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DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 10, 1979

Time: 8:00 p.m.

SUPPLY — AGRICULTURE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee come to order. Page 8, Resolution 8, Item 3. To the Members of the Committee, it is my intention to recognize the order that we had established before Committee rise. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I believe when we adjourned for the dinner hour I was asking the Minister the percentage that would be required as a down payment on the purchase of land and the Minister indicated and replied that MACC would carry 90 percent of . . . I would like to ask the Minister, when he says 90 percent, that the MACC would carry 90 percent, is he referring to the reserve bid price, the appraisal price or the bid price?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, just to clarify it for the Member for Ste. Rose, the 90 percent that the corporation will lend is under the direct lending program, not under the actual sale of MACC land. They are totally two different things. The corporation will lend, to those who qualify, after going through the loan application and qualifying, they can borrow up to 90 percent of a loan through the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. It has nothing to do with the sale of agricultural land through Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, unless, Mr. Chairman, the individual is a qualified farmer and qualifies under that loan and applies through the Credit Corporation.

MR. ADAM: Yes, all right; I want to clarify that a little more. Somebody comes in and expresses a desire to purchase a parcel of land at \$50,000.00.

MR. DOWNEY: He purchases from who, Mr. Chairman?

MR. ADAM: From MACC, Crown lands that have been bid. Who are the lands belonging to that you have now for sale?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, the only time there is land offered for sale it is land that has either had a lease drop on it or it has been land that has come back through people who have not made their payments. That's the land that has been advertised for sale.

MR. ADAM: That's the land I'm talking about it.

MR. DOWNEY: That's the land that you're talking about?

MR. ADAM: Yes.

MR. DOWNEY: When that land is tendered for sale on the tender basis I am informed by the management, that there is a deposit required by MACC, by the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. Now that, I don't believe is 10 percent. The 10 percent that I was referring to was the down payment on the Land Lending Program that we have introduced six months ago.

MR. ADAM: Then, if I understand the Minister correctly then, he is saying that it is possible to purchase land that is available for sale from the Crown without any down payment or just the deposit.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, if they reach the reserve . . . If they are the highest tender after they have put their tender in, and they are the highest tender, they have to submit the deposit with that tender.

MR. ADAM: And what is that deposit?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the initial deposit with the tender is \$500.00.

MR. ADAM: So the deposit, Mr. Chairman, is \$500.00. Is the purchaser obligated to pay any further sums of money when he buys the property, outside of the \$500.00?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, he is entitled to pay for the total value of the property.

MR. ADAM: He is obligated to pay the entire price of the land, I understand that, under a mortgage agreement, is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: Not necessarily under a mortgage agreement. He may have to come up with the total amount of money if he doesn't qualify under a land loan through the MACC.

MR. ADAM: Well, if he qualifies for a direct loan or a guaranteed loan, is there a mortgage involved?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, if he qualifies under the direct loan or the comprehensive loan, there would be a mortgage involved.

MR. ADAM: And how much will he have to pay initially to obtain this land, outside of the \$500.00 deposit?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the program that I referred to is that the Corporation will lend up to 90 percent of the value of the land.

MR. ADAM: This applies to both the direct loans and the guaranteed loans, is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct.

MR. ADAM: In the event that a purchaser purchased this land and say after two or three years defaults on his agreement, the land will revert back to the state, is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: After proceedings are taken place to collect the payments, that's right. A repossession of the property would take place.

MR. ADAM: Could the Minister indicate just how long the purchaser would be carried, say in arrears, how many years would the purchaser be carried?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the management indicate to me that they are allowed to go into arrears up to a year and a half.

MR. ADAM: Eighteen months in arrears. It could carry for a year and a half in arrears and then it would go into default, is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct.

MR. ADAM: Could the Minister advise, what are the annual payments?

MR. DOWNEY: Whatever the amount of money is that is borrowed, amortized over the 30 years or the 31 years or whatever the length of the loan is, plus the interest.

MR. ADAM: Yes, is there a standard time for the mortgages, 30 years or 25?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Up to 30 years, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: Up to 30 years, so then it could vary. In event that a purchaser would, say, hold the land and pay, meet his responsibilities for three or four years and then go into default, then the land reverts back to the Crown and it is then reoffered for sale, what would the sale value be then?

MR. DOWNEY: The market value would be established by the open market or the open tender system that we've sold the other land under at this particular time.

MR. ADAM: What would the appraisal value be then?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, that would be, Mr. Chairman, what would be established by the internal appraisal of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation.

MR. ADAM: Well, yes. Presuming that the purchaser paid \$3,000 a year for three years, \$15,000 paid on the purchase, under the present criteria that the minister is using to put a reserve bid on what the actual cost to the Crown, would the minister be using the same criteria in this case whereby say one-third of the farm has been paid for, or 20 percent, or 15 percent, would he be using the same criteria in this case?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the amount that was paid on the land would have no effect on the appraisal value of that property, but I don't know what the policy of the Board of Directors would be. To be consistent with the policy that I have stated here, we would be recovering the costs to the corporation plus all carrying charges.

MR. ADAM: Yes, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that it's not the MACC that should be making the policy, but it's the government, the minister, unless he's incapable of doing so. It's the government that makes the policy and it's the corporation that carries out that policy. And is the minister suggesting that if a person pays \$15,000 on a piece of property and it comes back to the Crown, is he going to carry on the same policy of putting a reserve bid, that the Crown has of costing?

MR. DOWNEY: For the member's benefit the people who would be bidding on that property would not know what the reserve bid was, they would not know what the cost to the corporation plus carrying charges were, and the people of Manitoba would have an opportunity to establish the market price of that property.

MR. ADAM: On the lands that have been tendered and sold and unsold, could the minister provide us with copies of the advertisements in the press, the dates that they were put in, and give us a copy of these advertisements or obtain them for us?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I've already provided that information.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, I'm not asking the minister if he's provided us with information. I'm asking him if he can provide us with a copy of the advertisement that was put in the papers . . . (Interjection)—

MR. DOWNEY: It's too late to bid on it, Pete, it's too late to bid on it, so what do you need the copies for?

MR. ADAM: Can the minister provide us with copies of the advertisements in the press so that we can satisfy ourself just what kind of advertisements they were, and was there a reserve bid? He has mentioned that there's no reserve bid mentioned on the advertisement. Is there anything on the advertisement that says or states that the highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

MR. DOWNEY: That land was tendered by the Manitoba Agriculture Credit Corporation. I've indicated to the members where it was advertised, where the land was bulletined, and I said I believe it was in the Winnipeg Free Press, the Winnipeg Tribune, the Manitoba Co-operator, the local newspaper, there was an ad hung up in all Municipal Offices, all Manitoba Agricultural offices and all Agricultural offices.

MR. ADAM: Would the minister be able to provide us with copies and the dates that they were inserted in the different newspapers, or were they all inserted at the same time, all in one group?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I have indicated for the member where they've been advertised.

I'm sure that they were public and open tenders that he would be able to find that information on his own.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, could the minister give us the date that these lands were advertised for sale? Would he be able to give the date?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, that could be provided, I am sure to facilitate the member's interest.

MR. ADAM: The minister, I understand that he has agreed to provide the dates that these advertisements were put in the papers. Could the minister tell us now whether or not there was on the advertisement that the lowest or the highest, or any tender not necessarily accepted?

MR. DOWNEY: No, I cannot indicate that at this time, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: So he's not sure whether that was on; that's the normal practice, I understand, to have on any tender, on any tender that at the bottom there always usually is a notation that any tender is not necessarily accepted, and I just wanted to see if the minister could provide that. He has everything else there. He has all the newspapers, he doesn't have the dates that they were . . . Is the minister sure that he doesn't have the dates there to indicate what dates they are?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, I don't have them right here with me, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: Could the minister provide them for us tomorrow or could he find out for us tomorrow?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, if the Member for Ste. Rose has difficulty in finding them, I can see if I can accommodate him.

MR. ADAM: Now, I think we've established that any defaults on any of these lands sold, if any of the purchases or payments go into default, they will revert back to the Crown — both the comprehensive and the direct loan, I want to make that very clear.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, for the clarification of the Committee and myself, is he referring to the loans that are made through the Manitoba Agriculture Corporation on direct and comprehensive loans on any property that money is lent to, to farm people.

MR. ADAM: No. Just on the land purchases. On the land sales.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I have no indication at this time that the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation is in fact lending money to those people who are buying those properties.

MR. ADAM: We have to assume that the Minister is going all over the country sending fieldmen out, coercing people who are leasing land now to purchase them immediately. That is what we are assuming, and we assume it because we have had reports and even phone calls in this regard.

So now I want to ask the Minister or the Chairman if he could contain the Member for Pembina for a few minutes, we can continue asking the questions.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister now if there has been any communication with people who are now on the Land Lease Program encouraging them to exercise their option to purchase, because this is the reports that we are receiving from the rural areas.

MR. DOWNEY: Not to my knowledge, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: Would the Minister undertake to find out from MACC if any of the field staff have been out asking farmers, young farmers who are on the Land Lease Program, to use their option in regard to the forgivable portion of the interest rates, and so on? Would the Minister undertake to investigate that?

MR. DOWNEY: It would be my intent that that would be the freedom of the person who is farming the land to exercise that option if they so desire.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I understand, yes; that's why it was set up originally in the first place so that he could take that option if he wanted to, but I am just asking the Minister if any field staff have been out asking farmers to hurry up and get with it, and buy this land before we take it away from you, or make it so unattractive that you will have to buy it or else you won't be able to stay in business.

Mr. Chairman, what are the interest rates at the present time? I believe there is a subsidized interest rate on the leased land. I am talking about the leased land, not on the land sold but on the land that is now being leased with an option to purchase. I believe there was a time period when the interest rates were subsidized at 5 percent or whatever, and then there was, I believe, something in the agreement that these rates would be renegotiated. What are the rates at the present time? Have any been renegotiated?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, at the present time the interest for the first three years is 5 percent, the following year 6-¾ and the fifth year 8 percent. Then it goes for an internal appraisal with the department, and then can be readjusted at the 6 percent of the new appraisal.

MR. ADAM: On April 5th the Minister stated that the lands that reverted back to the Crown would not be state farms, the name that he likes to put on the Land Lease Program as being state farms, and on April 5th he stated that any lands that would be coming back to the Crown under a default of payment, lands that had been sold and it reverted back to the Crown, that these would not be state farms, that they would be farms owned by MACC.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ADAM: I think he wanted to have it both ways. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman, the Minister didn't want to answer so . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: The Minister didn't seem as though he wanted to answer that question, but I think he wanted to have it both ways: he wanted to say that the lands that were under the lease programs, that was state farms, and that the lands that would revert back to the Crown through the loans would not be state farms. And he can't have it both ways. The lands that are now under lease are under lease from MACC.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Pembina has been constantly interfering in the debate and not too often willing to put his name down to be recognized as the speaker.

MR. ORCHARD: Pete, you are taking too much time. I never get on the list.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, some of the members opposite are very upset about the Land Lease Program. I am wondering if they would be upset with the Ontario government leasing out thousands of lots, residential lots. Thousands of lots are being leased on a long-term basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Would the member try and contain himself within the area that we're dealing with, Item 3, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, we're talking about state ownership and some of the members . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could we have one speaker at a time. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: The members are saying that the Land Lease Program is a state program, Mr. Chairman, and I just want to say that the good free enterprise Tory government in Ontario is leasing thousands of residential lots on a long-term basis, and that's state lots. —(Interjections)— By the way, Mr. Chairman, they also lease lands.

But anyway I would like to ask the Minister who makes up the complement of the MACC Board at this time. Mr. Chairman, I would like to know who sits on the Board, the MACC Board, at the present time. Could the Minister give us the names of the members of the Board?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the Chairman of the Corporation is Richard Klassen.
—(Interjections)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: The Board members are Richard Klassen, Harold Clement, Bob Manns, Don Fraser and Grant McAusland.

MR. ADAM: How many members are there on the Board?

MR. DOWNEY: I believe I said five.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose. —(Interjection)— Order please, order please. The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the Board Members are Richard Klassen, Chairman, Bob Manns, Grant McAusland, Harold Clement and Don Fraser.

MR. ADAM: Would any member of the board be eligible to obtain loans from MACC?

MR. DOWNEY: I would think, Mr. Chairman, that it would be undesirable for them to obtain a loan through the Corporation. I don't think it would be a good policy of the Corporation.

MR. ADAM: The minister is waffling a bit on that question. He said it would not be a good policy, you know he's not stating a clear position on this question. He is waffling from side to side, he's going around in circles. We'd like to know, Mr. Chairman, whether Members of the Board can obtain loans. I'd like to know if the Members of the Board can make loans or apply for loans.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I would not want to get involved with the Human Rights Commission in saying that they were denied a loan, but I think it would be poor policy for the government or the MACC to provide a loan for a Board of Directors.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, could the minister advise if any of the present Board Members have ever applied for a loan to MACC?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the question was, have any of the Board Members applied for a loan? I would have to check that out, I would assume probably they have applied for loans in different places, most agricultural operations do have to apply for loans in Manitoba.

MR. ADAM: That's all I have at the present time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: I wasn't here last night, but I was here Thursday last when we first got onto this particular resolution dealing with the affairs of MACC, and we haven't moved much forward since that time, Mr. Chairman. I understand I missed a considerable amount of debate on the question last night, when government responsibilities took me to the Community of Dauphin. But I think, Mr. Chairman, that there is possibly, you know, an opportune time to put the debate that has been going on now for some four days on this question, into some perspective. And, really the elements that we should be considering is just precisely what did the present government and the then-opposition say about this particular activity and program of MACC — before the election, for those of us that were in the House at that time, during the election, and what we're saying now about it, in fact what the Minister is carrying out, the policy of the present government in this particular area.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I need not remind the former Minister of Agriculture, who suffered through considerable numbers of hours on debates on this particular question, and the Hansards of the day are filled with our opposition at that time, as an opposition party, to the business of government purchasing farm agricultural land. Mr. Chairman, that same message was brought home very clearly to all rural Manitobans from all platforms during the elections of two Septembers, Octobers, ago.

MR. USKIW: You mean a big lie.

MR. ENNS: No, it was not a lie, Mr. Chairman; it was not a lie. I'm speaking about the commitment, the promise, that the now government, the now Minister, made to the people of Manitoba that we are here to represent as to what we would do should the people of Manitoba, the farmers of Manitoba, give us the responsibility of managing the affairs in the course of the next four years in this particular area. Mr. Chairman, I know it is particularly irritating to members opposite that this government has a way of fulfilling election promises that probably ranks at the top of the list of any governments across Canada.

Now we have said precisely what we are going to do in many areas. We have said we would try to reduce taxes and we have reduced taxes. We have said we would do away with state taxes and we have done away with state taxes. We have said that we would control government growth and we have done that; we would control the growth of bureaucracy and we have done it, in most instances through attrition or through simply not renewing programs that we didn't think were providing the service for the dollar paid. I acknowledge that in some instances it wasn't that easy and harder decisions had to be made and actual separations of employees took place.

And, Mr. Chairman, we also said on this specific item, that if elected, we would take the government out of the business of buying farmlands and that is essentially what we have done and what this Minister has done. Furthermore what we said, and we made it very clear, we would do everything in our power to put these farmlands so acquired, these 200,000 acres plus, so acquired, back into the hands of privately owned farm families.

Mr. Chairman, that is the election promises of the government of the Minister that we are now discussing his Estimates about. And for the opposition to now all of a sudden raise the question and all of a sudden get excited about the direction that this government is going in, it means they are merely venting their frustrations that in effect we are keeping yet another election promise. And when the Member for Inkster stands up in the House and says: "Are we going to continue the option of young Manitobans to farm on publicly owned farmlands and create new options?" The answer is unequivocally no, precisely in the same way that if I asked the New Democrats what option are they going to give should they return to power, what role will Royal Assurance Company of Canada play in the automobile insurance business in Manitoba, and their answer would be unequivocally no. So let's understand that, gentlemen; let's understand that, gentlemen. There is a question of basic policy.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Inkster is present and I remember only too well in one of his more benign and benevolent moments in the House, when he spoke prophetically about the fact, and he acknowledged, that indeed — and they were in power; they were in the seats of power and responsibility at the time — but he acknowledged, being the reasonably fair man that he is, that the day could well come that another administration, indeed even the Conservatives might one day again assume power. And lo, Mr. Chairman, it has happened. But what did he say on that particular day? He was not that worried, Mr. Chairman. Do you know why, Mr. Chairman? And this is all recorded in Hansard and I know I may be paraphrasing the honourable member, but he'll forgive a slip of the word one way or another. But his general response was in that particular speech was that he wasn't concerned because he was satisfied that in performing the functions in the four years, or eight years, that my friend socialists had as a member, as government, that they would move society three, four, five steps to the left and that when the occasion came that another government, a Conservative government came to office, we wouldn't have the guts to move it back or to move it in a different direction.

And, Mr. Chairman, what is bothering honourable members opposite, and what is exercising them so often is that we have not only got the guts, but we are doing it and we are doing it with dispatch and we're doing it in a hurry because we believe that that is our commitment, that is our mandate.

Mr. Chairman, we have, we believe, the mandate to do that. Mr. Chairman, no Minister of Agriculture, certainly not the last Minister of Agriculture can challenge this Minister of Agriculture's mandate in doing what he is doing. —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, my honourable friend, the Member for Lac du Bonnet, he should be the last to talk about a mandate from rural Manitoba. Mr. Chairman, let's put this on the record, there has never been another Minister of Agriculture who has poured that kind of public money into rural Manitoba, and in one particular segment if I may want to mention it, it's the segment that I am involved in, in the beef industry, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, at the same time that he was pouring that money in, he was prepared to, with the wave of a pen, literally piss \$10 million down the tube. And we are supposed to have an alert press that worries about how often hospital sheets get changed, that worries about how many strips of bacon are being fed, where's our Attorney-General that worries about jails not being built, and this Minister of Agriculture drifts \$10 million away — the former Minister of Agriculture — \$10 million away, and we are engaging in a big debate here and trying to challenge and trying to score

some Brownie points with our Minister about whether or not the Crown is getting its full appraised value return. The Minister's policy is clear. The Minister is clear; he is saying that we will get back every cent that the Crown has in the acquisition of this land.

