

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 12, 1979

Time: 2:30 p.m.

SUPPLY — AGRICULTURE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Committee come to order. Item 4.(a)(1) — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, this morning we were talking about the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture with respect to Bill 25, The Cattlemen's Association Act, or whatever, and what has transpired since that Act was passed. Of course I drew to the attention of the Minister that some of the things that we foresaw and indicated in the course of the debate of that bill have already occurred. And that should be expected in that any time government delegate their responsibility to private clubs of any kind, that there is always a question of whether or not those clubs or organizations will want to comply with what is in the public interest or whether they will be carried away with what is in their own particular interest and where there could be a conflict as a result of those powers given to them and the decisions that are made through those powers.

So I have indicated to the Minister a number of examples of how that works to the detriment of the public and I cautioned him this morning that in no way do we want to see this government advancing any kind of money to that association, given the fact that the people of Manitoba didn't want that association. The Minister may want to argue with me on that point but I think it is self-evident in that in seven districts, Mr. Chairman, as I recall it, there were no elections held. We had seven acclamations out of 14. That to me indicates a very deep apathy, lack of interest on the part of the people in seven districts. In the other seven districts where there was an election, we find that in all of those districts, less than 50 percent of the eligible voters who received ballots actually voted. In one district it was only about one-third of the eligible voters who cast their ballots.

So here we have a situation where the Minister has imposed an association on the beef producers of this province who didn't really want to be members of that association and who have already demonstrated their lack of desire, (a) by not contesting in the election of seven districts, that is for the directorship of seven districts, and (b) in the fact that there was a very poor turnout in the other seven districts.

Be that as it may, Mr. Chairman, it is this Minister who has to live with those results.

This particular document that I read from this morning, though, implies — at least it appears to me it implies — that there is almost a debt owed to this individual by this association, if you read through it, in that this person was very enthusiastically involved in supporting proposition, Bill 25, and the objects of the association and that now it is his sort of time to get his reward. That's how I read this letter; that's how I interpret this letter, Mr. Chairman.

You will note that on Page 3 of this letter this person talks about giving him a three-quarters of a year subscription, would guarantee — is the kind of a guarantee that he would want.

Any member, Mr. Chairman, would want that kind of a guarantee. The Member for Morris would; the Member for Gladstone would, and the Member for Portage la Prairie. A guarantee of the rip-off the people of Manitoba is what is being asked for.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we know how convenient it would be for the Board of Directors to agree to employ this newspaper in a way that is suggested in this letter, and that it could cost \$112,000, as the letter indicates it could cost, or maybe something less or something more. As I see it, if they were to go along with this measure, Mr. Chairman, there would either have to be a very substantial increase of fees on the members of this association, voluntary or involuntary, or this particular newspaper owner would consume almost all of the moneys generated by the levies that would be imposed on the producers. That's the way it is shaping up, in order to give them a propaganda piece, Mr. Chairman.

Now, the Minister may think that maybe too much is made of this offer, of this suggestion. Mr. Chairman, I don't think too much is being made of this suggestion because we already know it's historic, it's a fact that the Board has already employed one Mr. Stouffer for a fee, to conduct the election. He was employed as the Returning Officer, Mr. Chairman, something, by the way, that should have been done by the government of this province so that the people in Manitoba would

have some degree of confidence that there is some ethics involved in the procedures. It is beyond question but certainly subject to public scrutiny, certainly subject to public scrutiny.

Mr. Chairman, when I asked the Minister in the House a week or two ago about the improprieties and the irregularities at the time that the ballots were counted, a) he wasn't interested, and b) he gave me some sort of an answer that he might look into it.

Well, Mr. Chairman, I believe that at this state we should know whether he has looked into it and, if he hasn't, then why hasn't he. Because I am led to believe that there are very serious inadequacies in the way in which that vote was carried out. See-through envelopes, Mr. Chairman. You know there was even mention made of that at one of their Board meetings, as I understand it — see-through envelopes. I don't whether the Returning Officer was economizing or whether someone had some other ideas about see-through envelopes. I don't know what that meant, but I know it's being discussed in the countryside about why there were see-through envelopes which invalidated some ballots, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we know that there is discussion about that and there is some question, and there is the results of one district going to court, as I understand, because of that.

Now, the Minister claims that he is not responsible because he had delegated this out to a private organization. I simply want to remind him that ultimately he is responsible for having delegated those powers.

Now Mr. Chairman, I would like the Minister to tell me something else, and that is, whether or not his Board, the Board that he has appointed, has agreed to pay outstanding accounts that are owed to legal firms or any other agency or person leading up to the establishment of the bill itself, Bill 25, whether that Board has paid the accounts of any other association, other than this particular association? I would like the Minister to tell me yes, or no. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I go back again, I think the member was totally out of order in discussing the bill, although I'm quite . . .

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I now raise a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet on a point of order.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I want to know from you whether I was in order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: To the Member for Lac du Bonnet, we had agreed to discuss it and I will go along with that. The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I can only answer to the Member for Lac du Bonnet who expects that we should sit in here and debate letters that are sent from one organization, or to an organization — (Interjection) — Mr. Chairman, to an organization that was — enabling legislation was set up for them to form, and I think it should be referred to in that light. In fact, there was an interim Board appointed to set up a producer-elected Board and that, in fact, has taken place. As far as any see-through, as far as the Member for Lac du Bonnet, I think the only see-through of the people of Manitoba is that they're seeing through the MLA for Lac du Bonnet and really what he's really talking about, and he really is just sitting here trying to generate some kind of falsehoods that people would believe.

As far as I'm concerned, Mr. Chairman, we've debated that for a year. The organization that had enabling legislation is off and running. I think that I gave him the opportunity to discuss it under this. As far as handling the affairs of the association, they worked I'm sure within the limitations that they had under the Act and have performed those duties. I'm confident that they were well-qualified people and that once again the Member for Lac du Bonnet is sitting here trying to make mountains out of molehills as far as the people of Manitoba are concerned, the farm people in particular, and it just doesn't wash, and if he's going to continue to debate that kind of thing, then as far as I'm concerned it has no further relevance to the Estimates in which we're discussing.

We're looking at the Estimates for this coming year under the Livestock and the Crop Production in those Estimates. I appreciate the Member for St. George in his attitude in questioning. I think he got down to the actual Estimates, and as far as I'm concerned the Member for Lac du Bonnet, if he wants to continue on that, can ask his questions through the St. George member because he's just totally, totally not to the point of which we're here to discuss these Estimates.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Minister -30 hasn't answered one question that I've put to him in the course of my presentation. Now either he chooses not to and he's accepting them as factual, or he's denying them. But he has done neither. He has neither denied there is anything wrong with the procedures or the decisions made by his appointed Board. He hasn't confirmed or denied that grants were made to private associations outside of that Board.

