woods. We are not now just simply talking of the sports hunter, the farmer who is out there. These are people who are pursuing an illegal commercial enterprise. I am concerned that our officers have to combat this kind of activity. I have expressed the position that I have taken and have indicated to the officers that at this point in time I am not prepared to consider a change in that policy. I do so with the full knowledge that their concern is legitimate.

I do not like the statistics that apparently can be produced that demonstrate that a resource officer's life is in greater danger than that of a police officer in the City of Winnipeg for instance or other police jurisdictions. These kinds of concerns indicate to me that the concern on the part of the officers will not easily go away.

Mr. Plohan: Yes, it is a very sensitive matter and one of deep concern and difficult to find the right answer to.

I just want to ask—I was leading to that question to ask the Minister whether the issue of organized poaching for the purposes of animal parts is one that is growing as a problem in Manitoba. I recall a television documentary that was done a few years back when I think Mr. Mike Bessey, who is now with

the Executive Council, was interviewed a number of times about his knowledge, as I understood it, of this practice in some jurisdictions.

I was not certain at that time that Manitoba had an extensive problem. As a matter of fact I believe there were assurances by the department that it was not extensive and widespread in Manitoba. However, that may be changing.

I would ask the Minister whether in fact that is his information now, since he did raise it in the context of the issue of side arms and the relative danger that conservation officers work under—Natural Resources officers—if they are subjected to more danger than perhaps might have been the case over the last number of years?

Mr. Enns: Madam Chair, I am advised that—and Honourable Members will recall because these are recently well-publicized events—we have a greater difficulty, and it is one that caused the department concern, in the illegal sale of fish and meat sales of moose, deer, elk and some rather significant quantities of fish.

We conducted and carried out a fairly significant sting operation that involved, I regret to say, some of my fine constituents. I had an opportunity to demonstrate to my staff the benevolence of their Minister. I allowed the operation to proceed in its normal course with nary a word of reprimand from their Minister even though people near and dear to my heart and in my constituency were being properly apprehended and charged with some fairly extensive violations in the marketing of fish.

It is my understanding that this involved both the people involved in the actual harvesting or the catching of fish as well as some retail operators. I think that is very important if we are to effectively prevent this. We have to charge the recipient of the illegal goods or try to charge them wherever possible just as much as those who are involved in the illegal catching of the species.

The department advises me that the trade in international parts that Members are familiar with, bear claws, bladders and so forth, is not viewed as a serious problem within this jurisdiction.

(Mrs. Rosemary Vodrey, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

I just asked the director of regional services whether it would be fair to speculate that perhaps in our allocation system of bear hunting, and moose to some extent, whether or not that does not provide

some degree of supervision that may not normally be there. In other words, that outfitter who has an allocated area and X number of licences, which he prizes, he has them usually pre-sold to people that will come for that hunting experience. He generally takes a little more possessive view of their area, and that might in itself be somewhat of a control check on this kind of activity taking place in the area.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Acting Chair, can the Minister indicate whether the bear allocation has extended from the Duck Mountain area and the Parkland area of the province into all regions of the province in a formal way, allocation of areas, or whether this is still limited basically to the Parkland area of the province?

Mr. Enns: Madam Acting Chair, I am advised that there has been an expansion of the original allocation lines which, the Member is correct, started from the Duck Mountain area to other portions of the province, I believe, including the Interlake and into certain portions of the northwest. I could perhaps undertake to provide the Member with a map of some kind that shows those areas of the province that are now under the allocation program.

As with any introduction of a new program, Madam Acting Chair, there is always some difficulties associated with it. We do not presume to have done it right in the first instance. There are some issues in dispute with the outfitters. The whole issue in itself is up for some continuing debate within the broader community, but we believe nonetheless it is important to proceed in some orderly way particularly with the bear species.

* (1740)

It is a remarkable transformation that is taking place in a relatively few short years—the bear that certainly not that many years ago was considered a nuisance animal, a predator animal, an animal upon which there was little value placed in terms of a wildlife resource and hunting opportunity. Municipalities not so many years ago were involved in programs of bear poisoning with bait. They were trapped widely in the province, but that has changed very dramatically in the last decade to a point where the bear now is viewed quite differently.

There are old problems to overcome—the trapper who feels he is being deprived of certain opportunities to trap his normal quota of bears because in some cases the allocation process has interfered with that. These are operational

administrative problems that the department continues to deal with.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Acting Chair, the issue of the economic impact of the bear allocation system and hunting is one that is worth discussing or at least getting some figures on. I think if the Minister has some information, as well as the information he promised, about where the formal allocation system has now been established by way of a map, also any statistical information on the impact on the economy with current difficulties in rural areas of course and the need for diversification and economic opportunities, this is one that may have a growing significance.