Mr. Chairman, I'm far more radical than that. I would like to give it away because I believe it is in the interests of having land held in freehold tenure by private farmers. It is that important to me that I will encourage the Minister, I will do everything possible to the Department of Agriculture to encourage that direction, that we believe that we have a mandate for. —(Interjection)—

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet talks about . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could we have one speaker at a time. The Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: He can say what he wants but the fact of the matter is that in the course of their government, even though when the 1977 election became imminent, they then chose to underline the fact that indeed there was a purchase option in that Land Lease Program. But the truth of the matter is, how much land acquired by the Crown under the NDP was ever returned to the private farmer? How much land was returned to them into their private holdings? —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, that is not true. The previous administration was quite prepared to invest many millions of dollars to pursue an agricultural policy of their making. Now, Mr. Chairman, is there anything wrong for this Minister and for this administration to pursue the agricultural policies that we think we have a mandate for? Well, I have that acknowledgement, at least if not from the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, but from the Honourable Member for Inkster, that there is a responsibility on the government of the day to carry out those responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, you know, talks about and questions what kind of policy does the Conservative Party have, does the Conservative Government have with respect to agriculture. What kind of overall policy does this Minister of Agriculture have with respect to agriculture? Well, Mr. Chairman, the Minister knows full well the kind of policy direction that he wishes to take, and most Manitobans, most Canadians and most North Americans know the kind of agricultural policy that we wish to maintain in this particular area of government policy making.

Mr. Chairman, surely the responsibility of this Minister of Agriculture and this government is to maintain the capacity to produce the necessary food that we have built up in the past, that we have at the present, and to ensure that that capacity of food production continues in the future, Mr. Chairman. That, in essence, should be and ought to be the goal of any Ministry of Agriculture in this country, should be the goal of any Ministry of Agriculture around this world.

Unfortunately, agriculture far too often gets confused with grand and grandiose social programs and they tend to want to make the Department of Agriculture another Department of Social Assistance rather than develop sound agricultural policies and in that kind of a mix, agricultural production usually suffers.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet humps and shakes his head but, Mr. Chairman, you know if we want to talk about the delivery and about the performance of the agricultural industry thus far, then it surely has to be one of the brightest areas of achievement in the western industrialized and the western free nations of this world.

Mr. Chairman, if our housebuilders or our construction industry were anywhere near as efficient as the farmers and the agricultural industry, then our citizens would not be paying 30 percent for shelter as they are now, as compared to 17 or 18 percent for food of their disposable income. No other country in the world, perhaps other than the United States, bests us in that particular regard. Seventeen or 18 percent of Canadians' disposable income is used to maintain themselves with food.

Mr. Chairman, you know, when the hungry of the world send out SOSs, when there is famine in drought-stricken Africa or in strife-torn Bangladesh, you don't see the countries with the orderly state-controlled agricultural industries first off with their boat loads of wheat and supplies. Where does that help, where does that food, where does that grain come from? It comes from Canada; it comes from the United States; it comes from Argentina; it comes from Australia, wherever you have the kind of system that involves independent, freeholding farmers operating their land.

That is the kind of policy direction that this Minister is going to pursue. That is the kind of support that he is going to get from his caucus and his Cabinet Ministers and, Mr. Chairman, without any doubt — look around the honourable members who represent 95 percent of rural Manitoba, that obviously is the direction that Manitoba farmers want us to take.

Mr. Chairman, there will be mistakes made. I think that it is perfectly legitimate for this committee to examine diligently and questioningly the method used in the disposal of this kind of Crown sales. I think there is room for a good deal of honest debate as to whether or not a particular system

of disposal should be used or not, whether or not eligibility clauses should be entered into it. All these matters are subject for debate, but that hasn't been the debate to date. The debate to date has been the challenge to the Minister of selling any land and I want to make it very clear to honourable members opposite that that is our avowed policy, a policy that we will carry through with dispatch, with courage, because we believe in it.

It is far more important whenever we get home to our constituents, and I remind all members opposite that we get home to far more farm constituents than the honourable members opposite do, they give us the same message. They give us the same message. —(Interjection)—

Mr. Chairman, I think we can agree to disagree on this particular subject. The honourable members opposite can be charged with a great deal of hypocrisy in this particular area. The honourable members can be charged with a great deal of inconsistency in this question. The honourable members do not believe for one minute that any land that's so purchased by MACC will ever be returned to a private farmer.

Well, Mr. Chairman, what is the argument of the honourable gentlemen opposite? When we go into the other area, what is their argument with the whole question of CFI, for instance. They say that if the public puts up the money, then the people should own it. Well now, why would you then change courses in midstream and say, if you put up a half-a-million dollars to help me get established on a farm, why would you then say I should own the farm?

MR. GREEN: Because you said you can pay it back.

MR. ENNS: No, no, now you're equivocating. I ask the honourable member, when he was responsible for MDC, about the Simplot deal. Even though Simplot paid back every cent that was loaned by the public, with interest, before the time, and he stood up in the House, and the Hansard records it, that Simplot should be owned by the public of Manitoba simply on the basis that —(Interjection)— The honourable gentlemen opposite cannot have it both ways. They'd like to be the principal debaters of this thing. They'd like to debate —(Interjection)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could we have one speaker at a time? The Member for Lakeside. Order please — one speaker at a time. The Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: I hear from the sidelines the comment "Certainly the public should own Simplot — who put up the money?" Well, by the same token, certainly who should own the farmlands — who put up the money? Who put up the money? Who put up the money for the 200,000 acres?

Mr. Chairman, the impression and the knowledge of honourable members opposite — because I do believe them occasionally — I do believe them when they speak of fundamental socialist policies. And when Mr. Green says, and indicates, that's he's satisfied that we will live with an interruption every once in a while, every four years or eight years, but he will move society to the left, and to the left, and to the left, he means and he hopes that when an interruption such as the Conservative administration does come in, that we will not have the courage to move in our direction — to move in our direction. —(Interjection)—

Mr. Chairman, what that indicates to me too . . .

A MEMBER: You're going to have to give it away.

MR. ENNS: . . . what that indicates to me too, in that particular instance in land, that he can't have it both ways — that he can't have it both ways. That indeed he wanted to keep on moving it to the left, and to the left. Mr. Chairman, that means the kind of opposition, the kind of opposition that the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet and the New Democratic Party generally is putting up today, is generally putting up today, only reinforces, Mr. Chairman, if there was some Doubting Thomases during election times past, '73 and '77, if there were some Doubting Thomases who suggested that perhaps the Conservative propaganda was exaggerated when we talked about state farms, something like that, the very thing that is happening the last three or four days in this Committee proves, underwrites, underlines, the truth of the positions that were put forward by the Conservative Party during those election times.

Their resistance, their challenging this Minister in the sale of surplus lands underlines precisely, precisely what . . .

A MEMBER: Giveaways, not sales.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, what are we talking about giveaways? What are we talking about giveaways? Goodness gracious, we're talking about the Corporation retaining or returning to the

Crown all their costs plus. Now, Mr. Chairman, if there are instances where that hasn't taken place, then I think it's perfectly fair game for the Minister to be called on the carpet, for him to be examined, for him to have very good answers why in some instances total recovery wasn't made. That's a legitimate question of the debate. But that hasn't been the tenor of the debate; that hasn't been the tenor of the debate. The debate has been the charge that individual parcels of land are being sold, that they're being sold to Conservatives — well, Mr. Chairman, you know, that does present the Minister with an extreme problem. Eight out of ten farmers are Conservatives. And if we intend to sell 200,000 acres of land in the next little while, I'll be damned if he's not going to have to sell it to a Conservative every once in a while.

So that is a problem for the Honourable Minister. That is a problem for the Honourable Minister. But, Mr. Chairman, I don't want to be put off track, because that is only getting back to Position A that we were at before this gang of Socialists took over some eight, nine years ago. And that wouldn't satisfy me, Mr. Chairman, any more than it would satisfy the Honourable Member for Inkster, because I'm not satisfied at just staying at Position A.

Just as he has a vision, and has a belief, that over the long haul he will be instrumental and influential in moving society constantly to the left, I also have a vision, Mr. Chairman. And that's why, Mr. Chairman, we intend, and we make no bones about it, to sell many more thousands of acres of land; lands that up to now have not been considered for sale. Crown lands — lands that have never been entitled to any private freeholder. And let's put that on the record. Let's put that on the record. I'm waiting for it, and we are prodding and pushing the Minister and his colleague, the Honourable the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, under whose responsibility some of this additional Crown land lies, to provide and come forward with that policy. Because, Mr. Chairman, I am concerned that time is running out for us in that sense. I want to meet my election promises. I want to meet my commitment to the people that put me in this office, into this House.

So, Mr. Chairman, far from being concerned about the kind of debate that we've had here in the last three or four days, let me assure the honourable members of this committee, let me assure the Honourable Minister of his continued support, of his caucus and his Cabinet, with respect to the direction that he is moving, which is so obviously in tune, which is so obviously in tune, with the vast majority of rural people in Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, I have listened this afternoon, and today, and I repeat, I was in the Session Thursday last when we debated this question, or when we started to debate this question till the hours of 12:30 or 1:30, somewhere in that area; it's become patently obvious, it's become patently obvious, that the honourable members opposite —(Interjection)— No, Mr. Chairman. It's patently obvious that the honourable members wish to demonstrate or to vote against this particular issue. I wish to give them that occasion by moving, Mr. Chairman, that the question be put.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We have a motion on the floor that this question be now put. —(Interjection)— Order please. The Member for Inkster on a point of order.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman. If you are intending to put that motion, there is no such motion. If you wish to close debate on a particular item, the Rules specify how that can be done. But a motion that the question be put, Mr. Chairman, is not a motion which is acceptable in a committee, or in the House, or anywhere else. We'll debate the question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the members of the committee, under the heading Item 63, under the Rules, 63 (1): The previous question, until it is decided, precludes all amendments of the main question, and shall be put in the following words, that this question be now put. Item (2): Where the previous question is resolved in the affirmative, the original question shall be put forthwith without any amendment or debate. Under Section 64, Subsection (14): Where the motion for the previous question is moved in a Committee of Supply under a section of the Committee of Supply, the motion is not debatable. —(Interjection)— The question is not debatable. .

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 16. Nays 5.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I declare the motion carried.

Resolution 8: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,837,900 for Agriculture, the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation—pass — the Member for Inkster. Order please. The question has been put. All those in favour. Order please. The question was just put and was carried. There is no debate. Now the question itself, all those in favour.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 16. Nays 6.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I declare the motion carried.

Resolution 9: Item 4. Agricultural Production Division—pass; 4.(a)1 — the Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: I wish to speak to this question which relates to the providing of technical and specialized support services to farmers and regional extension staff, for purpose of enhancing the efficiency and growth of production of Manitoba's agricultural sector.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the policies of the existing government are going to make it very difficult for technical assistance with regard to Manitoba's agricultural population and the efficiency and growth of their production as a result of the way in which this government is eliminating the program, which permitted farmers in the province of Manitoba to have an option, Mr. Chairman, of renting land from the public in such a way as to be able to get on the farm, Mr. Chairman, without an outlay of capital which drained all of their resources and caused them to be in a position that only, Mr. Chairman. People with tremendous resources could enter the area of farming, with the result, Mr. Chairman, that numerous young people will never be able to obtain the opportunities that were available . . . —(Interjection)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. To the members of the committee, could we have one speaker at a time? The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I wish to deal with the question and I wish to say that this question relates to the other items that have been brought into the department and which I suggest, Mr. Chairman, there was an attempt to close debate and I still advise the chairman of the committee, that I believe that a motion that the previous question be now put, unless, Mr. Chairman, the rule change in the past two years is a rule change which permitted such a procedure to take place, that if that rule change was such a procedure, then we have passed that particular item. But, Mr. Chairman, I don't wish to deal with the ruling because that has been made and that has been proceeded on.

The question that I now wish to deal with, is the Agricultural Production Division and in doing so, Mr. Chairman, I cannot help but comment on some of the remarks that were made by the last speaker, Mr. Chairman, who had the great courage to make a very provocative speech, culminated by a motion that the question be put, in the hope that it could not be replied to. That is the kind of debating technique, Mr. Chairman, which proves without a shadow of a doubt, that the person who is speaking believes, Mr. Chairman, that he will be successfully challenged, unless he somehow terminates the debate after he has spoken. That is the most cowardly form of debating, Mr. Chairman, that has ever been taken and Mr. Chairman, is not becoming of the Honourable Member for Lakeside, who normally when he is on firmer ground, willing to hear an answer to what he has to say, normally has sufficient conviction in what he is putting forward, to permit it to be answered. But what we know with regard to the member in this particular case, is that we know that he was talking rubbish. Now, Mr. Chairman, when I told you at the last meeting of this committee and used words which he taught me in debate in the last session, when I used it, you said, "I wish the member would watch his language," and I said, "I learned it from the Minister of Highways." He has now added the other part of human waste to his vocabulary and introduced it at committee.

But nevertheless, Mr. Chairman, the fact is that the member in making his remarks, did so in a way which he apparently is entitled to do. He can now move the next question be put and the next question be put, and I suppose that that would be a way in which the Conservative Party . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I refer the member to Item Administration Salaries.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I am debating 4.(a)(1) as I heard 3. being debated without interruption on your part and I'm going to ask for the same consideration. I'm going to say, Mr. Chairman, that this item, Agricultural Production Division, that the policies that the government has followed and has just passed with respect to the availability of lands to farmers in the province of Manitoba or would-be farmers, and I'm not talking about only those who can make the highest bid on land which is being given by the government, or if they know that there is an inside track, make a bid which they know will not have to be high, and they will still get the land, will, Mr. Chairman, cause the Agricultural Production Division to suffer. Because now, we are going to be dealing with what was the problem as I heard it from many farmers, Mr. Chairman, in the 1960s and indeed in the early '70s; that first of all, there will be a cost price squeeze and secondly, the tendency will be for fewer and fewer people to till the land, that the Conservative policy in 1968 was to knowingly

reduce the number of farmers in the province of Manitoba, as evidenced by their TED report, from, I think, 38,000 to a target of something like 30,000 and I say that the last item, Mr. Chairman, and as it relates to the next item is an attempt to meet that target. They had an eight year problem, whereby they weren't able to run headlong into making sure that the land wound up into the hands of fewer and fewer private individuals and that the agricultural depopulation continued at a satisfactory pace. So they have now passed an item to quicken the pace of agricultural depopulation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the honourable minister says that this is simply keeping the promises of the Conservative administration when they went on the election trail in 1977. Mr. Chairman, as a matter of fact, the reverse is true. The fact is that in 1973, when the Member for Lac du Bonnet and in 1969, when the Member for Lac du Bonnet was being called a communist, and when they were attempt

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order please.

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

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Inkster is stretching the rules beyond all recognition. The item before us deals specifically with the salaries associated to the Technical Support Assistance programs with the Department of Agriculture. We're not now on election trails, we're not now in leadership fights or anything else, and I would ask you, Mr. Chairman, to either ask the honourable member to contain his remarks with respect to the resolution before us, or indeed, rule him out of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. James on a point of order.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, on the same point of order, if we looked at Item 8.(a), which we dealt with that dealt with the program by the government, that dealt strictly with the program by the government. The item that the Honourable Member for Inkster is now dealing with, deals with a technical and specialized support service. It doesn't deal with a government program, so it's out of order. —(Interjection)— It's a government policy program we dealt with last, we're now dealing with a government support service or technical and specialized service and not with the policy of a government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet on the same point of order.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman, the heading that we are dealing with suggests that we can debate technical and specialized support services. The Member for Inkster is talking about the fact that you have not provided for certain support services that would allow people who do not wish to own land to operate a farm in Manitoba. That's what he's talking about; that under this item there is no provision for that to happen, Mr. Chairman. That's what he's arguing.

MR. GREEN: I'm astonished, Mr. Chairman, that these people who have great conviction and want the world to know exactly where they stand and where we stand, would take the position that the world should know where they stand, but they should vote out of order any speeches as to where we stand. I have read — (Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, the member says that that's fair and I repeat that the Conservative position is fight fair. Let us state our position but do not let the opposition state their position.

"Promotes specialization and expansion in agriculture and where practicable . . ." — I'm talking to the point of order. Am I not permitted even to speak to the point of order? "Promotes specialization and expansion in agriculture, and where practicable, encourages and stimulates production of new products," and I say, Mr. Chairman, that that function has been impaired and I want to talk about that function. And when the Member for Lakeside says that there is nothing in here about the election trail or campaign promises, I want to know where the election trail or campaign promises comes under Item 3., where I heard 15 minutes of the election trail and campaign promises. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Chairman, then it is a big part of Item 4. and, Mr. Chairman, I ask for the right to continue and I intend to continue. —(Interjection)— That's right. That's right.

A MEMBER: He's out of order.

MR. GREEN: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I would like to direct all members of the committee that there is a certain amount of latitude and a certain amount of gray area here. I'd like to ask all members to try and get as close to the item under consideration as possible. The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: I promise to do that. "Supports the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life," and if you, Mr. Chairman, find anything that I have said to be out of the ambit of that particular phrase, then I will, Mr. Chairman, with greatest respect lose my respect for the Chair. Because what it says here is, "Supports the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life," and that's all I have been talking about and that's what the Conservatives do not wish to hear about. And that's why they make a motion to close debate after they have finished speaking about the courage that they have in putting forth their position and that is why they say, when you are speaking about the rural Manitobans, the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life, that you are out of order, Mr. Chairman. Is anything so unheard of, as that suggestion? And that I'm to be ruled out of order, according to the dictates of the Member for St. James.

Now, I intend to continue, Mr. Chairman, —(Interjection)— well' the Chair ruled that I'm to go and be very careful in this gray area which I undertake to do. I undertake to be as careful as the Member for Lakeside and I asked to be judged by the same standards.

Mr. Chairman, I want to deal with the collective farm. —(Interjection)— Fine, if the honourable member wishes me to deal with the collective farms, I will say, Mr. Chairman, that there are a healthy number of good Manitoba citizens who are good farmers in this province and good citizens of our province, who are operating perhaps the best collective farms in the world, here in the province of Manitoba — not in Russia — but in the province of Manitoba; and they happen to be cousins of my friend, the Minister of Highways, who probably —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, the fact is that these people are perhaps the most perfect communists in the world, is a problem for my friend, the Minister of Highways, but nevertheless he has to live with it. And not say that a person — this is what he said — that the best way and the way in which it is inevitable that the best farmlands will be conducted is by the individual owner operator.