These are the questions that I've put to him. He hasn't replied to one of them. Now, Mr. Chairman, either a grant was given to these associations by his Board to pay off certain debts, or it wasn't. Who paid the Returning Officer, Mr. Chairman? Who employed the Returning Officer? All of these things he has not dealt with. He did not tell me whether he made an enquiry into the allegations of irregularities of voting procedure based on the question that I put to him in the House several days ago. He hasn't replied to that one, either. All we get from him is a bunch of rhetoric, but no answers. Now, it's time that he started to answer some questions, that's what he's here for. That's the purpose of his being here.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I will go back again and say that I think the whole questioning on Bill 25 is irrelevant to the debate. I will say again, there has been no money from the government go to that Board at this particular point. I said there was consideration given to it, but there isn't any money, there hasn't been any money that is in the hands of that Board. How they paid their accounts is that Board's responsibility. It is my understanding, and it is an understanding that they have borrowed money to operate the affairs of that particular organization to this date. I would further add that getting into how that Board is operated, I said they had responsible people as far as the elections of the Board or the producer elected Board; I'm confident that everything was handled totally within the responsibility of that appointed Board, and have only heard from one individual, the individual from Lac du Bonnet who has been trying to make some great story of mistrust of a group of appointed farm people who he didn't have any trust for for the last 8 years; he was unable to accomplish what he felt was within his ambition and as far as answering any further questions if he does not get down to the items such as I referred to earlier like the Member for St. George has done, then he will find himself without any answers at all.

Because I feel that it is totally irrelevant after answering the questions that he has presented to me.

MR. USKIW: The minister now tells us that the line of questioning put before him is irrelevant to the subject item under discussion.

I asked him before I entered into the debate whether this is the place that we would discuss Bill 25 and the procedures and actions pursuant to Bill 25 by his appointed Board. He said this was the time to discuss it. We have now discussed it. He now doesn't want to give the answers. . .

MR. DOWNEY: I've given you the answers.

MR. USKIW: . . . and he tells us that it's irrelevant and that we're not on the item.

Mr. Chairman, he can't have it both ways. I'm ready to discuss it wherever he tells me that it's proper to discuss. He gave us an indication this morning that this is where it should be dealt with.

We have put questions to him; he has not answered those questions, Mr. Chairman, and I'm going to repeat again those questions that were not answered. Did his appointed Board approve Expenditures of other associations, of other associations leading up to the establishment of the Association? I'm talking about associations such as the Beef Growers Association and Cow Calf Producers Association and so on. My understanding of it is that the board has given consideration on application from these old groups that the board assume their legal liabilities. I want to know from the Minister whether his board has approved any payments to cover outstanding liabilities of associations other than their own.

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

MR. USKIW: Would the Minister then agree to enquire and to inform either this committee or the House whenever he receives that information.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Now, Mr. Chairman, one other point that the Minister did not respond to and that is whether he has enquired into the voting procedures and the counting of the ballots that took

place some several days ago, as he said he would when he took the matter under advisement on a question put to him in the House. Has he had a chance to make the enquiry?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I have enquired verbally to individuals and have found to my satisfaction that everything was handled properly.

MR. USKIW: Could the Minister indicate to me from where or whom did he get the information.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I discussed it with one or two of the members of the appointed board.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, am I correct, did the Minister say he did not discuss it with the Returning Officer.

MR. DOWNEY: No I did not, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member from Gladstone.

MR. FERGUSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, if we are through with the discussion on Bill 25 I'll desist from speaking, if not well I will.

MR. USKIW: Well we don't know. How do we know? I can't control all the people down on this side. They all have their own . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister indicated that he wasn't aware that there were any funds put out by the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association to pay debts of other livestock associations. Would he consider it legal that the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association pay debts of other livestock associations.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I would think that that would be left up to the appointed board or to the new board to decide for themselves.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman last spring during the debate on the establishment of the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, representation was made to the effect that advance notice of Legislation were presented to the Manitoba Cow Calf Association and the Manitoba Beef Growers Association prior to this Legislation being presented to the members in the House. He denied that.

MR. DOWNEY: That's right. I denied it then and I'll deny it now.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, not only was that done, Mr. Chairman, although the Minister has denied that, that that Legislation was presented to them prior to it being brought into the House, the fact remains that both the Manitoba Beef Growers and the Manitoba Cow Calf Association paid for the drafting of the Legislation that is now on the books. Mr. Chairman, it was a resolution now passed by the appointed board of the Minister of the new Manitoba Cattle Producers Association to the effect, and I have been given a hand-written copy of minutes from a meeting of the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association appointed board, included one of the motions moved by Mr. William Sharp, and seconded by Mr. C. Lundman, that Mr. Dooley of Scarth, Simonsen, Dooley, Olson and Wiens, be retained as counsel for the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association. Carried.

Moved by Mr. J. Dickson, and seconded by Mr. T. Snow, that the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, the MCPA as they put it down, accept the obligation of \$3,000 of outstanding account with Scarth, Simonsen, Dooley, in respect to the by-law developed in consultation with the Manitoba Beef Growers Association and the Manitoba Cow Calf Association.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister has the audacity to stand here in this committee and say, look this association developed and did not know about the Legislation beforehand, when now we find that the Minister's board that he appointed, is now going to pick up debts incurred by the Manitoba Beef Growers Association and the Manitoba Cow Calf Association in terms of the development of their regulations and the Legislation which was in fact presented, Mr. Chairman, in this committee by a member, if the Minister will recall, a member of the Manitoba Cow Calf Association when