As well, it may also have a significance for our Native population. The Minister may be able to indicate whether in fact this kind of allocation has now benefitted any of the Native bands in the province and whether more of them are looking toward this as an opportunity for economic improvement in their area.

(Madam Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairman, I am advised that we issue upwards to a thousand non-resident licences with respect to the bear. I am further advised that the average cost to that non-resident for that hunting privilege runs around \$1,500, which involves usually perhaps the better part of a week, three or four days. That is the charge that an outfitter will levy on a non-resident hunter of bear in Manitoba.

A Member refers to the economics of it. That is reasonably significant. The outfitter in turn provides room and board for the visiting hunter. The outfitter provides guides and the vehicles involved. So that is what we are talking about.

In addition to that, there are some 3,000 resident licences issued, just to give the Honourable Member an idea of the ratio. So in all we issue about 4,000 licences for the bear per annum, 1,000 of them being non-resident.

The Native people are moving very strongly into the field of guiding and have made some very good arrangements with the more established outfitters. In fact, one of the largest outfitters that we have in the province I think can with some considerable justification maintain the fact that he provides a pretty significant source of employment opportunities, economic opportunities, for some of our Native people who regrettably are all too often

resident in the areas where there are few alternative economic opportunities for them.

All in all, one ought not to take lightly the overall impact of the big bear in these circumstances. I quite frankly could use a bit of help from Members opposite. I have some difficulty when you recognize that there are, for whatever reasons—and one does not have to be a hunter, I appreciate there are some that do not view it that way—when you consider that a bear can provide a hunting opportunity and an economic return of \$1500 for a licence. To what extent should we be allowing continued trapping of that same species when the trapper sells that fur for \$50, \$60.00?

It is in the trapping, perhaps—and I want to be cautious about what I say—that one may encourage or find more opportunities to get into the legal sale of parts than with the trophy bear hunter who essentially is coming to shoot his bear, get his rug, go home and say that he has shot a big bear in the wilds of Manitoba.

These are the kinds of issues that our resource people have to sort out. Yet, at the same time, it is very difficult not to accept the kind of traditional practice of those involved in the trapping industry. Our trappers are in bad shape throughout the province because of the worldwide decline of the wild fur market, because of the whole situation in wild fur markets.

From a resource management point of view, certainly the opportunity of—if our resource managers, our wildlife managers tell us that we can sustainably harvest X number of bear per annum, and with the increased value and different attitude towards the bear, we are redoubling our efforts to get better statistical information as to how many bears we have, what the bear habitat is in the province. What is a sustainable yield? What can the population carry? We admittedly do not know enough about the species simply because we did not care that much about it up until a few years ago.

If we determine that 2,000 bear can be harvested per annum and still maintain an acceptable healthy bear population across the province, that they can be harvested in a sustainable manner, then the question that confronts the department is, should we be making that harvest available to those persons who in the first instance are prepared to pay us substantially higher hunting licences?

A hundred dollars for a licence is what we charge the non-resident plus the \$1,500 that that non-resident is prepared to pay to an outfitter who in turn hires two or three guides, very often Native guides. That makes up a pool of a \$1 million, \$1.5 million, \$2 million of economic activity. Do we continue to have half of them harvested by means of trapping and a much lower economic yield?

Mr. Plohman: I think, Madam Chair, that over a period of time, that through transition periods, there will be a gradual evolution towards the more economically beneficial way of harvesting, and that demand will change insofar as the people involved.

Trappers may turn to be outfitters over a period of time in that gradual evolution of the process. I think that it is probably best to do it that way as opposed to making some dramatic changes in the short term that may cause a great deal of repercussion in the local communities. I see a great deal of potential for this in the future, I believe.

* (1750)

I wanted to just go to an issue that is related closely, and that is the joint management with Native people in the moose management areas. There is one in the Waterhen area. I forget the number—the moose management there. I have had representation when I was with the department as Minister citing this experiment or this example of joint management with the band at Skownan, the Waterhen Band, that is a successful example of joint management.

On the other hand, I have also had, since that time, representations made to me from other communities in the area, especially the Waterhen, where local residents do not feel that they are having enough access for participating in deer and moose hunting themselves because of this management area, and they are kept out of that area. They are not able to engage in a successful hunt as many people would still like to be able to do in their neighbourhoods, in their areas.

I wonder if the Minister has dealt with that issue from the point of view of the reserve as well as the other community in the area, the other local residents who are concerned that they are missing out on opportunities as a result of this, whether he has also considered moving the boundaries of that area a little further north so there would not be such an area of conflict, if I can use the word, in the more populated areas in the south which the moose

management area currently encompasses, and whether the Minister has looked at perhaps moving north and held any discussions.