Mr. Chairman, I have seen individual owner operators in different places, and I've seen people who operate farmlands communally, and I can tell you, Mr. Chairman, that in those areas that I have seen it, that the communal farms have done better. But nobody is suggesting communal farms in the province of Manitoba. Those who want to run them have a perfect opportunity of doing so; and the member is right, that the government will not take it away from them; but it certainly throws the line to those who say that only the individual owner operator can operate his land, because that is false by the standards that we know directly in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister of Highways, who does not wish to be answered; who does not wish his great courageous statements to be answered; said that the vote in Manitoba reflected our position on the Land Lease Program. Well, Mr. Chairman, the former Minister of Agriculture was much more articulate about the fact that there should be this type of program available in the province in 1973, than he was in 1978 and 1977, and as a matter of fact he did very well in 1973, very well; and there are numerous New Democrats throughout this province did very well. And if my honourable friend wants to know where the impairment came — I said it yesterday,, the member wasn't here — it's exactly the compromise on the program that's created a problem and confusion, not the fact that the program was in existence, but that the program was withdrawn from. And that instead of making sure that that land was continually available, we introduced an amendment which made an option available which could have resulted in the program not existing.

And I think, Mr. Chairman, if one wants to look for the impairment, that the Minister of Agriculture nor did any of our rural candidates get anything from that option — they lost votes — they didn't gain votes. And the Minister of Highways, when he says that the Conservative government is keeping its elected promises and has disappointed me by not standing pat, I want to put that to the Conservatives. What were the biggest issues, Mr. Chairman, upon which he separated socialism from the free enterprise system? Mr. Chairman, they were: Medicare . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. For my benefit, could the Member for Inkster where this relates to 4.(a)(1), Salaries? The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: The question No. 4, as it relates to the first three paragraphs, including: "Supports the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life," which I've discussed, and I was then, Mr. Chairman, digressing into what was discussed for a full 15 to 20 minutes by the Minister of Highways, relating to the philosophical differences between this government on these questions

and the other government on these questions. And the Minister of Highways has said — let it be clear that this is what he has said — that he is going to dispossess as quickly as it is possible to do so, all of the people of the Province of Manitoba of those trial lands that we now own, and put them into the hands of private individuals. —(Interjections)—

MR. ENNS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Obviously the honourable member is not going to abide by the rules that he, himself, helped establish in terms of how we conduct our Committee meetings; but I cannot allow him to now wilfully distort and read falsehoods into the records.

I have made no such remark, indeed, I indicated to the honourable members of this Committee, that consistent with our policy as enunciated to the people and farmers of Manitoba during the election of '77, was that we would honour all commitments; all leases; all present leases; and have so continued to do so and will continue to do so; but that we will encourage —(Interjections)— we will encourage and we will provide the necessary support, through such agencies as MACC, to provide for the long-term borrowing, and other support services to encourage private ownership of the land.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Minister of Highways is stating a difference of opinion; and before we continue with the Member for Inkster, I would just like to state that speeches in a Committee of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion. The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: That's what I'm doing, Mr. Chairman, and I'm glad you reminded the Minister of Highways that that is the case.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Highways said — he used different language, but he said — “It is not going fast enough. I am not satisfied with what is being done by the Minister of Agriculture. I want all the lands that are now owned by the Crown turned over to private individuals.” And I said, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Highways said it is not going fast enough, he wants to dispossess that land which is now publicly held by the people of this province as fast as he can, and put it into the hands of private individuals. That's exactly what he said, and I want to remind . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. If I could caution the member that this item was dealt with under Item 3, and we are now dealing with Item 4. (a)(1). The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: I find it almost embarrassing to my friends, the Conservatives, that they would not want me to be able to discuss this subject. I find that embarrassing. Are you so weak; are you so cowardly; are you so unsure of your position; that you will not let this position be discussed? —(Interjection)— Because the Minister of Highways got up, Mr. Chairman, —(Interjection)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could we have one speaker at a time. The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, let us be clear, and it becomes clearer all the time, and the Minister of Highways introduced a new element into it; he said, and I want to remind the Minister of Highways that 75 percent of the land in the this province is now owned by the public generally, 75 percent of all the land area of the province of Manitoba is owned by the public generally. And what the Minister of Highways said is that the Conservative Party intends to — as quickly as possible — dispossess the people of this province of that ownership of that land, and turn it over to private individuals, Mr. Chairman. —(Interjections)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: We are now not voting on this Resolution, we are on a different department, Mines and Natural Resources.

The Member for Inkster. —(Interjections)—

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, it was the Minister of Highways that said he is going to encourage the Minister of Mines and Resources to see to it that this land is disposed of, so he's the one who brought in the Minister of Mines and Resources; and I am suggesting to you, Mr. Chairman, that I want exactly what the Minister of Highways wants. I want the issue to be clear. I want it to be clear, Mr. Chairman, that the Conservative Party position is to depopulate the rural areas; to have the lands owned by fewer and fewer numbers of . . . in the province of Manitoba; to see to it that there is no land available for young people who will go into farming; that in order for a person to enter the agricultural profession he will have to buy land on the basis of its current

market value and put the entire capital cost up either in cash or by mortgage; or not be involved in farming. Or, in the alternative, Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Highways says he will give it to him.

But after, Mr. Chairman, it has all been given away, it will be owned by private people, and private people do not give anything away. —(Interjection)— They will then, Mr. Chairman, say that they are going to sell it for the highest price, and when they sell it for the highest price, what will happen . . . ?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I would suggest that possibly the topic of discussion would best be discussed under the Minister's Salary. I'm suggesting that part of that was covered under Item 3; I'm suggesting that the Member for Inkster contain himself to Item 4.(a)(1).

The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: I'm dealing with the salaries that are spent to support the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet on a Point of Order.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, my point of order . . .

MR. GREEN: I'm dealing with the salaries that are paid to those people who are going to support the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order. Order please. Order please. The Chair recognizes the Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order.

MR. GREEN: Pardon me?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes the Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order. The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, my point of order is, that the heading that we are now debating is Agricultural Production Division, which includes all of the productive land in the province of Manitoba. —(Interjections)— Oh yes, yes, Mr. Chairman. It includes all of the technical services; all the support services of the Crown with respect to production of agricultural commodities; and therefore it is a wide open debate as to what is contained in these Estimates and as far as the Opposition is concerned, it is open to criticize what is lacking in . . . —(Interjections)— Mr. Chairman, who has the floor here?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member of Lac du Bonnet continue on his point of order.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, it is up to the Opposition to point out what is lacking under this appropriation in terms of the policies that come under Agricultural Production Division.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the Members of the Committee, I rule that the Member for Lac du Bonnet does not have a point of order. I would rule that the area that has been under discussion has been under Item 3, and I would like to refer members to Item 4.(a)(1). The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: 4.(a)(1). I'm dealing with 4. Agricultural Production Division. I refer to the clause: Supports the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life. I'm dealing with (1) Salaries, which is the people who are paid to administer those efforts to help rural Manitobans improve their quality of life.

One of the ways in which rural Manitobans are able to improve their quality of life is to continue to live in rural Manitoba, and one of the ways in which they are to continue to live in rural Manitoba, Mr. Chairman, is if we deal with agricultural problems.. One of the agricultural problems that we have noted in the province of Manitoba over the past years, is rural depopulation. —(Interjection)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. All members will have an opportunity . . . Order please. All members who wish to speak will have an opportunity if they so indicate. The Member for Lakeside on a point of order.

MR. ENNS: This Resolution has precious little to do with the quality of life for those people who want to live in rural Manitoba. It has to do with agricultural production, and it deals with the particular technical services of how to raise better cattle; how to raise better forage seed; how to raise better crops; how to produce better diversified crops, etc., etc., etc. That's the item that we're dealing with. That's the item that we're dealing with. —(Interjections)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. To the members of the Committee, with the interruptions going on, the Chair has a problem hearing. The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Highways has a problem. I am reading from 4.(a). If he will look at the line immediately above 4.(a) he will see that Agricultural Production Division, supports the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life. Now if the member will say that the Conservatives really put that in because they don't want to improve the quality of life of rural Manitobans, and therefore that that item should be struck and that we should eliminate the support of efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life, and if the member will agree that that is not a consideration of the Conservative Party, then I will agree with him and rather than agreeing to disagree, we will agree to agree.

But that's not what the Estimates now says, and until that item is taken out, Mr. Chairman, I have a right to speak to it. So I am talking about 4. — Support, Administration, Salaries' and I'm talking about the salaries that are paid to go to support the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life. And one of the ways that I say that people in the Province of Manitoba, in rural Manitoba, can improve their quality of life, is to be able to live, and to live in rural Manitoba. And one of the problems of rural Manitoba has been . . . there are two essential problems that I've heard from people in rural Manitoba, and you guys who represent the farm communities, you can tell me whether the farmers who have told me these things have lied to me.

One of the things that they said, and this is particularly in the area from 1957 up to '57-'58, is that there was a cost-price squeeze; that the cost of the things that they had to buy went up, and that the price of their product was in a market which did not give them even the cost of production for the production of their crops.

The second problem, maybe not for the individual farmer as such, but for the one who was affected in that way, was rural depopulation. And the problem of rural depopulation was really one that was created by, or at least aided and abetted by the Conservative Party, who said that they want to reduce the population of rural Manitoba from 38,000 farmers . . .

A MEMBER: No, no. Now you're talking nonsense.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's in the TED Report. It was filed by the Conservative Government in the TED Report between 1966 and '69. —(Interjection)— Well, I'm glad that you don't want to do that. The Member for Gladstone tells me that he doesn't want rural depopulation, that he agrees with me, and that this is a good subject. Fine. Now we want to talk about what causes rural depopulation. And what causes rural depopulation, Mr. Chairman, in many respects, is that it becomes more and more difficult to maintain a viable farming unit. And one of the reasons that it is difficult to maintain a viable farming unit is the cost of land. Mr. Chairman, again, will the farmer say that I've never heard this from rural people? That the farmers live poor and die rich? Is that something I learned from the factory workers in the CPR? —(Interjection)— That's what I got from rural people. Maybe they have never heard it, but I heard it. Do they not know, Mr. Chairman, do they not know the age-old rural joke about the farmer who went to New York and was on a quiz show, and he won on that quiz show a half-a-million dollars, and the Master of Ceremonies said "What are you going to do with it?" And he says, "I think I'll go back to farming until it's all gone."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could I ask the direction of the Member for Inkster, as well as the rest of the members of the committee, if the intention is to have a freewheeling debate on the whole Estimate as such, or whether we want to go item by item. We're dealing on a very wide range, and I'm asking the direction of the members of the committee. The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: 4.(a)(1) — I want to deal with the Administrative Salaries, where I am entitled to see the effectiveness of those salaries which are paid to our administration to help rural Manitobans improve their quality of life. I am suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that one of the problems with regard to the quality of life of rural Manitobans, is that it becomes more and more difficult to maintain a viable farming unit. I am suggesting that the Conservative Party has aided and abetted that problem

by virtue of its change in the option which was given to rural people to go on to public land at a preferred rental — and I admit that to this extent it was a subsidy . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I believe the member is discussing Item 3. again.

MR. GREEN: No, I'm not, Mr. Chairman. I'm discussing Item 4.(a)(1).

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Yes. I am talking about the problems that are going to be associated with all of these people in agricultural training and the Animal Industry Branch, in the Veterinary Services Branch and the Soils and Crops Branch, in the Communications Branch — all of which are related to trying to improve the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life. And I'm suggesting that these people are going to have a serious problem in dealing with people who want to get on the land, who cannot afford the capital cost thereof. And the reason that they will have this problem, Mr. Chairman, is that an option which was available, not only indeed, Mr. Chairman, was available in Manitoba, but an option which has been picked up in Minnesota, in various other places throughout North America, to have land made available to young people, Mr. Chairman, without having to put the entire capital cost in it so that they could live on the land, get the income from it, and not pass an estate to their beneficiaries as a result of accumulated wealth.

Now I know that that runs against the grain of some people, but just because it runs against the grain of some people doesn't mean that those people who don't want to do it should prohibit others from doing it. Where is this concept of freedom? Where is this concept of saying that we want to provide free Manitoba. The guy who says that I believe that I should own and operate my own land and that it should be a huge unit and that I should pay off my mortgage with the income and have a huge estate when I die — I respect him. But I do not respect his right to say that everybody has to live the way he wants to live.

And what we did, Mr. Chairman, and what I urge upon the Conservatives, that these people who are going to be paid these salaries are going to have a great problem, Mr. Chairman, a problem that has been created by the Minister of Highways and his administration under the stupid notion, Mr. Chairman, that this is the reason they got elected to office. You know, I hope they maintain that feeling that that is the reason that they got elected to office . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. GREEN: . . . because if they do that, they won't go to the true reasons, and we'll be able to beat them better the next time.

But that certainly wasn't the reason. And if we want to know what the people of the Province of Manitoba wanted, I tell you, Mr. Chairman, that there were more rural Manitobans supporting what my honourable friend says is Socialism in 1969 and 1973 when we were much more outspoken on these issues, than in 1977 when we were backing away from them. And when we backed away from them is when we lost the rural population, not when we were moving forward toward them. And let my honourable friend know that. And let him know that I am not, Mr. Chairman, I am not, except with one qualification, able to retract what I said about the Conservatives standing pat when they got into office and us moving forward. Because on the main issues — on this issue — there is no forward movement because we hardly moved at all. But on the main issues, they haven't moved at all.

I make a qualification, Mr. Chairman. I did not calculate that they were stupid enough to do some of the things that they have done. I did not realize that they would take profitable, public operations, that they would take profitable, public operations — yes, Mr. Chairman, I'll take, Mr. Chairman, a related item — Item No. 4. That deals with Morden Fine Foods, which is related to the agricultural community and improving the efforts of rural Manitobans to improve their quality of life.

In the Province of Manitoba, Mr. Chairman, to deal with that rural population, the Province of Manitoba bailed out — bailed out an irresponsible private sector cannery which said that it's going to get everything it can out of the citizens of rural Manitoba, and then when it did, that it would abandon them and leave and the province said, "No, we want to maintain the quality of life for the people in rural Manitoba. Therefore, we are going to provide a vertical industry for the people who grow peas and who grow corn, and who grow beans, to have a related industry where it would be processed in the community of Morden."

Mr. Chairman, we did that. We did it for five or six years. We did it where the private sector had abandoned them. And then, Mr. Chairman, I agree, I did not believe that the Tories would

be so stupid as to say that the businesslike government would turn that over to a private person on the basis of giving him \$1 million worth of land, and equipment, and \$1 million worth of inventory — for \$1 million. I didn't think that my learned friends could be quite as unbusinesslike as they have proved themselves to be.

And as a result, Mr. Chairman, I'm glad, and I spoke to the gentleman the other day, that the industry is continuing to operate. But, Mr. Chairman, he had it all his way, and could have abandoned that plant and taken out \$1 million in inventory, and sold the land and come out the winner by \$1 million. Fortunately, the work that went on by the public to create that cannery is now beginning to bear fruit, and he will be able to make money on the public investment and the public efforts which were made to keep that industry in the Province of Manitoba.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I do make that qualification. I did underestimate the stupidity of the Conservative Government, and therefore, to that extent my learned friend has scored a point. But it's a rather hard point to live with. In all other respects, Mr. Chairman, the facts are that the Conservatives, in terms of their farm program, have not reversed a great deal. The fact is that the Land Use Program that was being dealt with by the former Minister of Agriculture, was a very moderate program. It was one which the Minister of Highways doesn't realize resulted in 200 of the 600 farmers who were on leases eventually acquiring the land.

And he is right, in that respect. He is right. That being the program, it wasn't much of a Socialist program, and that by not being much of a Socialist program, he is not reversing very much.

And that's why I said yesterday at this committee, and I repeat today, that if the New Democrats made a mistake, it was impairing that program with that last option that we put on it, and it got us no votes at all. It cost us votes, because it made the Conservatives appear to be right, and they weren't right. And Mr. Ferguson agrees with me.

MR. FERGUSON: We were right, yes.

MR. GREEN: No, it makes you appear to be right. It makes you appear to be right, because we said you were right.

MR. FERGUSON: Well, a lot of people thought we were right.

MR. GREEN: And that's the problem. Well, if we say you are right, if we say you are right, then you will appear to be right.

A MEMBER: That will be enough.

MR. GREEN: That's right. We gave you the biggest assist, not by instituting the program, but by abandoning the program. So, Mr. Chairman, despite all of the interruptions and the difficulties that I have been caused, and people trying to take me off of the subject which I'm supposed to direct my attention to —(Interjections)—

A MEMBER: Beautiful leadership speech, Sid. Howard, look out.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: My major problem, Mr. Chairman, if I did have ambitions in that direction, is the support I get from my Tory friends, that's right. With friends like that, I do not need enemies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lakeside.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm not quite finished.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: I say, Mr. Chairman, that with regard to the agricultural life of rural Manitoba, that the direction of the Conservative Party is to rural depopulation, to increasing larger units of agricultural land, increasing larger units, fewer and fewer farmers, eventually, Mr. Chairman, a group of two things: tenant farmers such as existed not, Mr. Chairman, under the public ownership, but has always developed under private ownership; and a rural working people because the farms, as they become larger, and even with the mechanization of equipment, will require a labour force.

And, Mr. Chairman, that is where we are moving. We are not preserving that which the

say is best, and that is an owner-operated unit. We are moving away from that direction. And we would have preserved, not an owner-operated unit, but a farmer-operated unit which would have given the rural people a different option, and therefore, Mr. Chairman, I do not know how it could be in any way a restriction of their freedom. As a matter of fact, I would see it as an expansion of their freedom, and that the taking away of that particular program — the taking away of that particular program — will be a detriment to the quality of life of the people in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy that the issues have been so formulated. I said last year, Mr. Chairman, before the election, and I will remind the Member for Lakeside about it, when I told the story, a Tolstoi story of "How Much Land Does A Man Need?", which is directly related to the quality of life in rural Manitoba, he said: "I dare you to tell that story in my constituency". I said: "Name the place and the date; I will be there in your constituency to tell that story".

A MEMBER: I phoned you and I got a recorded answer.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, you don't get a recorded answer on my telephone. He obviously got the wrong number and didn't care. I'd make the same statement to any of my rural friends now. You want to have a good country meeting; I enjoy them very much and I've been at lots of them. —(Interjection)— Yes, I enjoy the apple pie in the country, that's right. —(Interjection)— And I will come, Mr. Chairman, and we will deal. . . —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, if apple pie isn't the quality of life in rural Manitoba, I don't know what is.