he showed us, showed in this committee, a draft Legislation which was identical to the Bill that was presented in this House. I ask the Minister, Mr. Chairman, whether this group that is now picking up expenses of the Manitoba Beef Growers and the Manitoba Cow Calf Association, whether this Association, whether the Minister will investigate and ascertain whether this association will also pick up the costs incurred by the Independent Cattlemens Association, by the Canadian Agricultural Movement, by the Manitoba Farm Union, by the Manitoba Farm Bureau, who was also involved in this Legislation and made presentations, whether it is legal for this Association to pick up the costs of two groups but not be involved in any discussions with respect to the other groups that were involved in this Legislation and in generating costs in respect to this debate. I want him to tell me whether he considers it legal of this group, of his group, to cover those expenses and not even consider any of the expenses of the other groups.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I will only speak to two points the first point being that the Legislation which was introduced to the House was prepared and drafted by the Department of Agriculture and is not identical, as he has said, to any other drafted Legislation that I am aware of so he is totally false in making that statement and I would certainly think he should retract it because I proved that last year, I proved that, Mr. Chairman, I proved it in the House. As far as the payment of bills by an association if they have the funds and they are a duly appointed board under Legislation, Mr. Chairman, I would think that they would have the right to distribute and handle those funds how they like, how they feel, Mr. Chairman. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Chairman, they have legal counsel. I'm sure they can retain that. I'm not a lawyer. My opinion would be that if the other individuals who you are referring to, The Farmers Union who have received some \$20,000 a year without being accountable to anybody from the last Government, could receive that kind of funds then this board who has been appointed with legal counsel could receive requests from the Farmers Union or from any other group if they so desired and if they accepted it, it would be up to that particular organization

However, I do not think we are on the debate which we are referring to and again I would like to get back to the estimates but if they want to again have a free-for-all on the overall waterfront then let them say so. But if they want to get down to the actual figures and what are before us, then I am quite prepared to debate them but I will tell them right now that if this is their attitude as far as the department Estimates for the coming year, that this is the way they are going to carry on, I don't think it's of any meaning to the people of Manitoba and to me. I'll debate it until the cows come home if they want to debate that whole thing, but not in this particular arena of Estimates of this coming year.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a point of order.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, are we in order or not on this question?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Could the member clarify what he . . . ?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the Minister keeps insisting that we're out of order. You have already ruled on this question more than once this morning. I ask you whether this debate is in order or not.

MR. CHAIAN: It is my interpretation that the Honourable Minister has indicated that he does not want to discuss the matter further, which is his prerogative.

MR. USKIW: That is correct, Sir, but let him not say that we are not in order in discussing this item here.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the Minister tell me that the \$3,000 in an outstanding account that are being paid by his Board, not by the elected Board, by the Interim Board, is legal? Can he tell me that producers' funds that are not yet there, that the producers of this province, the cattle producers, are being committed to an expense without having their elected representatives being part of that Board, the Board that he has appointed? And he tells me that it is not part of this discussion. He is already committing the cattlemen of this province to at least \$3,000 that we know of. He tells us that they are considering a grant to this group; that the taxpayers of this province will be putting in money, but we don't know when or how much. How much funds has he got in his Estimates as a contingency to whenever he decides to make that decision in this

fiscal year, Mr. Chairman?

Those are the questions that the Minister, I believe, is obliged to answer. He may not want to answer and he can tell us that I am refusing to answer, but certainly that will be left for the public to decide what happens with that money and how he has committed the people and the producers of this province to the expenditure of those moneys, and he is saying that is being done by a group who can make their own laws; they do whatever they please.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I would think it would have to be referred to legal counsel to get a legal ruling on it, as far as the ability for them to do that.

MR. URUSKI: Will the Minister refer this matter to the Attorney-General and bring back a report to the House on this matter?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I will give consideration to that and if I feel that there is need to do so, I will do so.

MR. URUSKI: What does that mean, Mr. Chairman? Can the Minister tell me what that means?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, if I am satisfied that there is some irregularity taking place then I would pursue to do that.

MR. URUSKI: How will the Minister find out whether there is some irregularity if he does not refer this matter to be checked legally?

MR. DOWNEY: In discussion with legal counsel.

MR. URUSKI: Am I to understand that the Minister now is indicating and telling us that he will refer it to legal counsel and have this matter discussed and report back as to whether he considers it legal or illegal?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding of Bill 25 that we dealt with last year, it gave powers to the appointed Board, the Interim Board. It was fairly restricted. In my opinion, the only parameters of the appointed Board was to set up a mechanism to conduct a vote of producers to elect a permanent Board. This is my interpretation of Bill 25. They were not to interfere. Even the elected Board could not change the check-off unless there were certain conditions met.

But the situation that has come up this morning is that an appointed Board with only the authority of setting up an election mechanism to elect people to a permanent Board have now taken upon themselves the responsibility of accepting the responsibility for debts incurred by other groups not part of the Cattlemen's Association. And this is where I believe that there could be some legalities of accepting these responsibilities. I want to point that out to the Minister.

We intend to proceed. Once we get by this item, we intend to proceed item-by-item and go through it as quickly as possible, but this is a very contentious issue because we have already had some information here. It is my understanding that even people who were running for office, candidates in the election for Board positions on the Cattlemen's Association, are unaware that such Resolutions have been passed; they are unaware of such correspondence from Stouffers requesting tremendous amounts of money, and so on.

Now, the Minister last year, we pointed out to him that he was entering into a dangerous situation by introducing Bill 25 himself and not having it done by a backbencher or any other way. I believe he felt that once he had created this bill, this association, and that they had some autonomy, that that was the end, that he would not be responsible and I assure him that he will never be free as long as that association is just at arm's length from the government. It is an arm of government, only an arm's length, that's all. And whatever happens in the future, whether the Minister is here as a Minister of Agriculture or somewhere else, he will always have to answer for whatever this Board does. And we warned him last year that there was very very little support for this legislation and the fact that there was very very little turn-out for the vote indicates that there was very little support for it.

In regard to the ballot, my understanding is . . . —(Interjections)— I wonder, Mr. Chairman, if you would . . .

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

MR. ADAM: In regard to the format of the ballot, Mr. Chairman, I was very hesitant myself to cast my ballot because it was a see-through ballot. I don't know yet today, Mr. Chairman, if my ballot was counted or whether it was ruled as a spoiled ballot, because I did wrap the ballot up in another paper so that the Returning Officer could not look through and see how that vote was cast.

Now, I have no idea whether my ballot was spoiled or not, and I understand that in that very close contest that took place in District 9 that the spoiled ballots were spoiled because of the fact that the voters did not want to be identified and took off their names on the outside envelope. And that was considered to be spoiled. Now, I stand to be corrected on that, but I understand that that could have changed the election, that those spoiled ballots could have elected a different person, because those people who were voting did not want to be identified as to how they were voting. I had that same apprehension, Mr. Chairman, I was on the verge of pulling off the outside name.

A MEMBER: Did you vote?