I have had representation made by the council at Waterhen on this issue. They are very aware of the sensitivity of dealing with it. So am I, but at the same time it is something that the Minister may want to look at, and perhaps has looked at, because when you get into joint management, Native management of resources, you get into another problem where you have the reserves that are located close to heavily populated non-reserve population. It is easier I think in remote areas, but it is much more difficult when you get into that transitional zone.

I point that out to the Minister as something that he may want to enter into some discussions with both the band and the people in the area so that there is a full consultation on it from all sides in resolving that issue.

Mr. Enns: Madam Chairperson, the Member for Dauphin touches on probably the most significant challenge that the department, at least this aspect of the department and I, as Minister, face in the coming years, one that is going to call for a great deal of time on the part of resource staff, staff time, staff resources, and time on the part of a lot of people, including Ministers, including local community leaders, people, tribal chiefs and our aboriginal people.

Allow me to, by example, cite you three examples of what we are talking about, co-management, where we are at with them and in some cases a difference. Probably a very successful example of this kind of co-management is carried out in the North and in the Barren Ground caribou herds, the Beverly-Kaminuriak herds that have now operated for—and I was privileged to be instrumental in their formation back in '78-79. They are operating very well.

That is a situation in isolation, by and large, from any other communities, an agreed-to management of principally the aboriginal people themselves up there and/or including non-resident hunters from time to time. Essentially, the issue of co-management involved departments, the Government of Canada, representatives of Northwest Territories, Manitoba and the Inuit people. It is an arrangement between those essentially two parties, the Government and the Inuit people involved.

We come down to the area of The Pas. For my sense of the matter, it comes more closely to the desired way that I would like to move the department, to co-management agreements in The Pas area, near moose management agreement, involving four Indian bands, involving the local wildlife association comprising, representing, the non-Native, the white community, if you like, the town community of The Pas, and the Department of Natural Resources.

I was there early on in spring signing a formal agreement, where we had agreed for the first time after a period of self-imposed abolition of hunting the moose to allow the moose populations to come back up to the desired levels. Now we have this joint management agreement agreed into how many of the hundred animal licences that will be issued in that prescribed area will be issued to band members, how many will be issued to non-band members now that there is a local community. It was agreed to. They came to a common agreement.

To me, that is the all-inclusive kind of management. It is not—I am aware, and that is something that I have to and I will make clear. I would appreciate it if the Member for The Pas (Mr Lathlin), who was co-signature to that agreement as Chief of The Pas Indian Band, were present in the Chamber, because it has to be said, in my judgment, that co-management is not always simply a matter of co-managing with an aboriginal group. If there are other interests who have some legitimate, you know, concern and are looking for access to that wildlife resource, then I as the Minister responsible for this department have to take them into account.

I would suggest to the Honourable Member that is perhaps missing to some extent in the Waterhen situation. The Waterhen situation, whereas for instance the agreement that we as Government, the department, had with respect to their wood bison experiment, that is an understandable arrangement that involves more directly Government of Canada, Manitoba and the Waterhen Band.

With respect to the further co-management of the indigenous moose populations that local residents feel they have a right to access from time to time, there perhaps needs to be a greater inclusion of their interest to be represented in that co-management that involves the moose in that area.

I say to the Honourable Member that this is an extremely important area that the department faces. It will become even more important as we hopefully conclude further agreements respecting the communities that have been affected, for instance, in the Northern Flood group of communities, the agreements that we have concluded at the forebay area, who are looking for some sharing of resource management in that area, but a sharing that is at the same time responsible to the rest of the population of Manitoba.

Mr. Plohman: It is almost six o'clock, Madam Chairman, and I just wanted to follow up with one brief comment or question to the Minister. Would he suggest that perhaps the local councils would like to perhaps invite him down to meet with him in the community or come in to meet with the Minister to start a process of resolving this? Does he have any

suggestions as to action? They have met with me and asked me to pursue this, and that is why I am raising it here.

Mr. Enns: It was only several weeks ago that I had an opportunity to fulfill an obligation that I had directly to Chief Harvey Nepinak to visit in the area. Unfortunately, it was the day after their band offices administration building burned down, but we had a good opportunity with Chief Harvey Nepinak and with Chief McKay from Pine Creek to fly over the area. We did not meet with the Waterhen council, and I certainly would welcome the opportunity to do that. I invite the Honourable Member to make those necessary arrangements with my office.

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise with the understanding the House will resume at 8 p.m. with Mr. Speaker in the Chair.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Tuesday, December 11, 1990

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