And the fact is, Mr. Chairman, that it is interesting, and I don't know, maybe members will help me out: I saw the tail end of a program that was produced by some Mennonite organization on Sunday night, and the tail end of the program was that they were burying a man and said that all he needed was six feet of land from his head to his toe, which is the ending of Tolstoi's story, and I wondered whether, really, did anybody see that CBC proram; it was this week. I didn't see the beginning of it. These gentlemen are nodding. Did they put on: "How Much Land Does A Man Need"? They did. Interesting, Mr. Chairman, because the end was that program and it was put on by the Mennonite Brethren, and they saw great value, Mr. Chairman, in putting on what I told my honourable friend, and I want to go, Mr. Chairman, to any constituency in the Province of Manitoba, now with the endorsement of the Mennonite Brethren, saying that that story tells you more about rural life and urban life and any kind of life than you will learn from all of the Conservatives that you will eve speak to. And that is, Mr. Chairman, what is being dealt with by this particular program, that if we think that we are going to improve the quality of life of rural Manitoba by depopulating it and by having a greater and greater increase in the size of farms and every man for himself, as the elephant said when he danced among the chickens, that if we think that that is going to improv the quality of life, then the battle lines are set, Mr. Chairman.

I'm very aappy. I promised, Mr. Chairman, my Conservative friends that if they announced that I'm going to talk with one of them on the same platform, they will likely get a good attendance. They will have nothing to lose if they're right. We'll see how many invitations I get.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lakeside. Before I recognize the Member for Lakeside, might I caution all members of the committee that anybody speaking should speak to Item 4.(a)(1).

The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, it's become patently obvious in the manner and way in which members opposite wish to deal with the Estimates, to accommodate them and to remain within the long standing rules of our committee, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Gladstone, that the entire Estimates of the Department of Agriculture be now passed with the exception of Clause 1.(a), which is the Minister's Salary.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. I would ask for a five minute recess to consider the motion.

I call the Committee back to order. Under Section 64, subsection 15, "The Chairman of the Committee of Supply or a section thereof may receive a motion to the effect that hhe entire Estimates of the Department of the Government, then under consideration except the item thereof that deals with the Minister's Salary be voted within a period set out in the motion, and upon receiving such a motion, the Chairman shall put the question on the motion without allowing any amendment thereto or debate thereon." Under the circumstances, I would have to rule the motion out of order because of lack of specified time.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, now the member has put a motion which has been ruled out of order;

you recognize the next person on the list. He has spoken and he has put a motion which has been ruled out of order. A member who makes a motion then terminates his speech with the motion. He has terminated his speech —(Interjection)— Mr. Chairman, if I got up in the House and I moved a motion and at the end of the motion if the Chairman ruled it out of order, the next speaker on the list is recognized. —(Interjection)— Absolutely. He has made a motion; the motion has not been accepted; now we move to the next speaker on the list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the members of the Committee. It has been the customary order in this room that a member has continuously the floor until he relinquishes the floor. I've recognized members —(Interjection)— Order please. I've recognized individual members time and time again for a long length of time until they conceded the floor.

MR. GREEN: That is when they have put a motion. You have not recognized anybody who has put a motion. He put a motion that. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: If the Member for Lakeside relinquishes the floor, I recognize the next speaker.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I challenge your ruling. The Member for Lakeside has put a motion. Once he has put a motion, he has precluded the chair, and the next person on the list is entitled to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. May I ask for the indulgence of the committee. Order please. I would like to call the committee back to order.

Under Section 414 of Beauchesne, "If a motion is ruled out on the grounds that its wording is objectionable or its allegations are irregular, the mover is not thereby deprived of the right to move it again after having made the necessary corrections and given a new notice. If the irregularities are trivial or without bearing on the main purpose of the motion, the House may agree to rectify them but the mover himself cannot amend his own."

Order please, under Section 447, "Occasionally a motion or amendment is by leave withdrawn and another motion or amendment substituted in order to meet the views of the House as expressed in debate. But that course can only be taken with the consent of the House." I don't anticipate getting that kind of consent and I, under the circumstances, recognize the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I regret that for the first time in fourteen or fifteen Sessions, that I have witnessed a motion of closure in this House; I regret that very much, because I think it marks a new procedure under a new administration who no longer is interested, Mr. Chairman, in hearing what the loyal opposition has to say about the Estimates of any department. This is where we're at and, Mr. Chairman, in recognizing that this government wants to operate in a very dictatorial fashion. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Could I direct the member to speak to Item 4.(a)(1)?

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

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

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the quality of life for the people of Manitoba, especially the rural people of Manitoba, has been seriously impaired tonight by the fact that the government through its majority, has denied full debate on the government's Estimates for the Department of Agriculture. Yes. And that affects the quality of life for rural Manitoba, Mr. Chairman, if you will read under 4., you will find that it mentions the importance of the quality of life of our rural people, and it has now been severely impaired because this government, Mr. Chairman, doesn't want to put its agricultural program; doesn't want to put its agricultural program before the loyal opposition of this province for public scrutiny. Yes, that's where we have arrived, Mr. Chairman. It is the first time in all the years that I have been in this House, Mr. Chairman, that that has occurred; the first time.

Now, Mr. Chairman, not only, and you know, if one wanted to give some latitude to the Member for Lakeside, who moved the closure motion, one could say he may have an ounce of credibility, because we spent an awful lot of time on one resolution. If there's any credibility, it's in that area, Mr. Chairman. But you know, remember, remember, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister has promised

to bring back certain information, took certain things under consideration, and then came back here and said: "I have nothing to say", despite, Mr. Chairman, despite the commitments he gave to this committee, despite the fact, Mr. Chairman, that he had an ample opportunity to bring back the information that was sought. He chose not to do so and then, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Lakeside chose to move a motion of closure. And that is the scenario that we have witnessed here today.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we'll leave Resolution No. 3 for the moment; we will leave that, and we will talk about Resolution No. 4. But what happened, Mr. Chairman, after one speech by the Member for Inkster; we have another motion of closure, not only of a Resolution, but of the balance of the departmental Estimates, Mr. Chairman. Yes, arrogant, dictatorial, Mr. Chairman, has no consideration; no consideration for the public interest, Mr. Chairman. We have to assume, Mr. Chairman, that unless we have second thoughts about our parliamentary system, that there is some validity, Mr. Chairman. . .

MR. ENNS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Member for Lakeside on a point of order.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, this Resolution deals with the specific technical and specialized support services for farmers and regional extensions provided by regional extension staff. It deals with the animal industry branch; with the veterinary services branch; with the soils and crops branch; with the technical economic branch; with agriculture training. These are the items that are supposed to be under this discussion. We are discussing items that are quite acceptable under the Minister's Salary in a general overview or review of the departmental affairs or this Minister's conduct, but I appeal to you, Mr. Chairman, not for the first, for the second, for the third time, which finally brought about the frustration of people that have some respect for the rules of this committee that you now rule; that you now rule, Mr. Chairman, unequivocally, that we deal with these specific areas — the animal industry branch; the veterinary services branch; soils and crops branch; technical economic branch; and agricultural training. This is the resolution that is before us, Mr. Chairman, not a Throne Speech debate; not a budget speech debate; and not the Minister's Salary.

I moved a motion, or tried to move a motion that would accommodate the kind of debate that honourable members wish to have, wish to carry on with. They choose not to and I appeal to you, Mr. Chairman, to rule with some degree of firmness on this question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please, order please. Might I suggest to the members of the committee that we've had a very wide ranging debate contrary to the normal procedure in working with the Estimates, or debating the Estimates. I would suggest to all members that we try and contain ourselves to items that are before us, contrary to the way we have been dealing with them until now, and deal with items specifically.

The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, you will appreciate that before I was rudely interrupted by the Member for Lakeside that I was dealing with the subject before us. I made reference to the question of the quality of life for rural people in Manitoba at least three or four times, Mr. Chairman, in the course of my comments. And so the Member for Lakeside did not have a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I want to point out as I was attempting to when the member interjected that if we are going to guarantee to the people of rural Manitoba that quality of life that is so important, because this government has decided that they should make mention of it in their Estimates, then the parliamentary system, Mr. Chairman, has to function in the traditional way that it has for a hundred years, Mr. Chairman. One of the problems is that it has begun to malfunction as of this evening . . .

A MEMBER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. On a point of order.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, how can we talk about programs for . . .

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

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, while I have a great belief in the parliamentary system, I don't necessarily believe that the parliamentary system is essential to the quality of rural life in Manitoba. There are, after all, other systems. —(Interjections)— There are other systems, there are other systems . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please. Order please. Could I suggest to the members of the Committee that a difference of opinion does not constitute a point of order. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, again the Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Highways, has interrupted me when I was trying to stress the importance of the quality of life in rural Manitoba. Mr. Chairman, and the Member for Lakeside put on the record that the parliamentary system is really not relevant or important to the people of rural Manitoba. That's what he just finished telling us, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we understand that that's their belief because they have put motions forward tonight, in this Committee, that indicates that very point. We have understood that for the last hour and a half, Mr. Chairman. We understand it fully. Because, Mr. Chairman, this government doesn't want its Estimates scrutinized by the Opposition. We understand that. And they are attempting ways and means of not having that done.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the member would refer to the Estimate that we are on, that's Administration 4. (a)(1) which is the salary of the Assistant Deputy Minister and expenses in that department.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak to the point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Inkster on the same point of order.

MR. GREEN: I think, Mr. Chairman, that indeed there is an unexpected subject with respect to the rural quality of life. I, myself, would not have thought that it would be relevant but when someone questions whether the parliamentary system is relevant to the quality of life in rural Manitoba, I believe it becomes an issue that has to be discussed, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, on that same point . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister on the same point of order.

MR. DOWNEY: The members will have an opportunity to discuss that general area on my salary and I think that's

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is not going to dictate when we are going to discuss the Estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Minister on the same point of order.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I think in keeping with the way in which we debated the last item that took so many days, we're quite prepared to carry on . . . —(Interjections)— and we would like to get directly to the salaries that the Assistant Deputy Minister . . . —(Interjections)— Well, Mr. Chairman, I'm speaking to the point of order that we should be discussing, 4.(a)(1), Salaries, which in fact, are the salaries of Assistant Deputy Minister and support staff.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, did the Minister have a point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister did have a point of order. The Member for Lac du Bonnet, would he retain himself to the Item of 4.(a)(1)?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, you will recall, and it is unfortunate that we can't produce Hansard instantaneously — you will recall several mentions in my comments with respect to the importance of the quality of life for the people of rural of Manitoba. That is specifically mentioned in Item 4, Mr. Chairman, specifically mentioned. And we are dealing with that, Mr. Chairman.

The Member for Lakeside wanted to preclude debate on that question, Mr. Chairman, and so we have now introduced to this debate whether or not the parliamentary system is relevant to the people of rural Manitoba. Well, I want to tell the Member for Lakeside that this parliamentary system has made him a Minister of Highways — yes, and that he has a responsibility . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. I rule the Member for Lakeside out of order on that point. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I agree with you, Sir, that we want to talk about the quality of life for rural people and in talking about the quality of life for rural people, I think it is important, Mr. Chairman, that we have the fullest degree of discussion with respect to each aspect of the Minister's appropriations. And so, Mr. Chairman, I don't appreciate when that is denied to us. I don't appreciate that and I think that the Committee should know that in case it slipped their mind, Mr. Chairman. I think the Committee should know that.

So, Mr. Chairman, what are we going to do with respect to the area of agricultural production in Manitoba. That's what we are talking about, Mr. Chairman. And the Member for Lakeside, this evening, indicated to us that they have made up their mind that they are going to alter in some way the lifestyle of the people of this province and in particular those in rural Manitoba, Mr. Chairman. Wherein, he said they were going to embark on the selling of all of the Crown lands that is available in Manitoba. And I want to ask the Member for Lakeside in that connection because, Mr. Chairman, I know that within this appropriation that is very relevant, Mr. Chairman. I know that with respect to the production of agricultural commodities, Mr. Chairman, for which we have an appropriation of some \$7.7 million in this vote, Mr. Chairman, that it is important to know how the Minister intends to make this change.

Now we know that as an example, Mr. Chairman, that the Minister of Highways has a Crown land lease, Mr. Chairman, some 1,700 acres of Crown land which is the farm that makes up the Harry Enns farm in Woodlands. We know that. And this Minister says he's going to sell that land and many lands like it . . . —(Interjections)— Oh no, that's right he said he was going to give it away — that is correct. I'm corrected by the Member for Inkster, Mr. Chairman. He is going to give it away, Mr. Chairman. And I would like him to explain more fully to this Committee how that is going to improve, Mr. Chairman, the quality of life to the people of rural of Manitoba and how that will affect the expenditures of \$7,794,000, Mr. Chairman. I suggest that the Member for Lakeside will have a problem because if he wants to sell the land that he is now leasing, I suggest that he will have to preclude himself from a privileged position in bidding for that land. Yes, because it belongs to all of the people of Manitoba. Unless he wants to exercise his conflict of interest and ignore the public interest, Mr. Chairman, similar, Mr. Chairman, to what is possible with the examples that were debated earlier in these Estimates, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: A Point of order. The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, as we are dealing with Item 4., which describes in general terms what in fact covers that department. And if we look in detail what covers that department, Mr. Chairman, it's Administration, it's Animal Industry Branch, it's Veterinary Services Branch, it's Soils and Crops Branch, it's Technical and Economics Branch, Agricultural Trainings, Communications Branch and Canada-Manitoba Northlands Agreement. I would ask you, Mr. Chairman, to rule the member out of order. It has nothing pertaining to leasing of land under that particular department and he's out of order. The Summary at the top of this item relates to the details that we have just covered verbally to you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask you to rule the member out of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. James has a point of order. The Member for Lac du Bonnet, I would suggest that we try and stick to the items specifically as they are designated here — 1.(a)(1) \$53,000.00.

The Member for Lac du Bonnet

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I don't understand how you ruled on that point, Sir. Did you rule on that point of order?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I ruled in favour of the point of order.

MR. USKIW: Oh. Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to explain that the expenditures of \$7,794,000 has to do with Animal Industry Branch, has to do with Veterinary Services, has to do with Soils and Crops. Now maybe the Member for St. James doesn't know that soil is involved with Crown lands, too, and is relevant with respect to the fact that the Member for Lakeside happens to operate Crown lands, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Economics Branch is probably the most relevant with respect to how we structure the land question in Manitoba. Yes, the Economics Branch is probably the most relevant. Because that's area, Mr. Chairman, in which we can determine the kind of land tenure system that

we should have, whether there should options within it, whether the quality of life for the people of Manitoba would be enhanced with two or three options or whether the quality of life for rural Manitobans, Mr. Chairman, would be enhanced if we stuck with only one option.

So that is what we are talking about. We are talking about the capacity of the people who are out in the countryside producing goods and services, primarily goods in the field of agriculture, what that capacity is, what its potential can be and how it can be structured to optimize the production of agriculture commodities in the best public interest. That's what we are debating, Mr. Chairman. So I would wonder how the Minister, Mr. Chairman, is going to optimize that capacity with respect to the provision of services under any of these headings when there is obviously, Mr. Chairman, going to be a reduction in the number of farm people in the countryside. And, Mr. Chairman, the statistics that we have had year after year, every five years we have looked at the census figures and we have come to realize a long time ago, Mr. Chairman, that there is a major shift of population taking place from rural Manitoba to the urban centres.

But, Mr. Chairman, during a period of time that trend was either slowed down, in fact, even reversed for a while. That was during the periods of the previous government, Mr. Chairman. Now there are many factors that went into it. It wasn't all to do with government activity in the field of agricultural production, in the policy field of land tenure or whatever. No one is making that claim, Mr. Chairman. What we are stating though is that there was a reversal of those long term trends and that part of the reason, Mr. Chairman, was that the government initiated certain programs that were not in existence before which assisted.

Mr. Chairman, I am reminded of a piece of information that went out to the public giving us the young Manitoba farming situation away back in 1976. This was put out by the Department of Agriculture at that time. And, Mr. Chairman, it's worth repeating.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister on a point of order.

MR. DOWNEY: I believe we are discussing the Estimates of this year 1979-80, not the Estimates of 1976 and I would like to refer the member back to Item 4.(a)(1) which are salaries for the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Production Division and his support staff.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet. respect to the young people, and that was a significant breakthrough. A significant increase took place from '71 to '76, Mr. Chairman, when a minimum of 4,980 young persons started farming. That was a new record, Mr. Chairman, for a short period like that. Manitoba performance differs from the Canadian average. The proportion of farmers under age 35 is higher in Manitoba than in any other province except Saskatchewan. This is a 1976 statement, Mr. Chairman.

In Manitoba, 21.5 percent of all farmers were under 35 years of age at the time of the '76 census, compared with 22.9 in Saskatchewan, 19.6 percent in Alberta, 16.1 percent in Ontario, and 19.2 percent for Canada. The increase of young farmers matched with a movement of older farmers out of the farming business has slightly lowered the average age of farm operators in Manitoba from 48 years of age in 1971 to 47 in 1976. Several financial support programs have been targeted toward young farmers by both the provincial and Federal governments. During 1971 to 1976, the farm diversification program, the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, the Farm Credit Corporation and various other government programs provided 2,500 beginning farmers with financial assistance. There were 32,104 farms of all types in Manitoba in 1976, although this is a decrease of 2,877 since 1971, the reduction is much less than over the previous five-year period, which saw a reduction of 4,766 farms. Analysts with the Planning Secretariat suggest that, on the basis of the figure, the flow from rural areas is being stemmed.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I read that into the record, and of course, Mr. Chairman, the Minister is not even interested. We've made that observation. But I read that into the record, Mr. Chairman, because we will be watching to see what develops with respect to rural population figures over the period of time that this Minister has the responsibility to develop agricultural policy and rural development policy. We will be watching with a great deal of interest. And if the Minister of Agriculture thinks that these are not important items of consideration with respect to policy development, so that we have a production base based on a number of principles, Mr. Chairman — Yes it's possible to have a production base where only 100 people produce everything that is produced in Manitoba,

or we could have a production base where 30,000 produce what is capable of being produced in Manitoba or whatever figure that you would want to use, Mr. Chairman. And it is really up to government policy whether or not we degenerate, degenerate to the position where we have only a handful of people left in the industry. It is a matter of government policy that will determine that. Or whether we have a great multitude of rural people operating their farms which will give us a greater degree of balance in terms of population, in terms of opportunities in each region of Manitoba, and that if that could happen, Mr. Chairman, it would be much better, much better than to swell the urban areas with people who don't want to go there, who will not necessarily fit into an urban community, who would be there only as reluctant people who have been forced into a new environment. And that is what we're talking about when we talk about what should be done with respect to policies in the area of agricultural production.