MR. ADAM: I certainly did. I voted but I have no assurance from the Minister or anyone else that my ballot counted. I have no assurance that my ballot counted —(Interjections)— God damn it, why don't these guys shut up.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. If I could caution the member that all members have been guilty of interruptions. The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Mr. Chairman, in speaking to one of the candidates who was running for election, he was , unaware . . . I'll save your time, Mr. Chairman, if you are worried about "God damn it," I'll withdraw that remark.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I appreciate that.

MR. ADAM: It's not a bad word anyway.

Mr. Chairman, in speaking to one of the candidates, there was very little apathy, there were irregularities, there were people who were on the list in the next district who should have been in his district and they didn't bother to vote because they had not been put into the right districts. I am very disappointed that the Minister proceeded in the fashion that he did, but I want to point out again that — I also mentioned to him during the debates last year that there was danger in appointing one official body that the Minister would recognize to the exclusion of all others — I warned him at that time there would be other associations that would come up and organize. There would be some that would disappear and more that would come into being, and we have had such a new organization that sprung up in southwest Manitoba and I believe they go by the name of the Southwest Livestock Improvement Association. It is another group since this Minister has introduced that bill.

So here you have a situation, Mr. Chairman, where the Minister has appointed an official group, above all others, that is the one to be recognized. In spite of that, we have a large group of producers in southwest Manitoba who have thought it was necessary to organize another group and they call themselves the Southwest Livestock Improvement Group. —(Interjection)— No, no, right here in Manitoba. I ask the Minister, how is he going to deal with these new groups? He officially recognizes only one spokesman now for the cattlemen of this province. How will he recognize this group; how will he deal with this new association, since he recognizes only the Cattlemen's Association as the official spokesman for the cattlemen of this province.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I will treat them openly and fairly, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: He will treat them fairly and openly but they are not recognized as the official spokesmen for the livestock people of this province. We warned him last year and he will have to answer to this and he will have to live with it. He will never be free of the criticisms that will come, no matter how long he is the Minister of Agriculture. He will be responsible for every action

that his board takes because they are still his little baby; they are an arm of government; they are an arm length of the Minister. I just wanted to put those remarks on the record.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1)—pass — the Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate who drafted the procedures for the voting, the voting procedures and the actual balloting in respect of the elections?

MR. DOWNEY: I have no idea, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, was this done in consultation with the Provincial Electoral Office?

MR. DOWNEY: I have indicated just 10 seconds ago that I didn't know. —(Interjection)— No, it hasn't been.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, were the procedures developed in accordance with the local authorities Elections Act?

MR. DOWNEY: I don't know, Mr. Chairman. I would think probably they would be.

MR. URUSKI: Who paid for the election procedure, the returning officer, the balloting and everything else?

MR. DOWNEY: I have indicated that the appointed board had the authority to handle the election proceedings.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister tell us the cost of the procedure?

MR. DOWNEY: I don't know, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister tell us where the board will have the funds, or has the funds, to pay for this procedure?

MR. DOWNEY: I think I have answered that, Mr. Chairman. It is my understanding that those funds were borrowed.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate why the existing procedure of conducting elections in terms of producer groups was not used, that is, the mechanisms already within the department through the Manitoba Marketing Board? Why was that group not utilized in this process?

MR. DOWNEY: I assume the board did not choose to go in that direction.

MR. URUSKI: Can the Minister tell us, does he accept the contentions that have been raised insofar as the see-through ballots, the irregularities in terms of the returning officer and the scrutineers counting ballots and the like, as being a legal procedure in the carrying out of the elections of those producers?

MR. DOWNEY: As far as the reference to see-through ballots, Mr. Chairman, it has been indicated to me that the envelopes, or the see-through ballots, are the same as the see-through members on the other side, that they were the same type of ballot that was used in the previous elections held by the last government. That's my understanding.

MR. URUSKI: If they were of the same kind of material, could the Minister tell us where the material was purchased for the election?

MR. DOWNEY: I don't know, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, since he knew so much about, that the material was the same as was handled by the province before, could he tell us, where did the province get their material and how does he know and can he tell us how he knew that it was the same as before and it

is the same now.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, if the Member for St. George wants the Department of Agriculture to waste their time looking up paper that was provided for ballots that were held some several years ago to bring in a Marketing Board for the beef cattlemen, I respect him a lot less than I did prior to the entering in of this debate of the agricultural production of Manitoba agriculture in the department.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Is the minister not concerned about the irregularities that have been raised in respect to those elections, or by his remarks here now? He is telling us that he is not at all concerned with the procedures that were conducted in terms of the elections that were held. He would have been happy had all the 14 members been brought in by acclamation, and then he would have really had a group on his hands that producers did not even want to be involved at all in his group. But is he not concerned?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I'm fully concerned about the activities of the total agricultural community and how they advance and prosper. I think that with the member's question, as far as I am concerned, he's trying to point out some irregularities which he cannot substantiate. As far as I am concerned, the people who were appointed to the board are very qualified, respected people throughout the province. Their actions, they are quite prepared, I am sure, to stand behind as their responsibilities, in acting on the Interim Board, to see a fully elected producer board in the province, which has been carried out. I can also inform the members that the transition from the appointed board to the elected board, has taken place, and I feel that it's just a matter of, again the members opposite, feeling that they have not been able to accomplish something in the province that they thought they should have been able to, through their type of government. We have seen, as far as I am concerned, an organization of livestock producers that will have been provided with enabling legislation, will be carrying on the operations of that association, and I'm sure that they will do a very commendable and respectable job. Any question of wrongdoing, as far as these members opposite are concerned, as far as any question that they're bringing up of any wrongdoing of these individuals who are appointed, I'm sure will be not listened to very heavily by the electorate of Manitoba. I'm confident that we have had reputable people, and will continue to have reputable people in that association.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the minister makes mention that the people on the board are very highly regarded. The people on the board probably are very highly regarded. It is the minister who is not very highly regarded, Mr. Chairman. These people were directly appointed by the minister, Mr. Chairman. They are responsible to the minister. They are the Interim Board. The Interim Board was set up by this government. The minister cannot now come in here and say he doesn't know anything about those operations — of that board. He passed the legislation forcing the producers of this province to go into a cattle association. He wasn't prepared to conduct a referendum along the lines that he wished to proceed. He pushed that association down the producers' throats. Now he is saying that there's nothing wrong with the members on the board. I'm not challenging, Mr. Chairman, the members of the board. I am challenging the minister to tell us what has gone on, who is paying the bills, and where it goes. I placed the question, Mr. Chairman, to the minister, in my previous remarks, to ascertain whether there are any funds in his Budget that he has set aside, if he so desires to allow a grant to this association. Are there any funds within his Budget that can be set aside for this group?

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1)—pass — the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, could the minister tell me whether this is the appropriation which financially supports a staff member by the name of Mr. Al Church? I'm talking about the Animal Branch — is that what we're on. —(Interjection)— No? I'm sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a)(1)—pass; 4.(a)(2)—pass; 4.(b)(1)—pass; 4.(a)— pass —(Interjection)— We're dealing with 4.(b)(1). The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Church is in the Animal Industry Branch, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Could the minister tell us what his role is?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, that individual has been moved from the Planning Department of the department to the Animal Industry Branch in the Animal Production Department of the department.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, did this person play any role whatever with respect to Bill 25 and the operations of Bill 25, its board, the election of officers, etc.? Did he have anything to do with that?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I indicated earlier today that he acted as a reporting secretary.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, how much does this person earn? How much of these appropriations are going to pay his salary and expenses?

MR. DOWNEY: I would have to check that detail out, Mr. Chairman. —(Interjection)— There haven't, to my knowledge, been any increase in pay, it's just been through a normal increment increase. There has been no change in the wage from previous years. Mr. Chairman, I think that as far as any involvement as a reporting secretary, or keeping track of minutes for any association, it isn't the first time it's been done within a government staff. We have certain department people that do work with producer organizations' associations in the —(Interjection)— well, Mr. Chairman, yes, I could refer to one that was an association. I'm sure the members are aware of some of the work, in fact, that's part of the extension role of government is to work with farm people, to provide them with some support in that area.

MR.USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I gather there is a figure forthcoming momentarily. Am I correct?

MR. DOWNEY: You want his wages, his total salary?

MR. USKIW: Wages, and his expenses. Not in particular expenses, but the norm that goes with the staff man years relative to the kind of operation.

MR. DOWNEY: I think, Mr. Chairman, his wages are in the neighbourhood of \$32,000 — \$32.6, and the allocation of expenses as with most staff people in that type of work is in the neighbourhood of \$3,000.00.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, we're talking about \$35,000. Is it correct that this person was substantially involved in the proceedings leading up to the establishment of Bill 25, involved in meetings throughout the province, involved in meetings subsequent to the passage of Bill 25, with regard to its implementation, etc.?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I would say that the member of staff has been, other members of staff have been involved in development, but as far as active participation, to my knowledge very little, if any.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, just so there is no misunderstanding, my questions are not intended to reflect on the individual. I merely wanted to now confirm how germane the Bill 25 was to this estimate, because the minister implied on two or three occasions today that we really shouldn't be discussing Bill 25, the appointed Board, the election, when at the same time he now has to admit that he had a paid person fully involved in all of those situations spending \$35,000 of this appropriation, and that's the only point I'm making, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, that individual was not fully involved with that as the Member has implied.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I didn't say that this person was full-time involved. The Minister said that he was involved in all of these things, whatever portion of that \$35,000 is here nor there that he would want to attribute to Bill 25. All I wanted to point out is how wrong the Minister can be in the answers that he gives to this Committee, and how quickly it catches up with him when he's wrong, Mr. Chairman, and it reveals very much, Mr. Chairman, how much we are in order in debating

what we have been debating since this morning. And that's all I want to make of it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(1)—pass —the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, no, not yet. Mr. Chairman, I want to know whether there's been any change in policy with respect to the Dairy Inspection Program.

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Okay. I want to know, Mr. Chairman, whether there has been any change with respect to the standards of Dairy Products pursuant to the inspection program.

MR. DOWNEY: The question, Mr. Chairman, if I understand — any change in standards?

MR. USKIW: Yes. The bacteria count, etc., etc. I believe there was a regulation which was passed not too long ago effecting a certain bacteria count in Milk Products.

MR. DOWNEY: That regulation — nothing to do with any regulatory change or standard change, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, with respect to pesticide residue, can the Minister tell us whether or not there has been any evaluation program or something in that nature to do with residues from various chemicals that are used, whether we have had any reports in the last 12 months that would indicate some concern to the Minister?

MR. DOWNEY: It is being continually checked, Mr. Chairman, but no indication of any increase in residue content in any specific cases in Milk Products, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Can the Minister assure us that there is no chemical now being used with respect to agricultural production that is a concern to him with respect to residue?

MR. DOWNEY: Are you referring to the Dairy Industry or general livestock use?

MR. USKIW: General.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, as far as I'm concerned there's been nothing brought to my attention through any testing or any checking that would indicate there should be an alarm or a concern, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Yes. My next question, Mr. Chairman, has to do with the Milk Laboratory. Is this the agency that has the responsibility for the licensing of Creameries, Dairy Plants, etc.?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, the Dairy Section handles that, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Is this not the appropriate place to discuss this, Mr. Chairman?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Since the Minister was not in a position, or didn't wish to give us a full explanation of the events leading up to the closing down of the Glenella Creamery, I would like to now ask him, Mr. Chairman, whether or not that action is justified in light of the fact that that Creamery had upgraded its operation to the point where the last two inspections proved that they were in compliance with the health regulations of this province?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I'd like to indicate to the member opposite that that was a problem that was brought to the department. I'm sure he's aware of some of the background of that. It's been indicated to me that they now have a licensed butter maker in that particular Creamery and operating it.

MR. USKIW: Is the Minister confirming then that that plant is not being closed down?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, as far as I'm concerned as a Minister the company could make the decision to close that particular Creamery down or Butter Plant. As far as we're concerned there is a licensed butter maker in that particular plant at this time which satisfies the department.

MR. USKIW: My question is: As far as the Minister is concerned, the public agency in question is not about to revoke the licence of that Creamery or to close it down?

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman. It wasn't the intent, of course, of the department to close down the butter plant. The intent was to assure the people of the province that there was a qualified, licensed butter maker in that plant, and that is in fact in place at this time.

MR. USKIW: How many livestock specialists do we now have?

MR. DOWNEY: Total? Total livestock specialists? Livestock specialists, Mr. Chairman, there are 15.

MR. USKIW: Of those 15, how many are located centrally in the department and how many are field men?

MR. DOWNEY: Six positions centrally and nine in the field, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, is that an increase or a reduction from last year's total?

MR. DOWNEY: A decrease in one, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: Yes. Is the Minister saying that we deleted one staff man year or that there is one unfilled position?

MR. DOWNEY: There is one deleted position, Mr. Chairman, and one vacant position.