Now this government doesn't want to hear those things, and we appreciate that they are not interested in any constructive debate that may be presented to them Mr. Chairman. We have witnessed that for the last eighteen months, because they have made up their minds some time ago as to what policy they want to pursue. They want to pursue a policy of minimum governmental involvement. They want to pursue a policy where the marketplace is the sole determinant of what happens, what shapes and moulds our society. Yes, that's the do-nothing philosophy of my friends opposite. And they are very consistent when they present these Estimates to this committee with that point of view. Now surely, Mr. Chairman, they don't expect the Opposition not to take notice of that.

What is it, Mr. Chairman, that the government feels the role of the Opposition is? We've learned that this evening. They believe that there is no role for Opposition. They believe, Mr. Chairman, that we ought to move into somewhat of a semi-dictatorship situation as has been demonstrated by the Member for Lakeside this evening, where the government of the day will make all the decisions and they really shouldn't have to put up with an Opposition that may have some constructive ideas. That's what we have come to in 1979 during the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Minister, I tell you that that is not a credible position. You will suffer because of that position. That is your problem. We will try to guarantee that you will suffer because of that position. That is our job. Mr. Chairman, I move the committee rise.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee rise. All in favour? Any opposed? Committee rise.

SUPPLY — HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN: I direct the honourable members to Page 52 of the Main Estimates, Health and Community Services. Resolution No. 67: Item 6. Manitoba Health Services Commission, Item 2; Personal Care Home Program—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, it's quite a coincidence that we should be debating Personal Care Homes at this time. I want to say to the Committee that I had a good example of some of the problems that we have. I received a phone call immediately after — in fact, I had a call that I returned at 4:30 after we finished the Estimates for the afternoon, and this was the case. This lady was working. She had a mother that's 90 years old and her daughter was taking care of the grandmother. She had been advised to make application to have her mother taken to a Personal Care Home but she thought that she would keep her at home as long as possible. It got that it got pretty hectic, pretty difficult for the granddaughter, so the mother quit her job to take care of her 90 year old mother.

Well, things got from bad to worse. The mother had a broken leg, I believe, a few months ago and she wasn't admitted in the hospital. I think — the work — sent her back home. She is senile and at times her temper gets the best of her, and she's been on drugs. It's been quite difficult. In fact, it got so bad that the doctor advised the lady to get her mother into the hospital. The mother was taken to the General Hospital, —(Interjection)— yes, the Health Sciences Centre, and there she was told that they only had private rooms and she could be admitted if she went into a private room and paid \$25.00 a day.

Well, Mr. Chairman, that's news to me. I always felt ever since this plan came in that, if there weren't other rooms, these people would be admitted to either semi-private or private rooms if that was empty and, mind you, they could have transferred them the next day or the same day if at all possible. Well, these people then, because they had to, they had no choice, they did admit her and they're paying \$25.00 a day. Now, the doctor suggested that she would have to go to a Personal Care Home.

She had a lot of trouble with the person in charge of the social service, the gentleman that dealt with her, and he told this lady that she had four choices: That she could take her home —

No. 1; No. 2, that she could have home care; No. 3, that she have her admitted at the Municipal Hospital; or keep her in that hospital at \$25.00 a day. She was supposed to be given a couple of days or so to think over the situation, and she's been quite disturbed by that. Then she received a call — mind you, according to this lady, the gentleman is not very helpful and that's another point that I have. I think that we could be a little more humane to the people and it seems that the only thing that counts is keeping people out of the hospitals to save dollars these days. Well, the gentleman told her that there was no longer the same choice, there was no room at the municipal hospital and there was a waiting list of over 100 people and there was nothing that could be done and she would have to make an application. He wanted to give her an application form, to make an application to have her in a personal care home and if she was panelled, she would keep on paying the \$25.00 a day plus \$7.75 per diem rate as a panelled person.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I told the lady that I was sure that this person was wrong and this would not be allowed. As the bell rang for a vote, I asked her to come tonight and I haven't met the lady — I think she is upstairs — and I suggest to the Minister at this time, I would ask him if he would be ready to meet with this lady very soon and if she is listening, I guess he could answer, because I think that this a case that either is —(Interjection)— Well, maybe we could do that.

Mr. Chairman, I feel that this is one of the areas — the Minister is saying that everything is right and I'm not blaming him for that, but what kind of instructions do these people have. You know, you have social workers in the hospitals to try to help and they get everybody shaky, they get everybody disturbed by that kind of nonsense talk. And what is going on? Will the Minister allow that? Is this a new policy where from now on the people, when there is no room, they can go into a private room and pay \$25.00, because certainly that is something new? I have never heard of that before where the people, if there was no room, they had to be accepted and they were covered, but then of course they would be moved as soon as an ordinary bed would become available. So these people have been there, I don't know how long, a couple of weeks or so at \$25.00 a day, which I think is wrong. The woman can't get anywhere with the social worker and I certainly blame him, and I have no reason to doubt the lady. She is not the type who was trying for years back to try to get somebody into a personal care home. She did everything possible to keep her mother with her, a 90 year old mother who is senile and whom she is having difficulty with. Right now she is in the hospital; she is tied in a wheelchair in the hospital, in the Health Science Centre, in a private room.

Now the last advice of this gentleman who is out there to help people, to say, fine, you can't go to the municipal, there is a waiting list. You come and get your mother, get her out of here or we'll give you an application and she will pay \$25.00 and \$7.75 when she is panelled.

Mr. Chairman, this is what we were saying, that there is a lot of need for many personal care homes. I don't think the Minister has to worry that it will start slowing down too fast. I'm sure — as I say, I'm not blaming the Minister for that — but I wonder if he knows what is going on, if he knows that many of these things, that we have many complaints like that. I don't know if people are told, well, you've got to be a little tougher, we can't have people in . . . When these old people, if they were treated like other people, if they need a hospital, if they need treatment for a little while before they are sent home, but the administrators and the people of the hospital are so afraid that they will be stuck with older people, that they won't be able to get rid of them that you can't get them in the hospitals. It's next to impossible to get them in the hospitals.

And Mr. Chairman, now I want to hear from the Minister himself if I'm wrong, if this was the right advice, if these people had the right to charge \$25.00 a day when they were there because they had no alternative, and if that is the case, if the only solution is that she either brings her mother back home — and it's getting too, too difficult for her and her daughter, she needs more than home care, she needs to be hospitalized according to the doctor — and if her choice is to keep her in that room for \$25.00 a day, plus \$7.75 which is the per diem that she would have to pay when she's panelled. Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could answer this at this time and maybe in his answer advise the lady what to do.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is absolutely illegal for the hospital to levy a charge of that kind. I can only advise my honourable friend that someone who is ill-advised and ill-informed has given that particular lady incorrect advice. There is no entitlement to a hospital to charge for semi-private or private accommodation that is made necessary by virtue of the fact that other accommodation is not available, and the levying of that kind of a charge is illegal and unacceptable. I have in front of me officials of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, including the Executive Director of the Health Services Commission, Mr. Reg Edwards, and I can assure the honourable member and the lady in question if she's in the gallery, that the facts of the case have been noted and recorded.

My honourable friend referred to the Health Sciences Centre, and if there are any other details that the honourable member or his particular constituent wants to, and can, make available to us we'd appreciate having them, but that certainly will be followed through by the Health Services Commission at the Health Sciences Centre and the family in question would be advised to return to the Health Sciences Centre if that was the course of action that they were going to pursue, and advise the Admission desk that the matter was brought up in front of the Health Services Commission and the Minister of Health in the Legislature tonight, and that they're entitled to admission in the accommodation that's available at no charge, and that the accommodation, unless it's elective as semi-private or private, is to be considered as free public accommodation.

MR. DESJARDINS: I certainly would thank the Minister for his clear answer. I'll say that she knew when her mother was admitted that she was going to pay \$25.00 a day but she was told this is the only place. We can't admit your mother or she'll pay \$25.00.

Now, Mr. Chairman, then could we tell this lady that she either get in touch with somebody in the Minister's office or at the Commission to rectify that and then it might be, and I think she would understand that she would be treated like anybody else and then that she should maybe proceed with putting an application, if she's panelled then she would have to pay the \$7.75 a day, no matter where she is. So I wonder if the Minister could, so we can finish with this case, advise the lady or advise me and I'll let her know who she should get in touch with. —(Interjection)— Mr. Edwards? Fine, the Executive Director. Thank you very much.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, if the honourable member and the lady in question would follow that course of action and contact Mr. Edwards' office at the Manitoba Health Services Commission, that procedure will be put in motion for her.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Personal Care Home Program—pass. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with a few areas that relate to my responsibility as Member of the Legislature for my own constituency and that deals with the personal care home situation in the community of Selkirk. Approval had been granted in the early part of 1977 for the construction of a new Personal Care Home and plans were well advanced, I believe, nigh finished when the minister saw fit in November of 1977 to freeze any further work in connection with the completion of those plans. Since that time, the minister I know has received communication from the Council of the Town of Selkirk expressing their concern about the lack of personal care home facilities in the town, but I believe even greater than that is the concern about the expected replacement of the existing personal care home, namely the Selkirk Nursing Home.

I have communicated personally to the minister about the conditions in respect to that home, and I don't wish to go into any public detail, but the minister does have correspondence from me in connection with that home and the need for the replacement of that home, and I have cited to the minister what I feel to be the pressing reasons that something be done at the earliest possible time to replace the building, some 75 to 80 residents therein.

So I wonder if the minister at this point would be able to advise me whether in fact we can expect an announcement this evening in respect to what certainly I believe most of the residents in the area consider to be a pressing situation, at least as a minimum action on the part of the minister the approval to replace the existing building, the Selkirk Nursing Home, one of the three nursing homes within the Town of Selkirk.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, the honourable member is quite correct in that the question of the condition and the future of the Selkirk Nursing Home has been certainly prominent in considerations over the past, well, I suppose several years, but certainly in our administration, over the past year and there has been considerable discussion about replacement.

I want to advise my honourable friend that government has made a decision with respect to the Selkirk Nursing Home and it's my intention to communicate that decision to the nursing home operators, the proprietors themselves and to the Selkirk Town Council and to those connected with the Selkirk General Hospital and I would respectfully request of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to do that, Mr. Chairman, unless he considers that an affront to the Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. PAWLEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, whether it is an affront is really of little concern to me in respect

to this particular item. My main concern is whether the news be good news or bad news. The Minister has really placed me on the horns of a dilemma whether I should continue to press as to just what his intentions are. If I felt that the Minister was not contemplating any action then of course I would want to debate at much greater length the need for something to be done in respect to the nursing home facilities there. On the other hand if the Minister is contemplating some positive action, and he can assure me it is positive action, then I wouldn't want to burden the Committee with further discussion which might be unnecessary on my part. So I'm really in a conundrum not knowing which way to turn. I would like to deal at much greater length if I thought it was necessary that I deal at much further length on this point.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can assure the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition that the government is intending positive action. I would like the opportunity to visit Selkirk again, I might say. By no means my first visit to the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition's home constituency, nor the last. I would like the opportunity to visit Selkirk again within the next very few days and convey the content of the decision to the persons involved rather than having them read about it in the newspaper. But it is positive action. It might require another several days before I can make that visit because of pressing commitments here that the honourable member appreciates. But I can assure him it is positive action.

MR. PAWLEY: Mr. Chairman, I believe it would be remiss on my part not to thank the Minister for indicating that there will be positive action. I assume therefore a positive announcement and that he will be making it in conjunction with interested parties in Selkirk and I'm appreciative of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Personal Care Home Programs - \$68 million. The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I would like to come back to the Minister's prior statements before 4:30 on costs and the provision for increases. The increase is something in the order of 6.5 percent which if you take into account inflation it really means that there has been an absolute reduction in the amount of funding this being provided for personal care homes if you take inflation rate as being say 9 percent, there's been a reduction of 2.5 percent in real terms.

I wonder if the Minister can give any advice to the personal care home administrators who are saddled with having to pass on this hardship to the people who are in the personal care homes, because when you start looking at some of the component costs of operating a personal care home costs of operating a personal care home, you'll find that the two major elements are food costs and salary costs. The third one probably would be the utilities, and if you look at all three, you may be able to hold salaries down to 6 percent or something in that range. And when you're doing that, that means that you are squeezing the workers who work in personal care homes to accept something which is below the rate of increase in the cost of living. So you're asking them to take on some of this hardship or the redistribution of hardship. But when you start looking at the food costs, I'm wondering if the Minister or his staff have talked to his colleague, the Minister of Consumer Affairs to look at what the increase in food prices has been over the last year. Now, depending upon what you take as your base, food prices have increased something in the order of 20 percent over the last year.

Now I don't know how a personal care home is going to try and deal with that. When you have in a sense a fixed limitation to the amount of funding and when you have food costs increasing by something in the order of 20 percent, then you're asking personal care homes to start squeezing blood out of a stone, which is impossible. If you look at utilities, utilities have been increasing more than 6 percent as well, heating, electricity' and again I wonder what the personal care homes can do to try and deal with passing that type of budgetary restriction on to their patients. So on those counts, I think that the amount of funding is insufficient, especially when the Minister is saying that there is going to be a small increase in the number of personal care homes.

So I'm wondering if the Minister could indicate whether he thinks — well, obviously, he's saying that the amount is justified — but how does he take into account the fact that the components over which the personal care homes have very little control, have increased far beyond 6.5 percent? Has the Minister taken that into account in his budgeting?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the actual figure is 7.3 percent, not that I'm suggesting that we

split hairs mathematically, but for the record it's 7.3 percent. And we are involved in discussions, the Health Services Commission is involved in discussions with the homes at the present time to assess and evaluate the impact of the new budget on their operations. No final decisions have been made, but we believe that within those budgetary increase parameters, we can meet the need requirements and service requirements and so we are budgeting for that appropriation, but no final decisions have been made. We are, as I say, in discussion with the homes on the subject, and we certainly do not intend to see the quality of service diminished.

I think that, on the basis of the kinds of approaches to more frugal operations management that has, I suggest with all respect, been introduced right across the Health system in the last seventeen months in response to the challenges that have been laid on, not simply the system, but the people of Manitoba and the people of Canada by the realities of the day that efficiencies have been achieved, opportunities for efficiency have been discovered and have been put into place simply as a consequence of the requirement for doing so, and I don't say that with any implied criticism because all of us, I think, operate and live exactly the same way. We manage better when we have to, and all I can say to my honourable friend is that through it all, I've insisted on the most assiduous monitoring of the operations of the personal care homes under our standards division, and that goes on on a continuing basis, and I do not have and have not had given to me at this point in time any evidence, any hard evidence of any diminution of service.

I said to the Honourable Member for St. Boniface this afternoon, I know there are isolated complaints. Most of them, unfortunately, are anonymous complaints and they're very difficult to pursue. But I think that he would concede that there are always persons — all of us, including the Member for Transcona and myself, the Member for Fort Garry, can find things to complain about occasionally, even amidst the best of conditions, and that has been the sum and substance of the complaint element that has come to us. There has been no hard evidence or evidence of the kind that the Member for Transcona would suggest was proof, factual, that there was a reduction or a diminution in service that required some emergency action by the government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. You know, when the Minister says that the quality of care is in fact being monitored and that you have some type of standards, I've never seen the standards and I don't know how they're applied, say in the case of providing assistance in a place like Tache Nursing Home, where you need a number of people, I think, per patient, providing assistance for people for feeding or for orderly care. And there has been a reduction and there was a reduction last year, and I'm wondering whether in fact the services provided in that Tache Nursing Centre were too great before and whether in fact they just fell back to the standards when there was a freeze on hiring, or whether in fact there wasn't an absolute drop in the service level. Or, when, upon receiving complaints from Tache Nursing Centre, with respect to food, complaints that I never received, for example, with respect to Park Manor — the personal care home in Transcona with respect to food. I went, I visited the complainants, I then went to other places, to other patients in the Tache Home and the complaint was somewhat consistent. They said that the food quality had decreased.

Now I don't have — there aren't menus printed. You are served what you're served on a daily basis, and people have variable menus, depending upon their illness, so you don't have any menu sheets that one can take for 1979, March 1979, and compare that to March, 1977. But I'm wondering whether in fact in your monitoring system, whether you don't have that type of data available. And if you do, can you then provide the documentation to indicate that there hasn't been a decrease in the nutritional quality of food? And secondly, I think very importantly, and this is a difficult thing to measure, the palatability of the food. To what extent is it the type of food that people are going to eat? To what extent will people follow the paths of lesser resistance in providing this? To what extent will personal care homes try and provide a home cooking type of flavour to the food, so that the patients will in fact eat. Because I think that's a big problem with older people. They quit eating. Their nutritional quality decreases of their food, and their illnesses which many of them have, and that's why some of them are in the nursing homes, take hold, gain, in the battle for the individual's health, and a person ends up then transferring into a hospital.

Now those are particular cases in Tache. Now, I wonder, and I ask specifically, has there been an evaluation done at Tache Nursing Home with respect to the food quality? Has there been a monitoring of it on a continuous basis? That's quite important, because I wonder what objective standards are being set. If I was an administrator and then someone then puts a ceiling on my budget, there are different ways in which one would possibly try and meet that, and then I guess different personal care homes will try and use their ingenuity. One way may be to cut back on the staff. So I'm wondering if there are any general standards with respect to a patient-staff ratio.

I know in education there is a student-teacher ratio. I wonder if there are similar ratios for personal care homes.

Secondly, what exists with respect to the provision of standards for food? To what extent is powdered milk substituted for whole milk or fresh milk? To what extent are powdered potatoes substituted for fresh potatoes? To what extent is food cooked for that particular meal, as opposed to being cooked once, steamed and kept for the day? There are different ways of saving costs. But the point is, with your objective standards monitoring, which you say you have, can the Minister indicate whether that type of objective monitoring is being done? Because if it is, when I get the complaints from the constituents or from people saying, "Come look at my husband", or "Come look at my mother. Look at the situation." And we as MLAs, and you would do the same thing, you go take a look at that, and then you want to know well what objectively do you have to measure their subjective complaints against? Because the subjective complaints I say aren't that isolated. They are somewhat consistent. The complaints for the Park Manor are primarily with respect to the waiting list. There are complaints in other places with respect to the food quality. Now what objective types of measurements can I get from the Minister, or can I in the future refer to the Minister for, so that I can deal with these particular subjective complaints. To the wife or the spouse of someone who is in a personal care home and who feels that their spouse isn't getting the proper care, that complaint is a very real plaintive complaint which is immediate, and which to them is a crisis.

So I'm asking the Minister, if he says that there is monitoring, where is it and how objective is it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, yes, there are standards and they're laid out at the Health Services Commission, and certainly available for inspection by any member of the Legislature. There are standards officers, who spend their time as officers investigating the levels of care and attention and the amenities available at personal care homes. They consist of nurses, dieticians and pharmacists and also administrators are involved and they are on a continuing basis, Mr. Chairman, responsible for visiting personal care homes, both during the daytime and at night, to review staffing and to review meals, etc. -to-patient There are nurse staffing standards and ratios, and they are in existence for every level of care. In terms of individual complaints that we are able to identify when a personal care home or facility is identified, they are always followed up, both from the point of view of the accommodation and care that the complainant is receiving, as well as the food, although only one of those items might have been mentioned or indeed none of them might have been mentioned but the whole spectrum of care for that individual is reviewed in cases of that kind. We have visits made to investigate the quality of nursing care as well as the other features and factors involved in residence in a personal care home.

All of the facilities have to receive accreditation and even in those cases that have been cited recently, there have been one or two newspaper reports of individual complaints and in neither of which case I believe was the facility ever identified. But we did, through the process of elimination, attempt to pinpoint the facility and in each case the standards were thoroughly checked out, and in each case the facility had accreditation from the Canadian Council on Hospital Accreditation. So I can reassure the Honourable Member for Transcona, Mr. Chairman, that this does take place continually and that standards are in existence in written form and are there for the adherence and for the recognition of personal care home operators.

We find that in many many cases, the vast majority of cases, complaints emanating from residents of personal care homes actually concern other issues entirely other than nursing care or attention or food. In a great many cases it's a matter of noisy residents or a temperamentally unsuited roommate, or noise in the neighbourhood, because of adjacent facilities of one kind or another. Those really constitute the majority of the complaints and in that respect I don't think residents of personal care homes are very much different from any of us at any age; we're all bothered by those distractions.

But I can reassure the Honourable Member for Transcona that those standards are in place and are in effect codified and we insist that they are observed and that standards officers do operate on a continual visitation basis to all personal care homes. In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, I just would say for the record that although I am not a standards officer — and I certainly don't bring the expertise to bear that a standards officer would — I have, with Mr. Edwards and other officials, visited a great many personal care homes in the province in the last seventeen months and certainly there has been no discouragement, no reason why any resident of any personal care home should have been discouraged about or intimidated by the prospect of discussing his or her environment with me. I may engage in pretty volatile conversation in this Chamber with the Honourable Member

for Transcona but I can assure him that when I am in a personal care home, I take pains to be very gentle.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Chairperson, I will ask those various people phoning me to in fact now phone you and get in touch with you and make their complaints directly to you, and I think that your office would be a good office to receive that, given the type of personal assurance that you have given us today. Because again, I have talked to my colleagues on this, I have received those types of complaints and the three that I've listed, the ones that I think are pertinent, were the waiting lists; the food quality; and the decreases in staff helping people within personal care homes. There will be other complaints. I have heard very few of those, and in fact I've usually heard very few complaints directed at the staff who are there trying to administer the program within a personal care home. There seems to be an understanding on the part of the patients that they just don't seem to have quite enough to go around and that seems to be their concern.

I will in fact take up the Minister's invitation to look at the standards that exist within the Manitoba Health Services Commission with respect to personal care homes. I certainly don't intend to do it now or probably won't have the opportunity to do so while the House is sitting, but I certainly will take up his invitation to take a look at the standards, so that when in fact people do complain from constituencies, my own and others, I will be in a position to say: "Well, you know, let's go down and take a look at the personal care home and see the extent to which those standards in fact conform to those which exist at MHSC, which is the central funding authority and which frankly, should be ensuring that there is some type of universal standard of personal care in Manitoba.

I'd like to ask the Minister for some further statistics, if I might, relating to personal care. On page 33 of the Annual Report that you sent over to me for the year 1977-78 for the period ending March 31st, 1978, and actually this was a bit of a confusing period because it's for the period January 31st, 1977 to March 31st, 1978; it's almost a year-and-a-half. Perhaps you're going on to a new fiscal year, is that correct? Okay, I'll understand that then.

You have here a total on page 33, you have a total of 7,373 beds, hostel personal care extended treatment, and I'm a bit confused with those figures in that perhaps the Minister can give us a bit of a description as to what hostel means; what personal care means; and what extended treatment means. Perhaps he's made that explanation elsewhere and I apologize if I'm repeating the question, but the reason why I am asking this is, in discussions with personal care home administrators, they point out that within a personal care home, there are levels of care; that certain levels of care require more staff and that other levels of care require fewer staff, and that that is a very important factor in determining whether in fact the personal care home is in a position to handle hold-the-line budget or a cutback budget, or what. And that's why I'd like the Minister, if he could, to explain the figures on page 33 and to indicate where in fact I can apply the breakdown that was given to me by personal care home administrators and that concerns hostel care, level 1, level 2, level 3 care.

MR. SHERMAN: Hostel care, Mr. Chairman, is essentially room and board with a minimum degree of supervision. There is often a nurse on the premises that is available for attention for the group of residents who are occupying a hostel type of accommodation and that group of residents may run anywhere up to as many as 30 persons or more. In many cases they're elderly married couples living together who simply have moved their place of residence from the home or apartment that they once occupied into the manor or lodge offering hostel care. So there is simply a minimum of supervision. The recognition central to hostel care is that those persons in hostel accommodation are self-supporting and independent but are elderly.

Personal care is the type of care that one attaches and associates with the familiar type of personal care home that for the most part we're discussing here. It consists of two or three different levels of care each of which command a greater daily period of nursing attention. The nursing attention in personal care, I think, can run from an hour and a half a day to up to two and a half hours. Depending on the level of care and the condition of the resident the amount of nursing can range anywhere from an hour and a half a day to two and a half hours a day, Mr. Chairman.

Then extended treatment or extended care beds are for the heavy care residents who are certainly not fully ambulatory, who are perhaps only semi-ambulatory at best, are required to spend most of their time either in bed or in a chair, a wheelchair or a chair and require much more and heavier nursing care. And nursing care in those instances ranges up to as much as three and a half hours a day. So the different categories simply relate to the different levels of physical condition and the attendant levels of nursing requirement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: I thank the Minister for that detail. It helps understand the differences that exist. Just a further point of clarification, are there extended treatment beds in nursing homes? That's just a quick point. Yes, you're nodding your head yes. Okay.

The reason I raise this is to point out another particular problem that exists at the constituency level. And that's that if you do have, as existed, a freeze on nursing homes there will be different sorts of pressures put on a nursing home and the care level will tend to go from that requiring one and a half hours to that requiring two and a half hours to three and a half hours. Those people in the care home already will get older, some will require more physical care so that the pressures on that nursing home, in terms of costs, increase as the care requirements of their patients increase over a period of time.

I don't know whether nursing homes or personal care homes like to keep some type of proportionality in place with respect to the different levels that they would have. Some type of target level, perhaps it's a third, a third, a third, I'm not sure between the three levels of care that they usually provide for in the personal care homes, just so they could spread out the resources in a good way, the staff resources. I haven't come across any ratios like a third, a third, a third but I know that there are differences.

I came across some wierd anomalies where people had contacted me and said so and so down the street seems to be in somewhat better health than my parent or my aunt or my neighbour and yet they were admitted into a personal care home and my friend, my neighbour, my relative who is in more need of care hasn't been accepted. And on investigating I found that there have been some instances and again I don't blame the personal care homes for wanting some type of balance, but it does create incredible tensions within a community when people who the community perceives as requiring less care are admitted into a personal care home ahead of someone who seems to, is perceived to require more care. And that's the problem that exists and that's why I again ask the Minister not to just lift the freeze in certain areas but to start looking around at different nursing homes or personal care homes that exist right now and determine which ones have the potential for expansion.

Again I point out the Park Manor Personal Care Home in Transcona has 2.8 acres beside it which has sufficient capacity for 100 enriched senior citizen units and 70 to 100 personal care beds and the group wants to undertake it. That's the point. They want to undertake it. They have the potential and the need is definitely there, documented. All I am saying is that I think you should open the valve on the pressure cooker. If you don't have the valve opened on the pressure cooker, you are going to have tremendous social tensions developing within the community and I suggest to the Minister that those are.

Now when it comes to costs, I don't know if we've received any costs and I think that now is an appropriate time. We could do it part now and part in the next section. But has the Health Services Commission determined the average costs of an acute care bed, of an extended care bed, of a personal care bed, and of an enriched senior citizens housing bed, even though we may not have any. I think we have a couple on an experimental basis. I know certainly in Saskatchewan that they have some. —(Interjection)— Yes, we have some. Do we have any average costs for those four categories, acute care bed, I throw in extended care bed because you've got them here as a special group — extended care, personal care beds and enriched senior citizens beds. There are four categories there and it would strike me that in terms of getting some idea from an overview perspective of what the particular allocations should be to each category of funds that we should have some idea of what the costs are today to provide that type of care.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: I just rise on a question of privelege of the House. I would like to apologize to the Minister and the Members of the Committee as well as the staff of the Manitoba Health Services Commission. Before the dinner hour I stated that I had seen somewhere a letter that was from a personal care home stating that they were making an appeal that they needed more than 3 percent increase. I made a mistake. I have the letter in front of me and it was for the residence for the mentally retarded. Now it's a valid letter but unfortunately I didn't have it in time and this is not debatable on this issue, so I apologize to the Minister and Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass, the Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, the rule of thumb that we go by — I'll give the honourable member better than a rule of thumb, but just for purposes of rapid calculation in any discussions that he or I are in in terms of talking about personal care beds, etc., we calculate the annualized

cost of a personal care bed at about \$10,000 a year, so that for exale, if you're talking about adding 100 personal care beds, you're talking about an annual operating cost of a million dollars a year. We regard the cost of an active treatment bed, an acute bed in a regular active treatment hospital at \$35,000 a year, \$100 a day. But I think we have to update those figures a little bit. That figure has been used for two or three years, but that has been the sort of the rule of thumb, \$35,000 a year. An extended care bed would run at about \$13,500 to \$14,000 a year, and hostel beds \$6,000 per year.

So those are the general yardsticks that we use: \$6,000 for hostel, \$10,000 for personal care, \$13,500 for extended care and \$35,000 for acute care. However, if I check my house book, I must say that particularly in the case of acute beds in active treatment hospitals, that figure has been left somewhat in the distance. We're now looking, my officials advise me, realistically at a cost of almost \$50,000 a year for an acute bed in an active treatment hospital. So those yardsticks have to be continually revised upwards, but those are essentially the kinds of yardsticks we've been using for rough calculations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: I thank the Minister for those benchmarks. I think they're very important for any rational discussion of the personal care problem in Manitoba. And indeed, given the Minister's previous statement that we have something in the order of 600 people in acute care beds in 1978, it would strike me that given that and given the difference in costs of acute care and those of extended care of something in the order of \$35,000 that it really would make a lot of sense to build something in the order of 500 or 600 personal care beds immediately, to bring that number of people panelled for personal care homes in acute care beds down to zero. In fact, we would be saving an incredible amount of money if we did that. And you know, basically we'd be saving 600 times \$35,000.00. That's a lot.

Now, I don't know if those people have been in there for the whole year, but at the same time, I notice that from the figures you gave us before, there were something like 800 people in acute care beds last year, and there are something like 600 people in them this year. But surely it's very very important that we try and bring that number of people panelled for personal care homes in acute care beds down to zero, and I would hope that next year the Minister would be able to come to us and say, "We don't have many" or "We have 50 or there's that slippage, there's that short-term amount of 50, 75 people." But 600 out of a total of 1800 certainly isn't slippage. That's one third who are panelled and on waiting lists or in acute care beds right now. And that just is too great a number, and I think the Minister really has to come up with a bigger program than 132 personal care beds. I think that's the figure you gave us, or 155. That just is too small, and I think the Minister certainly has sufficient cost ammunition to go to his own Cabinet and argue on straight economical terms, that we would be saving something in the order, and I haven't done the arithmetic on it, but strikes me as being very simple, \$2,100,000 immediately.

Now, again I hope the Minister has been doing this, because I just find that keeping them in acute care beds isn't going to solve the problem. And secondly, we're also backing up those people who should be using the acute care beds. There are a lot of people who are waiting around for elective surgery: three months, six months. So I think we're getting it both ways. And I think on the cost side, the Minister really has some very sound economic material at hand to go back to his Cabinet and to get more, more for ow, one point that the Minister really hasn't talked nursing homes.

N about, and maybe it's not covered under this section, are private nursing homes. I raised this question with him the other day. Maybe he has. I didn't pick it up if he did that. Okay. Now, when I raised this the other day, the Minister indicated that he is doing a study, that there is a hodgepodge of private nursing homes, that he's doing a study to determine whether in fact they should be regulated, and how should people be admitted. Is this for guest homes and for private nursing homes? What is the distinction between the two? Perhaps he could take a bit of time on that. And secondly, what is the future policy of the government in this respect? If it would appear economic to build 500 to 600 personal care homes, because of the numbers he gave us before with respect to benchmarks for different types of care, is it the intention of the government not to build these publicly, but rather to let the private sector build them? And is that the thrust of the government, to have the private sector pick up this gap? I've heard, and I really haven't got the documentation in front of me, but I do remember the Minister indicating that maybe that was the solution. Perhaps he made that statement in his speech some time over the last five or six months. I don't have the documentation here on that, but again I ask the Minister specifically, what is the intent? Does the Minister feel that it would be an economic saving to the province of Manitoba to get these 600 people out of acute care beds and into personal care homes? And secondly, if

that's so, is the intention to do that through the private sector rather than doing it through the public sector?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Well Mr. Chairman, let me try to deal with the subjects one at a time. The Honourable Member for Transcona has really raised three subjects here. The first one is the basic question of block beds in active treatment hospitals, the so-called block bed problem, acute beds being blocked by elderly patients requiring heavy personal care or indeed extended care. The second one is the question of private nursing homes, and the third one is the question of guest homes.

With respect to the first one, he asks me whether it would be economic to build 500 to 600 personal care beds, to facilitate the transfer of elderly patients occupying acute beds on the grounds that there would be a great apparent cost saving, on the basis of the kinds of bed cost statistics, which I have given him and which are, as I have suggested, the yardsticks by which the system operates. The answer is unfortunately, no, and this is a question in a dilemma that faces every jurisdiction in Canada. Manitoba is not alone in this problem of dealing with block beds, because in the first place, Mr. Chairman, there are two essential flaws in the argument and this argument has been advanced, in fact by editorial writers and has ignored two essential flaws.

The first is that the elderly patients occupying those acute beds are indeed occupying acute beds, but they are not occupying them at a cost of \$35,000 a year which the Honourable Member for Transcona would be, or I would be, if we went in for a gall bladder operation. They're occupying them at the extended care bed rate, because that is the level of service they are getting. They are not getting the kinds of technological and sophisticated life support medical service that an acute care patient requires. So, in the first place, you're not looking at \$35,000 a year in the case of each one of those beds, you're looking at approximately \$13,500 a year.

The second flaw, unfortunately, in the argument is that the question remains, after you take those elderly patients out and put them in the new 500 personal care beds that the Member for Transcona and I going to build — and I'm using that phrase rhetorically — what do you do with the 500 beds that you freed up in your general hospitals? The experience, Mr. Chairman, is that within a very short period of time they would fill up again, unless he is prepared and I am prepared to close them. That is a very difficult decision, just as difficult for a Progressive Conservative government as for a New Democratic government. It's difficult for every and any government and all provinces Canada are wrestling with this problem.

In fact, the province of Quebec recently decided to wash their hands of the whole problem by decreeing that henceforward, 20 percent of all beds in active treatment hospitals would be considered extended care beds, and that was it. They simply said, "We don't want anymore to do with the argument, you're operating a hospital or we're operating a hospital, from this day forward, 20 percent of those beds will be considered extended care beds. Now, you've got no block beds. That's the end of the argument." So, it's a dilemma, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate what the honourable member is saying and what he is asking, because it's been asked before, as I say, it's been asked by editorial writers and the answer is not there. The answer is not easy; we are wrestling with it as every other province is wrestling with it.

In the second area, with respect to private nursing homes, we have no position of antipathy or opposition to private entrepreneurs, private operators in the personal care home field. In fact, we would like to see more private operations in the field. We did, a year ago, close down approximately 194 private nursing home beds in Winnipeg and Portage la Prairie, because they were time expired and in violation of safety regulations, and we have told the proprietors of those homes that they will have priority consideration for getting back into the field if they want to get back into the field, when, as and if we can fund the operating costs of the beds involved. Provided they build to the requisite standards and to the requisite requirements of the Public Health Act and other safety statutes they will be considered on a priority basis for getting back into the field.

There are though, hidden problems and ramifications to that kind of a course of action. I simply illustrate these and put them on the record, Mr. Chairman, to acquaint the Member for Transcona with some of the very complex problems that my advisors and the consultative committee and the commission and my own office are wrestling with in this field today. It's all well and good to say that we'd like to have private operators in the field, and private operators who could charge according to the market that was prepared to go into nursing home accommodation, but that, of course, is dependent upon the resident's ability to pay and in many cases, and in the cases of most persons, there is always the possibility of a termination of their funding means, and in that case, you'd wind up in a situation where you had people in a private facility of some kind who were no longer to

pay the cost and the province, the taxpayer would wind up in a position of perhaps having to face the responsibility of picking up the full cost of those beds. So, these things have to be measured very carefully.

On the other hand, if it was simply a matter of operating parallel with the insured system, where the resident paid the per diem equivalent to the per diem in the nursing homes under the insured system and the Province of Manitoba paid the remainder, then probably that kind of system could succeed, could operate successfully. But once again, I suggest that you have to measure the ramifications of that kind of operation pretty carefully, because on the one hand you're dealing with a system that's operated by the public, that's operated by society and another, you're dealing with a system that's operating essentially for profit and I certainly am not one who looks askance at profit and I subscribe to and endorse the profit motive, but in this field, I think we have to be careful. So, we have to measure these things very very carefully and these are part of the very difficult examinations that we're going through at the present time.

Point No. 3 was a point having to do with guest homes, Mr. Chairman. There is a pretty substantial number of guest homes in the city, in the province in fact, but essentially in the city of Winnipeg. These are essentially rooming houses, they're rooming houses and people go in there and pay their board and room, pay their rent and live there, but in many cases they are elderly people who are on limited income and who, probably to some degree and in some cases require some kind of personal attention and care. And we are, at the present time completing the compilation of a register or a listing of the number of guest homes in the city and where they are, just so that we have at least an initial fix on the situation.