MR. USKIW: Yes. Mr. Chairman, the figure that the Minister is using, as I understand it and he can correct me, is the staff other than the contract staff that we had for three or four years under the ARDA arrangement. What has happened to the livestock specialists that were covered by the ARDA package? Are there none at all?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, it's indicated to me that there weren't any.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman. What is the status of the ROP Program, Mr. Chairman, at this point?

MR. DOWNEY: Could the member refer to which ROP Program he's talking about?

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, perhaps the staff could help the Minister. We had an item designated in our Estimates documentation under ROP which involved two staff man years. Is that still there or has that been deleted?

MR. DOWNEY: It's still there, Mr. Chairman.

MR. USKIW: I see. Mr. Chairman, have there been any changes in the area of the Poultry Industry?

MR. DOWNEY: In reference to staffing, Mr. Chairman?

MR. USKIW: Staffing and operation.

MR. DOWNEY: There are no changes in operations, Mr. Chairman. I've indicated earlier to the Committee of one staff position, a poultry specialist position being dropped which had never been filled.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like the Minister to advise the Committee as to where we will debate the various marketing boards and commissions in these Estimates?

MR. CHAIRMAN: If I could maybe assist the Member for Lac du Bonnet. Would that be under Resolution 11, Item 6.

MR. USKIW: 6(d). Is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is my interpretation of it.

MR. USKIW: Okay, that's fine. Could the Minister tell me what is being proposed in these Estimates with respect to livestock exhibits?

MR. DOWNEY: If the member's referring to transportation and that type of thing, the programs are basically the same as they have been in the past few years. No change — as it's been carried out in the past.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman. What is the current status of the new Sire Index Station. Is the province still providing subsidy or funding and in what amount?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. We're still carrying on with \$50.00 a bull and this year we've made an allowance for up to 500 bulls.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, my question had to do with capital expenditures. Is that all finished?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, there's no capital expansion at this time.

MR. USKIW: Could the Minister explain to me what the nature of recoveries from the Government of Canada are — the \$26,000 item shown in the Estimates? What is that related to?

MR. DOWNEY: That's related to the Federal Government's cost-sharing on the transportation of animals to the Royal.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Could the Minister advise if the butter maker at Glenella is the same person . . . What is the name of the . . . ?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the department indicates to me that there has been a new individual brought in to retrain the butter maker who was having difficulty with his licence.

MR. ADAM: Then, Mr. Seiger — I think it is — is licenced as a helper?

MR. DOWNEY: That's right. He's there as an assistant, Mr. Chairman.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I believe, from looking at the correspondence and the demands of the department, that he was perhaps an individual who had been overworked in that operation. There was a bit too much to do; they had been renovating and from time-to-time there should have been some help given to this person, but, Mr. Chairman, he will be receiving his licence once he is qualified — is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, one would assume that that is what would take place, but I cannot pre-judge whether an individual will pass the qualifications to get his butter making licence back.

As far as the overworking of the individual, I suppose you would be advised to contact the company that he works for to bring that to their attention.

MR. ADAM: Yes, I want to go to the lab; there was some staff that were laid off, or reduced in the lab?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there was a reduction of one lab staff, and that position was

vacant.

MR. ADAM: Is this the lab that experiments on communicable diseases for animals, animal diseases?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman, it's the butterfat testing position. There's a machine now that does that.

MR. ADAM: Where is the lab where they study the medicine for animal diseases?

MR. DOWNEY: That, Mr. Chairman, is under Veterinary Services.

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

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate whether the staff that do the administrative work on the Beef Income Assurance Plan are under this heading?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: I would like to ask the Minister — I've been given to understand that he sent a letter out recently to producers with respect to the program, I believe, in the early part of this month. Is it possible for the Minister for the next day we meet to get a copy of that letter and table it?

MR. DOWNEY: When we get into that item, Mr. Chairman, yes.

MR. URUSKI: Well, I'm in a bit of a dilemma, Mr. Chairman, because I was snowbound at the time that you spoke about the Farm Income Assurance Plan and I am not sure that that item was raised or whether that letter was in motion at the time and whether the Minister wants me to wait until we reach his salary. I would like to give him notice, if he could give us or be prepared to table that letter that he mailed on April 2nd to the producers.

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, it was sent out by the man who was directing this program so I could make that available. Maybe the Member for Ste. Rose got a copy of it in the mail, did he?

MR. URUSKI: Okay, I have no contract and I was told about it and I would like if possible to . . . —(Interjection)— April 2nd letter? I don't know. —(Interjection)—

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I've indicated that it could be made available. Sure, that's the one you wanted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(b)(1)—pass; 4.(b)(2)—pass; 4.(c)(1)—pass— the Honourable Member for St. George.

URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a specific matter that I wanted to raise with respect to Veterinary Services and Clinics that the department had in place. And that relates very specifically to a satellite clinic that was to be established in Fisher Branch. I am given to understand that a Committee from the community met with the Minister a little over a week ago with respect to this clinic. Could the Minister enlighten this Committee as to what he is prepared to do with respect to the clinic in that community and give us some information?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, the member should be able to remember. It was he who was kind enough to set the meeting up with the individuals from that area so he should be able remember the meeting. We had a meeting with the individuals from Fisher Branch as I had met with them last year and told them we would review the whole program of buildings of that type. I indicated

to them that I was prepared to consider giving it consideration for next year but I did not have any funds in the Estimates for this year.

MR. URUSKI: The Minister is not prepared to proceed with any construction or assistance to setting up a local satellite clinic in the Fisher Branch area this year?

MR. DOWNEY: Well no, Mr. Chairman. The consideration that's being given is to building a clinic in the area. I think one of the concerns that I have as the Minister and the people in the area would have is the effect that that would have on the other clinics in that particular part of the —(Interjection)— yes that's right. But anyway in reviewing it in this past year there was some concern about the effect that it would have on the already established veterinarian clinics.