I can't suggest to my honourable friend where we intend to go from here, but we'd like to know where those guest homes are, how many of them there are and just how many people are involved in terms of their residence.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Chairperson, I want to correct the figure I gave before, . If we built 600 personal care beds, we would be saving \$21 million per year, not \$2,100,000.00. And I still say, despite what the minister said about flaws in my argument, I would suggest to the Minister that the figure is closer to \$21 million than zero if we built the 600 personal care beds, in that we are, in fact, spending between \$35,000 and \$50,000 if we have senior citizens in acute care beds in hospitals who could be in personal care beds. Because the overhead for that hospital is such that it's there and it's fixed.

And if you look at the quality of construction for a hospital, and I can recall looking at the old Grace Hospital, and looking at what exists in that hospital to provide the acute care — you have a tremendous fixed overhead in the capital costs of that building. So hospitals cost more per square foot than personal care beds, and that's there and you're going to have to amortize that on a yearly basis.

Secondly, and I don't think you have just wards and wards of seniors in acute care beds. You do have the care that's being provided there by the nurses who are there looking after other acute care patients, and they're going to be there on standby, and maybe then they are under-utilized. Maybe the staff is under-utilized if you've got a number of senior people, if you follow your particular argument, and I don't think that's true, so what I think then, is that if you have a senior person who could be in a personal care bed, who is in an acute care bed, in a hospital — that cost per year if that person stays there will be closer to \$50,000, which is the annualized cost for an acute care bed, than it will be to the \$14,000.00.

Secondly, the Minister also said, well, you know, if we cleared that 500 or 600 out, we'd have these beds empty and they'd fill up with people. Well sure they'd fill up with people, because people need elective surgery. And doesn't he think, in social accounting terms, that it's costing society to postpone elective surgery? And if he says that we have enough beds right now to deal with it, why do we have the three-month or six-month or nine-month waiting list?

So in social accounting terms, we wouldn't be losing money. And I'll come back to this later because I think it's very important — the social accounting that we do for medical and health care.

I want to come down to one other thing that the Minister said with respect to private nursing homes. You know, I think that within our society, and this may shock the Minister, there are people on this side of the House who also appreciate profits with respect to profit differentiation, especially with respect to product differentiation. But when you're talking about personal care, you're not talking about product differentiation. What you're trying to provide is a good, universal type of product. I think it would be wrong if you said, well, we're going to try and provide that product differentiation.

You want to provide the best possible care. And in that respect, when you don't have the product differentiation, you want to look at ways and means of providing for uniform costs. And, you know,

when you have non-profit or third-sector groups, because we're talking about third-sector groups primarily when it comes to personal care homes, you have dedicated non-profit groups that are coming along — Holy Family is one, that's a religious group; Park Manor Personal Care Homes, another group, that's another religious group — and if you look at the personal care homes, they are non-profit groups. They're the third-sector groups, and they are incredibly dedicated. And they are bringing behind them, they have behind them which always . . . I don't think it's built into the costs, their overhead of their religious organization who have done some work in putting these people forward.

And that's a very valuable thing. When we talk about housing, for example, we talk about private housing, public housing, but we're also saying that there's tremendous scope for non-profit housing and in fact, where we've been trying to promote non-profit housing. Well here we have non-profit groups providing, I think, the best possible care that we can get in nursing homes, and we have many of them wanting to do more. Holy Family wants to do more.

A MEMBER: St. Josephs.

MR. PARASIUK: St. Josephs wants to do more. Sharon wants to do more. Park Manor wants to do more, has the space, is virtually begging to do more. I think it would be incredibly retrogressive if we turned our backs on those non-profit groups that want to provide more, don't want a 10 percent return on equity, and said, "Oh, no, we're going to give preference." As you said, we'll give preference to those people, those private ones, those five private ones, that had to be closed down.

You know, I've looked at the budgets of some of these particular nursing homes. They have cut their budgets to the bone. And that's why when this \$1,400 cost for Park Manor, for example, for this local taxation, or the local assessment, came up, they didn't know how to deal with that. That's how tight their budget is. That's how thin it is. And I wonder how they could build in a 10 percent return on equity. Which is profit. They couldn't build in that 10 percent return on equity, so I ask the Minister, don't turn your backs on the non-profit organizations that have done such a good job so far in providing personal care, who want to provide more, who are really begging the Minister to provide more, who have the potential to provide more, and right now the only stop on their providing more is the government.

And if the government wanted to expand this program by 500 or 600 beds, they could do so virtually immediately because I know that there are those places right now in existence with proven experience, proven performance, who want to do more, and can do more. So don't turn your back on the non-profit groups, and I think there would be an incredibly strong opposition from people on this side of the House, and I think from the population at large, if we turned our backs on those non-profit organizations and somehow went with the private groups, who frankly haven't provided the same type of service as the non-profit ones.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to provide the Minister with a change, which is almost as good as a rest, and raise another matter concerning nursing homes, which is a concern of mine, and that is the amount of drug-taking, I'm now talking about prescription drug-taking that is used by some older people, and I think adversely, in nursing homes and perhaps in hospitals and private homes as well. But I specifically direct my attention to this particular topic.

I have had a few tours over the last few years of nursing homes, and it always shocks me to find out that one discovers that some elderly people are taking tremendous numbers and combinations of prescription drugs, that whereas it might be found that an average person takes 0, or may take a prescription once in a while, it seems not uncommon for elderly people in nursing homes to sometimes have 2, 4, 6, 8 different types of medicines and pills and potions, which I think can only have an adverse effect on a person's body. I would just say in passing that if a person was perfectly healthy, or healthy as an ox, like you, Mr. Chairman, that to give somebody a series of drugs for a variety of purposes, I believe that you would make that healthy person ill in a very short period of time.

Another problem associated with this is the fact that if people are not totally informed of the various drugs that are being taken, if all of this isn't carefully laid out and recorded, then it is also possible that people will be given prescriptions from doctors, not to treat a particular illness, but they will in effect be treating a reaction to a particular kind of medicine. So, when you get people who are taking a number of medicines and then they're taking two or three, by the time they get to their fourth the doctor may be prescribing for a reaction from the first group of medicines. I

recall quite vividly listening to a prominent British physician a couple of years ago, who spoke at the Great-West Life seminar on the dilemmas of modern man speaking on geriatrics, and pointing out that this, in fact, was the case in terms of people going from doctor to doctor or getting prescriptions; not treating illnesses so much as treating the ignorance of illness or treating the reaction of a particular illness. I don't know whether much of this goes on but I have a very strong suspicion that in some nursing homes some of the older people are given too many drugs and sometimes in the form of tranquilizers so that they are more easy to handle, which to me has a sinister connotation, if in fact some people who are spunky or lively are given drugs to slow them down, so that they are much more easy to handle.

Recently, on a program — I think it was probably either a radio program or perhaps it was in the newspaper — there was a discussion of this problem and there was a particular program put in effect by a government agency — I don't recall whether this was Canada or the U.S. — in an attempt to reduce the intake of drugs of older people, because I'm sure if you correlate the drug taking in society, I'm talking of pharmaceutical drugs, young people I suppose in general don't take any; and middle age people may take one or two of this or that; but when you get to elderly people, then you're getting into heavy drug taking for a whole score of ailments and problems, some psychological, some physiological, etc., etc., etc. And it was pointed out quite clearly that, in a particular instance, where it was found that people were taking combinations of drugs, that there was a deliberate attempt made to study this program; to monitor it — in the favorite word of the Minister — and to deliberately attempt to reduce the number of drugs taken, which not only has an economic component, or a financial side, which I believe is secondary but worthy of consideration, but it was found that by reducing the intake on the part of people, that it was not only believed but it was demonstrated that they felt better and functioned better in that particular way.

So I wonder if I could ask the Minister for a comment there, and then I wanted to make a further comment in this direction.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there are some recognizable or apparently recognizable problems in that field that certainly require examination and attention, and we are currently working, Mr. Chairman, I want to assure the Honourable Member for Elmwood, to get a sort of tighter reading and tighter control on that situation. We have a liaison with the Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association to that end, and we are hoping to determine a better way of monitoring — if I may use that phrase again, that term again — of monitoring drug prescriptions in nursing homes, in personal care homes and nursing homes generally. What's necessary is a system whereby the pharmacists would advise the personal care homes and their physicians on drug prescriptions and other related problems, and we're hoping to devise that kind of a system with the co-operation of the Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association.

In the whole area of drug prescription, we are working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons on closer regulation of and closer attention to the prescription drug practice. We're also programming our computer, so that we can provide each personal care home with a print-out of its own drug experience as compared to other personal care homes, so that they can then compare the variances and the discrepancies and differences as between one nursing home and another.

MR. DOERN: Well, Mr. Chairman, just on that last point, I want to say to the Minister that if he's taking steps in that particular direction then I would applaud what he is doing, because he talks about the specifics of the nursing home situation, but he also raises a larger question of attempting to do something about controlling I guess the amount of over-prescribing — I'm not sure I understand him correctly — but I assume when he says he's working with the Pharmaceutical Association and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, that he's talking specifically not of nursing homes, but he's talking in the broader sense as well about potential drug abuse on the part of patients; and also in terms of possible over-prescribing on the part of physicians. I think that in order to get a handle on that the Minister will have to expand that area so that at a point in the future, it will be possible for doctors and pharmacists to be able to determine what sort of drug taking has been going on on the part of individuals.

Now, there's one caveat in all of this, and that is that you must also attempt to protect people in terms of releasing extensive amounts of personal information, which may be used in a way that it wasn't intended. By having a person's entire health record available at a person's fingertips, it could be abused in that sense. But my concern here is the other question, and that is namely to attempt to make sure that individual people aren't going to various doctors and getting a whole score of drugs for themselves, which would have an adverse effect, and also the fact that there are some physicians who are very quick with the prescription pad — the first thing that they reach for when they deal with people is a prescription — which might be a short-cut, but I believe is

detrimental to people as well as very expensive to the public purse.

And the Minister gave us figures earlier on the amount of money that has been spent on the Pharmacare Program — well spent, in my judgment — but that it has been growing, and I think that there has to be some particular controls.

Mr. Chairman, I also wanted to ask the Minister if he could comment on this particular point made by the Attorney-General when we were dealing with his Estimates. He threw out this figure, that 80 percent of mentally disordered persons — I use his terminology — mentally disordered persons, 80 percent, under court orders are kept in nursing homes, and I wonder if the Minister could comment where these people are kept, and also under what conditions are they kept? If they have mental problems, one question is why are they kept in nursing homes? Is this the appropriate area? And another question that follows from me is, if they are difficult to control, is part of their control the use of drugs to make them more amenable or easier to control?

So, I wonder if the Minister could comment on the Attorney-General's remarks?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I can't comment on the precise percentage or figure given by the Attorney-General. If that's the figure he has provided to the Honourable Member for Elmwood, then I presume it's correct; but there's no question that we do have psycho-geriatric patients in our nursing homes; and we have psycho-geriatric patients in our hospitals too.

Certainly, one area of the province in which there is a significant number of psycho-geriatric patients in nursing homes is in Selkirk, where there are three nursing homes, and a significant proportion of their resident population is made up of citizens suffering from that particular disability of age. They are staffed accordingly; those nursing homes are staffed to accommodate that kind of patient. I'm not sure that I can answer the honourable member's question about prescription drugs, precisely. Many post-mentally ill patients and psycho-geriatric patients are of course on therapeutic drug prescriptions of one kind or another. That's done at the decision of their personal doctor and physician.

I can tell my honourable friend that the medical profession does have as a constant and ongoing concern this question of drug prescriptions and proper control of prescriptions. He has seen recent references to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, I'm sure, being concerned about some reported reputed potential perhaps extravagances in drug prescription.

All seminars on geriatric medicine; all seminars for geriatric specialists and practitioners now emphasize the importance of very close control and discipline in this area. There are very strict rules with respect to the dispensation of drugs in all nursing homes. The medications and narcotics are kept locked up; they have to be signed for; their dispensation and distribution is monitored; the drugs can be prescribed by a doctor by telephone, but the by-laws of these nursing homes dictate and require that the doctor has to sign an order covering the prescription within three days; and in all nursing homes doctors have to sign a drug list every three months. So, the system is carefully watched, and it is a concern of the medical profession as well as of my department and the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

I accept the honourable member's suggestion that there is potential for over-use and abuse, and as I've indicated we're aware of that, and are attempting to develop both by computerization and by work with the college and with the Pharmacists' Association better systems to guarantee better controls.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, my last comment is just to extend what the Minister has said. I gather that the Minister feels that his department is taking steps in the nursing home area and for geriatric patients to limit the amount of drug taking, which can have adverse effects. I just ask him on a general basis, in view of some of the extensive drug taking throughout society — we saw an article recently in the paper that we have the dubious distinction of being the North American capital of consumers of the tranquilizer "diazepam" or "valium", that some 20 million tablets a year are taken in Manitoba. Now I'd be tempted to say to the Minister that that's a consequence of his government being elected, but I wouldn't be that rash.

I just wonder though, on a general note, whether any attempt has ever been made — and I'm talking now of the past eighteen months — or whether the Minister would consider a program again, with the same parties he mentioned: the Pharmaceutical Association; the College of Physicians and Surgeons and his own department to attempt to either in a public campaign or in a campaign within the profession, attempt to discourage the unnecessary use and abuse of prescription drugs. Because it just strikes me that in our society, this is becoming an ever increasing trend. It has a big dollar sign attached to it; I think it's very unhealthy.

In the old days, a lot of people prided themselves in never taking a pill, an aspirin, medicine of any sort; there are still plenty of people around like that, but then there's the other type of person who, they're taking pills from the time they are young children to the time that they're extremely

old. I would just ask the Minister under his leadership, whether any program like that has ever been attempted or whether he would give some serious thought to trying to take a positive lead to encourage members of the medical profession and citizens, to cut down on the amount of drugs that are being taken today, which I think is an alarming thing.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Chairman, certainly I'd consider it but I'm not disposed to act in that manner until I have had it demonstrated to me by the professionals in the field that that over-use or extensive abuse that the honourable member refers to, is in fact a reality. I certainly will ask the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Pharmaceutical Association and the medical profession, for their comments. In fact, when references of that nature appear in the media, they always become subject of a conversation in my office as I am sure they did in the office of the Minister of Health in previous administrations. And the discussion then is extended to a consultative committee or to contact with the College or the Health Services Commission or a sort of an ad hoc unofficial investigating committee of one type or another. But on the strength of what we've had so far, I can only ask the parties to which I have referred for their professional opinion, their professional comment, if there is demonstrable evidence of that, then certainly I would consider what the honourable member is suggesting. Up to this point in time, I don't have any evidence other than media reports, not that I am casting doubt on the media reports, but surely there has to be professional documentation to support the contention if we are going to take action of the kind the honourable member suggests.

The main thing is that we are working with those parties to ensure that there are no abuses in the field generally and in nursing homes generally. We haven't zeroed in on individual specific cases of abuse; what we've been more concerned about is the general atmosphere; the general climate; the general usage and the rules by which we require our nursing homes to operate.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I have some knowledge and experience in regard to the detail business; talking now of drug salesmen who deal with professional medical people, and it's a well known fact that when people are dealing with doctors, that the common approach of pharmaceutical companies when they are dealing with members of the medical profession, is to concentrate their efforts exclusively on people who are known big prescribers or what we might call, people who over-prescribe. The average detail man representing a pharmaceutical company doesn't waste his time by going to every doctor in his area. What he does do is he goes to people who sign out dozens and dozens and dozens of prescriptions and he focuses all of his efforts on them. It's been said by people in the profession, I think Dr. Allan Class, who wrote a book on this several years ago, that to an unfortunate extent, some members of the medical profession are almost captives of the pharmaceutical company through promotions and samples and information and so on, so that some doctors who are overworked tend to take their advice and information from the medical companies' representatives rather than from the learned journals.

So I simply say in conclusion, Mr. Chairman, that I believe that this is an area that the Minister should be very vigilant in regard to, because I believe it's an area that is costing us a great deal of money and that has some adverse effects in a paradoxical way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass — the Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure whether this information has been given out or whether it's readily available, but does the Minister have information on the staff-patient ratio in the nursing homes in Manitoba for the year 1978 on average compared to 1977 and compared to 1976; that's the average for the years 1976, 1977, 1978; the average staff-patient ratio for nursing homes in Manitoba.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the total approved equivalent full times in personal care homes in 1977 were 3,594 and as of February 28th, 1979 — the figure I gave the honourable member was 1977 and I am now giving him the figure for February 28, 1979: 3,517, for a reduction of 77, for a percentage reduction of 2.1 percent.

MR. EVANS: I would take it from the Honourable Minister's remarks that this is information on the number of full-time equivalent patients residing in nursing homes. That's staff. . .

MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Chairman, this is full-time equivalent staffing.

MR. EVANS: Thank you. Does the Minister have that number for 1976 and also, is the information available on the number of patients or residents in these institutions in which these staff personnel

are employed so we can get a ratio?

MR. SHERMAN: No, I don't have the number for 1976, Mr. Chairman, but the total number of personal care beds in the province as at December 31st, 1976, was 7,260 and March 31st, 1979 is 7,534.

MR. EVANS: Sir, I didn't hear the last figure. Was it 7,934?

MR. SHERMAN: 7,534.

MR. EVANS: 7,534. Well then, I would by a very quick assessment of these figures, I would take it that there are fewer personnel per patient per resident today than there was a year ago. In other words, from reading this information, the actual staffing has gone down from 3,594 to 3,517 as of February 28, 1979, whereas the number of beds has increased from 7,260 to 7,534. So in effect, there are fewer personnel available while the number of patients or the number of residents have increased so that the staff-patient ratio is, if I can make a value judgment, it's worsened in effect.

I'm not going to ask the Minister for a breakdown of the type of staff because indeed, you've got everything I'm sure, from registered nusses, through to nursing aides, through to kitchen help, through to people who clean the floors and so on.

But the point that I wish to make, Mr. Chairman, is that while in many of these institutions; while in many of these homes around the province; while you see some very well maintained, well operated institutions, nevertheless, the impression I get, is that there is a deficiency in the number of certain kinds of personnel and that type of personnel is that worker, whether you call him a social worker or a recreational worker, who can help with the emotional health of the residents, who can help with the spiritual if you will — I hesitate to use that term because it has some religious connotations, so maybe I should best use the term emotional health — the emotional health. It seems to me that the people who are required to assist in upgrading and maintaining the emotional health, the psychological outlook of some of the people in these personal care homes, the nursing homes in Manitoba, the people we need here are people who are perhaps social workers, certainly people who are interested in various types of recreation, who have time to sit down and talk to these people.

I would say generally speaking, the average nursing home; I can't speak for all of them, but for the few that I have seen and I would say on average, yes, people are fed; yes, the rooms are kept clean; and yes, the physical needs of the patient, physical needs of the residents are attended to. But where there is a failure in our system, is the deficiency in emotional support. And you might argue, Mr. Chairman, that that deficiency in emotional support should come from the families and friends of these people, the people who are living there. And indeed, it should, and that is an important avenue for that kind of assistance, but the fact is that many of these people, and particularly people who are quite elderly, whose friends have unfortunately passed on, whose children may indeed be living thousands of miles away, simply are there on their own and have very little in the way of personal friendship or they may have an opportunity to make friends with other residents of the building but for some reason or other, having difficulty in this.

And it seems to me that this kind of help, you're almost in the realm of psychology. You're certainly — and I'm not advocating the hiring of all kinds of psychologists, but you're in the realm of having people who will have the time to sit down and talk to these elderly people who are in some cases in their eighties and nineties, or who might talk to some of the younger people who are unfortunately crippled and must be in these nursing homes. It seems that this is where there is a great failure in the system that we have, and this is where I think there's a need for government to be prepared to finance the budgets of nursing homes in this province to allow them to have personnel on hand who can take the time, who will be able to spend time in gauging the people in whatever type of recreational activity or, in some cases, maybe just taking the time to talk to those people. And goodness knows, in my experience I've seen many elderly people who have for some reason or other become very confused and disoriented and so on, and really there is a way to help them that doesn't require drugs, in some cases doesn't require a lot of medical attention, it really requires some one or two people who are ready to sit down and be friends to that person and to bring that person back into the world of reality or whatever the expression is.

So this bothers me when I see the worsening staff-patient ratio that we have — well I've only got the two years. I'd like to see it for the last several years — but there's no doubt a deterioration of this staff-patient ratio. Again I admit I haven't got the breakdown by type of employee, so I can't really discuss in too much detail the point that I'm trying to make, and that is the need for adequate personnel properly trained if you will to assist.

The other thing, of course, is that if your regular nursing aide, a person who is in and about with the residents quite a bit is very much overworked in just tending to whatever they have to tend to, providing the food or providing medicine or helping the patients with getting their clothes on or getting them to bed, or whatever they have to do. I've seen one or two homes where the staff have complained in the last year or so, that they're really overwhelmed with these day to day chores which are critical, which are fundamental, but unlike a year or two before, where they had a little time where they could sit down and talk to the older people or to the crippled person in the wheelchair and befriend them in effect. You know, my impression is that these people, the nursing aides particularly regret the fact that some of them are really rushed off their feet. They have very little time to talk to some of these residents that could be in a better state of health, better state of emotional health, if they had people who were willing to sit down and talk to them or were prepared to be friends with them. I know the answer could be, "Well, look there are others in the institution that you make friends with and so on", and of course that happens. But I'm saying there are many many people who, for some reason or other, have a tendency to withdraw from a group or to withdraw from society, withdraw from life if you will.

And because they don't have friends, because they don't have relatives nearby or if they do they're not around enough, it's very critical that some staff are around that can ensure that some additional support is given for these people so that they can lead their remaining years with some degree of happiness, whatever that is. I know it's extremely subjective and no one's ever going to measure it and compare it, but to hopefully enable them to lead the years that they must lead in these institutions in as satisfactory a way as possible.

In other words, I'm saying yes, we may be looking after the physical needs, but what about the emotional needs of these people? I wonder if the Minister could comment on this, whether he is concerned with this, whether the commission, whether his department has any program or any policy initiatives they might take to improve and increase this emotional support that I've talked about for the people that live in these nursing homes.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, the reduction in nursing is 1.5 percent. Hardly a cataclysmic reduction. The reduction in general service is 2 percent. The reduction in administration is 3 percent, for the average of the 2.1 percent which I gave my honourable friend. Well, Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether the Honourable Member for Brandon East has any relatives in nursing homes or not, but I have had, and had them in what I consider to be one of the best nursing homes in Winnipeg, in the 1970s, and I must say that the nurses there, notwithstanding their efforts to provide as much love as possible — were not able to sit down with that particular relative of mine, or any other residents of the home for any length of period. It was the relatives of the residents who did that. It's the relatives of the residents who are expected, I would suggest, to fulfill those responsibilities in large part plus the fact that there are visiting organizations, friendly visitors, volunteers. There are usually recreational directors that the nursing homes have access to, to provide other opportunities for their residents.

The Honourable Member for Brandon East, I think, is implying that he's asking more than is reasonable of the nursing staff in the average nursing home. Of course, if somebody is having a particularly difficult emotional time or an emotional spasm of some sort, the nursing staff is available to sit with the resident and offer comfort. But generally speaking, they're there to attend to the regular medical care needs of the residents, and the Member for Brandon East and I and others of us who have relatives in those nursing homes have the greater responsibility to provide the comradeship and companionship that he is referring to in my view. And I suggest that it was that way five years ago and it was that way ten years ago and it hasn't changed today, and I don't think that a reduction of 1.5 percent in the nursing compliment reflects any change of that kind.

MR. EVANS: Well, Mr. Chairman, I couldn't agree with the Minister more when he said, it's up to the relatives, it's up to the friends to provide comfort and friendship and to talk to the residents, the patients of these institutions. There's no question, and I said that and perhaps he didn't hear me. But I also pointed out that because of the very mobile society in which we live there are people who live in these nursing homes whose nearest relative may be 1,000 miles away; whose friends have long since departed, because they have been blessed with longevity, which perhaps their friends were not blessed with. So that there are many people who do not have the relatives, who do not have the friends, and who are in a state of loneliness. I didn't mean to say when I talked about emotional support, I wasn't talking about people who had some traumatic experience and were suffering some very acute psychological period where they were extremely upset. I'm talking generally in terms of loneliness, the feeling of despair that many of these people often have. And my impression from talking to some nursing workers around the province — I won't mention any particular institution

— is that they wished that they had more time for some of their residents. Not all of them. Not all of them. Some have got children who come and see them every day, or they have friends who come and see them frequently or their church organization or their service club. That's true. It's quite true.

As a matter of fact, I've had the pleasure for some years now playing my piano accordion in a large nursing home in Brandon, and we have a sing-song at Christmas time and hopefully in the summer time as well, and we have lots of fun. About 100 of us were — we have sing-songs and there are cookies that are served and so on, and there are a lot other people who come into the Fairview Nursing Home in Brandon, the one I'm talking about, who do their thing, various service organizations, and they do a good job and God bless them and they're a credit to all of us and to our society. And it's possible that this problem that I'm talking about will vary, well it's got to vary from one institution to another, from one place to another.

I just pass that on to the Minister because I have talked to some nursing assistants who have commented that they wished that they had more time, because there were people who were very lonely. There were people who seemed to be in just a chronic state of despair. At any rate, what I was hoping that — and I guess the answer is no — but I was wondering whether the Minister's department or the Manitoba Health Services Commission was undertaking some sort of a survey or perhaps there's an ongoing survey of this matter because it's an element of health. It's one element of health care. We all recognize this. It's recognized because as the Minister said, there are some recreational workers now. I know that. And we all know that. But is there any sort of ongoing survey of the institutions with regard to the kind of recreational programming, with regard to this associated medical service that might be provided to these people? That's my question. And, you know, sometimes you can do an awful lot and it doesn't much money. Sometimes if you get a good social worker, that person is very good in bringing in all kinds of organizations, in contacting relatives and bringing them in. It doesn't mean you have to hire 20 people for a small nursing home or something, to all of a sudden do what I'm talking about. I'm not suggesting it — maybe a bit of imagination, but it may be worthwhile for ongoing surveys of this kind to be undertaken to see if we can do better in this area.

So I just wondered if the Minister could comment on that.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, I can't identify an ongoing survey, Mr. Chairman, but the standards application in nursing homes which we discussed earlier this evening, includes constant examination of the recreational opportunities available to residents of nursing homes. There is a check run on the recreational amenities available as there is on the other aspects and features of the operation, ranging from staffing patterns to medical care to prescription dispensation to food, menus, etc. And I must say that I haven't been in any nursing home that I can think of, and I've been in a fair number in the last seventeen months, where I didn't encounter at least one room and often many more than one room of residents engaged in various activities, whether it was occupational therapy or whether it was a sing-song of the kind the honourable member refers to or whether it was simply in a group, watching a television program, and there are recreational activities fostered and encouraged and measured by our standards officers and that will certainly continue. In the meantime, I would say to my honourable friend that we are taking an initiative in the field of volunteer development, which we certainly hope will be successful otherwise we wouldn't be taking it, and there will be emphasis in that area, on volunteer visitations to facilities such as these under discussion.

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to ask the Minister another question and that is to what extent is he and his staff exploring the possibility of having enriched senior citizens' housing developed in this province? When we were in government, we felt that this was one way that we should move in Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation that — in fact we did have a committee set up — Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation staff were on a committee with the Department of Health to look into this area because when you talk about enriched senior citizens' housing, what you're doing perhaps is providing accommodation for people who are not quite candidates, full candidates for nursing homes, and rather than putting a person into a nursing home who perhaps has to have meals prepared for them or have a nurse available; in other words, someone requiring fairly minimal care, that you could more cheaply at a lower expense to the taxpayer, provide for that category of people by building the enriched senior citizens housing. This would take pressure off the construction of nursing homes as I know the Home Care program itself does.

The Home Care program, of course, as one of the features of the Home Care program, it takes pressure off of government, off of society for constructing more nursing homes. But it seems to me that this was an avenue that was worth exploring and I'm just wondering whether the minister and his staff are continuing to explore this with Manitoba Housing and whether there is any possibility

for this enriched housing. You could argue it should be under MHRC, but it does involve this department and it does involve this area of service to the people.

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we are continuing to pursue that objective. As discussed earlier in the committee — I think the honourable member was in the other committee and missed it — we did deal with that topic and I am working with my colleague, the minister responsible for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation in the conviction that enriched elderly persons' housing provides one of the answers to the challenges we face in this field.

MR. EVANS: With respect to the City of Brandon, I wonder if the minister could indicate whether he's had representation made by the City of Brandon or by any groups in Brandon for additional nursing home facilities in that city.

MR. SHERMAN: The answer is yes, Mr. Chairman, we have had some approaches from Brandon from the proprietary field. They have not been accepted or approved yet, I would just remind the honourable member that on the basis of guidelines which have been followed by both the previous and the present administration, the Brandon area is better served in terms of beds per thousand than any other individual region in the province.

MR. EVANS: Yes, I wonder if the minister could be a little more specific. He said the Brandon area, is he talking about an average for Westman, for example, southwestern Manitoba or is he talking specifically about the city of Brandon, and maybe it's difficult to separate the two, I don't know, but I was just wondering specifically if he could delineate that.

MR. SHERMAN: Not the whole of Westman region, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I shouldn't have used the term "region", but I meant the Brandon area, Brandon and the catchment area around Brandon city.

MR. EVANS: Does the minister have any figure available as to the basis of his statement? He says there's more, I think he said more beds available than perhaps any other area in the province. How does he make this calculation, is it the number of nursing home beds available as a ratio in relation to the number of aged people, the number of 65 years of age and over, or what kind of a figure is it? How does he calculate this? I'm not asking for a mathematical dissertation, but just what kind of a number is the minister talking about?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, we're looking at a guideline of 90 beds per 1,000 over age 70 and the total in the Brandon city area and catchment area would be in excess of 120 beds per 1,000, Mr. Chairman.

MR. EVANS: When the minister says he's looking at 90 per 1,000 and it's over 120 in the Brandon area, do you mean it's 90 per 1,000 as an average for the province, or is that the standard that the department sets up? What does the 90 per 1,000 mean?

MR. SHERMAN: I don't know that 90 per 1,000 is the average over the province, but that's the accepted standard, the accepted guideline that we have been following. There are some areas that obviously have less than 90 per 1,000, some have more. I don't know whether it would work out to an average or not, but that is the guideline that's accepted as being the acceptable level of service for society in this particular field in Manitoba in this particular day and age. Now, the honourable member opposite may quarrel with that guideline, but that is the guideline at the moment and it's exceeded substantially in the particular area that he is referring to. Not that I'm saying that in a critical way, but I suggest to him that we have perceived needs in meeting that guideline in some parts of the province, and although there have been approaches from Brandon, they have not been approved or commissioned yet.

MR. EVANS: Yes, well, thank you. I agree any standard is, I guess, ultimately based on some sort of a value judgment which relates to a study of society's needs and I don't know whether 90 per 1,000 of persons over age 70, how that compares with provinces such as Saskatchewan or Alberta or Ontario or whatever, or how it's changed over the years. I know in the case of housing, which you can relate to housing for senior citizens, we've had different standards and over the years we've actually, I recall we've improved the standards we said we needed. I don't remember the numbers, we needed so many units per persons over 65 and we accepted a particular standard for a number of years, but then we felt that well now, we were in a position to improve that standard, because

we felt that well now, we were in a position to improve that standard, because we felt the demand was there.

It would seem to me that one indication of whether this ratio is adequate or not, would be the amount of waiting lists, the number of people on waiting lists that there are. Now, in conversation with a former mayor of the City of Brandon — I don't have any data and the gentleman didn't provide me with any data, but on several occasions indicated that in his view, in the City of Brandon there was need for another nursing home. Now, we weren't talking about whether it was proprietary or non-proprietary, but he indicated very strongly on many occasions that there was a need for another nursing home, and I'm just wondering, does the department — the department must have some information on waiting lists of persons wishing to get into nursing homes. I know those numbers are not necessarily that reliable in some ways, because if a person or that person's family is very discouraged about the possibility of getting into a nursing home, they don't even bother to go on a waiting list. This is what happens with senior citizens' homes, senior citizens' apartments, but nevertheless, it is some guide and I wondered if the minister could provide us with the information, how many people are on waiting lists for nursing homes in the Brandon area, and also, could he indicate how many people are on waiting lists in Manitoba in general?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have already indicated how many are on the waiting list in Manitoba in general, I provided that figure to the committee several hours ago. I can't tell the honourable member how many are on the waiting list in Brandon. I can tell him that the Assiniboine Centre in Brandon is not full; there are beds available in the Assiniboine Centre, extended care beds and personal care beds. The total in Westman Region, the total patient days per 1,000 population for 77-78 was 35,025 and that's the highest in the province. The next highest is Winnipeg at 28,414; Central Region at 28,143; Eastman, I'm sorry at 28,467; Interlake at 26,798; Norman 19,231 and Parklands 17,170 for a Manitoba average of 28,304 and Westman is at 35,025.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; the Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: I didn't hear the beginning. I heard the figures but what exactly were those figures again, I'm sorry, I didn't hear the honourable minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Patient days in personal care homes per 1,000 population in the year 1977-78.

MR. EVANS: Well, okay then, just to conclude this with respect to the City of Brandon. I don't where this person who was a former chief magistrate of the city got his information, but he declared that there was an urgent need for additional nursing homes. Is the minister saying that because of the information that he has, how this area compares more favourably with other areas, that the government is not prepared to see or approve the construction of any additional nursing homes in the city in the foreseeable future, in the city of Brandon?

MR. SHERMAN: No, Mr. Chairman, I certainly would not say in the foreseeable future, but I would say in the immediate future that we have some perceived needs in other areas that do not have the kind of ratio, the kind of level of personal care accommodation availability and they are ahead of Brandon on a priority list.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; the Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. EVANS: Okay, just one point then; the Assiniboine Centre, which the minister referred to, as I understand it is an extended treatment hospital and I don't know how he would put that in the same category as a nursing home, or do you mean to say that this could be used as a nursing home facility? It would seem to me it's a very expensive way to run a nursing home, because it is a hospital, it's an extended care hospital, so the information the minister gives is news to me and I'm glad that it's not — in some ways it's better to be under-utilized than having the other problem. But nevertheless, is the minister saying that if people have a need to go into a nursing home, that the government is prepared to place them into the Assiniboine Centre rather than have

them wait for entrance at Fairview Nursing Home or some other nursing home in that area?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, there may be a modicum of truth in that suggestion, Mr. Chairman, although certainly not by design. The fact of the matter is that the Assiniboine Centre probably is not being utilized properly. It was designed as an extended care hospital, an extended treatment facility, that's correct. What's happened is that it's being utilized largely for personal care, most of the residents in there are personal care residents, but if somebody needs extended care, an extended care bed, extended treatment, there are beds available in the Assiniboine Centre. The point is that the Assiniboine Centre, even being misused as a personal care centre, a personal care facility is under-utilized.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (2)—pass; the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, just a few words on this. I'm still concerned with fact that, in my opinion, the funding for personal care homes is not keeping pace with the actual costs, with the costs to the operators of the homes, and therefore, the services to people. The increase in the last two years has been in the neighborhood, in total between the 24 month period is 16 percent, which I don't think is adequate, does not reflect inflation over the 24 month period. The result is they've had to cut back on staffing, as we know 2.1 percent. It seems like a very small percentage, but if you replace a person who is on the ward or who is on duty, or you replace someone who is involved not directly in the direct services to people in the sense of when they are in bed, but in the social services within the personal care home itself, which makes it more of a home than an institution — if you have to cut down on those, you're cutting down on the value of the personal care home. The fact that these places are the final home, the last home, that these elderly will be living in and really the purpose of it all is to try to, not just save the hospital's money by vacating beds. The idea is that a personal care home is a facility which is as much as possible duplicating a private residence, as much as possible. But at the same time, in my opinion, this is not possible with the kind of restraint that this government is showing in this area because these homes are going to be forced to simply treat people as if they were simply graduates or transferees from a hospital. Whereas in a hospital they are occupying acute care, there is really no recreation facilities, there is nothing there to make life liveable, then they should be in personal care homes for all the reasons that were mentioned earlier.

But surely in a personal care home it should be an atmosphere which is more of a home than that of an institution. That's what it is all about and I am a/ concerned that the level of funding is not going to achieve this. If anything they are going to have to cut back as they are cutting back now. They are going to have to thin out their services and the personal care homes will end up as mini institutions, I'm afraid, so with those few words, Mr. Chairman, I deplore the fact that the increases are being held to as a strict level as they are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 2—pass; 3. Hospital Programs. Committee rise. This committee is adjourned.