We did provide assistance for a veterinarian to go into the Fisher Branch area and we are unable to locate an individual to take up his practice in Fisher Branch. So with those things being considered and looking at the importance of the livestock industry to that particular area and to all of Manitoba in supplying them with the infrastructure they need, consideration will be given to building in there next year.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, over the past year I was very concerned with the situation in that community because I gather the Council either had the impression or was given the impression that there may be construction in that community and withdrew from participation in the clinic which is situated in the arm of Bifrost near the village of Arborg. As a result, residents within the LGD of Fisher Branch but north of the arm of Bifrost which would normally utilize the Arborg clinic irrespective of whether or not one was established in Fisher Branch were left without service. They were eligible to receive service because of the Board decision but they of course had to pay the full costs in terms of transportation and the like. But it did irritate and create quite a concern in the community in the LGD of Fisher. Rightly or wrongly the Council, I gather, must have been under the impression or at least was under the impression that there may be a clinic coming forward or at least capital funds for the construction of one and they got out of the clinic. Since then, of course, they have opted back into the clinic and are participating in it. Could the Minister indicate whether there is a second veterinarian now in the Arborg Clinic.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes there is, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: So we were able to attract a second veterinarian into the Arborg Clinic but were not able to attract one to set up a private practice into the Fisher Branch area, is that correct?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, it has been indicated to me that the second veterinarian that the member is referring to will not be there until after the veterinarian college graduation next month and that he will be going into Arborg as an assistant to the veterinarian who is there.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the Minister . . . is he indicating that he made a commitment to the Board there that there will be funds provided for next year towards the setting up of a — is he telling me — full clinic or a satellite clinic with I think a home and the office as one unit or what is the thinking?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, what I indicated to the Council was that in the coming forward of Estimates this year that I would give consideration . I couldn't say at this particular point that it would be built. If something were brought to my attention that would alter that I wouldn't want to mislead those people. But I am concerned about it and I am giving consideration to being able to provide funds next year.

MR. URUSKI: Is the Minister indicating that he has requested the local group to submit a new application for a clinic or what did you tell the people that met with you?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I indicated to the people who were here to further substantiate, still the need for it, to put forward a presentation that would give some indication of the general support for it in the area. As far as I was concerned if any other clinics were built that we had no other ones that would be built ahead of that particular clinic and it is a special clinic that the directive was. But we are looking at the whole thing and as I say, many things can develop that would change that but at this particular point I'm looking favourably upon it; that I feel with the livestock that are there, the value of them and the clinic concept that consideration will be given

to it. I can't make the announcement.

MR. URUSKI: I'm not asking the Minister to make an announcement. I want to understand what the Minister sees as the next step on behalf of the local group. As I understand it, the people on the Peguis Reserve and north were part of the delegation and wanted to be recognized that they would be participants as part of the clinic. Whether those statistics of cattle on the north of the LGD of Fisher, within the Peguis Reserve were not part of the original concept. In other words those statistics were not part of the original plan, they were not taken into account when the original intent was to build a clinic. Whether those figures have changed somewhat, is the department aware of some new figures, what has changed and should there be a new submission with new figures, a new survey? I would like to know whether that is desired on behalf of your government and your department, from the local people.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there was indication that came from that group that they would be prepared to submit more information and support for that type of a facility in the area and I felt it was important, that if there were some changes or some update that we should have that information available to finalize the decision or to be part of a final decision. They offered to put more information forward and we have offered to receive it and there will be discussion taking place with that group over the coming months.

MR. URUSKI: Is there any indication within the department that there has been some change in cattle populations or are they just indicating that they are prepared to update the information that was originally presented?

MR. DOWNEY: The major change the inclusion of the reserves.

MR. URUSKI: To add to the numbers that are already there?

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Minister indicate whether there is any changes within the numbers of students that are eligible to enter the veterinary schools that the province participates in?

MR. DOWNEY: There have been no changes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Is there any change in the amount of money to the scholarship fund?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order Please. The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, there has been an increase yearly on the amount of money that is made available.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister indicate what amount of money has been allocated for this fiscal year, in this budget? What's the specific amount of money for the scholarship fund?

MR. DOWNEY: The figure is, I don't have it in my Estimates. It's approximately \$7,000 per student per year.

MR. URUSKI: And there are how many students?

MR. DOWNEY: Ten to eleven, Mr. Chairman. .

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(c)(1), the Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Is there any change in policy contemplated with respect to the veterinary district grants, insofar as the application of the grants?

MR. DOWNEY: No change, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: I wanted to ask something with respect to the costing and the sharing of travelling costs with respect to veterinarians who have a fairly district to operate in. I'm given to understand

that the costs that are paid by the producer as far as travelling — and I will give the specifics in the Interlake in the district out of Arbog — that the producer pays the actual costs to his residents. Are there any districts or is there any preclusion under the existing formula that the costs of travel be averaged out throughout the whole area, and the cost be handled directly by the Board, so that irrespective of where the producer is within the district, the costs of travelling will be an average cost, and yet the veterinarian will be paid his actual expenses. Is that kind of a system precluded, or is it being operated anywhere in the province?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, no, there is no money goes into the average in transportation costs, which I guess would be the way I'd interpret what his question is. The money goes into the maintenance and the operation of the clinic itself.

MR. URUSKI: All right. Is there anything preventing a district board from doing what I have suggested?

MR. DOWNEY: Is there something to stop them from doing it?

MR. URUSKI: That's right. Can a district board, if it decides between all municipalities — I gather the share that the municipalities now put in is on the basis of population of cattle, I believe — if they pay a 30 percent or 40 percent share of the operations of the clinic, what would prevent the district board, if anything, from apportioning the travelling costs on that basis or a formula similar to that?

MR. DOWNEY: As far as the funding is concerned, there are no restrictions stopping them from doing that.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Mr. McGregor): The Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, is there any change in the numbers of animal health specialists within the province in the Department of Veterinary Services?

MR. DOWNEY: Animal health specialists, no, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: The Minister indicated, in his remarks about veterinary clinics, that he did not foresee any — at least I got the impression any new districts in the process of — being set up other than the move from the Fisher Branch area. Am I accurate in that assumption from his comments?

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: So, if funding was approved by the government, the Fisher Branch clinic would receive the priority as it stands now, with any requests that have been forwarded to the government?

MR. DOWNEY: That's right, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, is the department still involved and continuing to be involved in the bulk drug purchasing in the province?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Is there any change in funding in terms of the bulk purchasing of the drugs? Is there any change in the program?

MR. DOWNEY: The change has gone from gross budgeting for the purchase of the drugs from the revolving fund, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister explain that it's going to gross budgeting from the revolving fund, or . . .

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct, Mr. Chairman. The procedure which is being followed now is that each year the gross amount for the drug purchase will have to be voted annually for the department.

MR. URUSKI: To understand this properly, the funds that the branch takes in from the sales to the vet clinics goes back into consolidated funds, and then the branch has to reapply annually for new funding?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: I know that the costs, of course, are increasing, but in terms of volume, can the Minister indicate what is the change, say, from last year and what is anticipated this year in terms of dollars, and does that more than cover the inflationary cost of drugs.

MR. DOWNEY: I believe you referred to . . . are the drug costs increasing, or the total purchase of the department for drugs?

MR. URUSKI: Yes, the total purchases . . . what I want to know is the growth in actual volume of drugs — is the program becoming more popular, is it static, is there less purchases, what is going on?

MR. DOWNEY: There has been a growth, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister indicate how much of a growth, and the amount of money that was provided last year, and what is anticipated this year in the budget?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, there is an approximate increase by approximately \$430,000.00.

MR. URUSKI: An increase?

MR. DOWNEY: That's right.

MR. URUSKI: From last year?

MR. DOWNEY: From 1977-78 to 1978-79.

MR. URUSKI: Could the Minister indicate what the total sales were in 1977-78, the actuals in 1978-79 and what is projected for 1979-80?

MR. DOWNEY: The sales for 1977-78 were \$1,026,667, and you wanted the sales for the following year?

MR. URUSKI: The last year.

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, \$1,441,359.00.

MR. URUSKI: What is projected for this coming year?

MR. DOWNEY: The projection for this year is \$1.8 million.

MR. URUSKI: Has the staff within the branch changed at all? Is the staff the same as it was in the past?

MR. DOWNEY: There has been a transfer in of one additional person, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Specifically in the drug purchase branch?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: What is the revenue in terms of sales? This branch, I presume, is self-sufficient in terms of total costs. Could the Minister provide those?

MR. DOWNEY: The figures that I have here — we're looking at a gross margin of \$81,368, expenses of \$79,803, for a net margin of \$1,564.00.

MR. URUSKI: That is operating about as close to margin as a co-operative as one could have,

Mr. Chairman.

A MEMBER: With a socialistic program.

A MEMBER: Should we get rid of it, Pete?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, is there any change in terms of the program in the diagnostic lab, within the province?

MR. DOWNEY: It's indicated, Mr. Chairman, the only change is an increase in fees.

MR. URUSKI: In diagnostic fees?

MR. DOWNEY: That's right.

MR. URUSKI: Both in terms of feed and animal checks, could the Minister elaborate on that — what the changes are? I know that there's been a change, I believe, in feed-testing diagnosis. Could the Minister indicate what specifically those changes are?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the fees have increased to \$10.00, and the emphasis are now being put on food animals, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: From what to what, Mr. Chairman?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, it's indicated to me there is a very unseemly charge of animals — it goes from \$5.00 to \$15.00, and the figure that I gave him is \$10.00. It's been indicated that there is a range in there, with the emphasis again being put on food animals, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: When the Minister indicates the emphasis on food animals, in terms of numbers of tests being taken, was there a greater ratio of non-food animals, or was there a large volume of non-food animals previously, and what does he mean — horses and dogs and cats and the like versus poultry and cattle and sheep?

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I can provide that in detail, if we want to get right into the exact figures. In scientific names, I might have a little problem pronouncing some of them, but we can go right through them if you like. —(Interjection)—

MR. CHAIRMAN: We won't understand. Go ahead, Mr. Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: We're looking at the mammal carcasses, which are made up of the food animal origin, something like 82 percent, as opposed to the non-food origin of 18 percent. As far as the histopathology tissues, we're looking at something like 51 percent as food animals, and 49 percent non-food; blood samples 16 percent in the food types as opposed to 84 percent in thenon-food; poultry cases, we don't have many pet chickens in the country, or pet turkeys, unless you have one or two out on the farm, Bill, that you want tested — we're at 100 percent for food origin. Also the same for poultry carcasses. Microbiology cases, we are looking at 51 percent food and 49 percent non-food.

MR. URUSKI: The blood testing percentage of food is being held at 16 percent. I gather the blood samples that I am aware of, in terms of breeder flocks in the poultry industry, which probably make up a large portion of the testing that goes on within the province and the analysis of blood samples that go to the lab — could the Minister indicate in terms of blood, that 84 percent, is that largely from veterinarians within the province dealing with pets and the like?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. It's indicated to me that there are very few farm dogs included in that percentage, that most of them are . . .

MR. DOWNEY: I can again see if we can take them to the Human Rights Commission and see if they should be looked into, but it is indicated that most of them are pets from veterinarians, or people's pets through veterinarians.

MR. URUSKI: Would those fees of blood tests be within the range of \$5.00 to \$15.00 per

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, that's correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Yes, for example, the blood tests, what were the costs and what are the costs now?

MR. DOWNEY: It's indicated, Mr. Chairman, that they were \$5.00 per excision and that could include many tests on that particular sample. It could go to \$15.00, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Oh, I see, the increase would be on the number of tests that were requested and that would be the change in the pricing formula.

MR. DOWNEY: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, is the department investigating and doing any work with respect to the disposition of animal carcasses throughout the province with the environmental problem and the handling of animal carcasses on the farms? What is happening in that area?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think it would be fair to point out, I think with the increased livestock prices and probably some of the by-product increase prices that it does not appear to be the same kind of a problem that it has been somewhat in the past years. I think that there has been an increased demand for the dead animals or the disposable products from livestock products, or just animals that are unable to be disposed of because of lack of value. I think that situation has turned around and at this particular time there has been very little request, and I know there has been some work done in prior years in looking at that particular problem, but it appears not to be of any great concern at this particular time. However, I would think that people involved in clean environment in that department would be involved in monitoring any excessive amount of collection of dead animals or that type of thing throughout the different parts of Manitoba.

MR. URUSKI: The minister indicates that his department is not directly involved in this area. Can he indicate whether there has been a change in the numbers or whether the problem still remains the same, but now, some commercial entities are involved in this, because I'm not aware of any newly set up commercial ventures that are going around and picking up the carcasses, but if there is, I'd like to know about it.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, as I indicated prior, I felt there was an increase in the value of the product, and there has been more interest in the commercial capacity to pick up the goods. It's been indicated to me that there is a new pet food plant at Russell, that are now in that particular business, so there's indications that it is not a major problem, but we are continuing as a Department of Agriculture and the veterinary services want to keep on top of any major loss of livestock. We would, by all means, be right on top of it and see that there was proper disposal because of the disease problem.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: (4); the Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Yes, Mr. Chairman, is there an inspection program that is conducted of the veterinary offices in the province, with respect to pet diseases and the like by the province? What relationship is there between the veterinary lab and the private veterinary clinics, primarily within the city of Winnipeg with respect to — well, there's rabies, in terms of those kinds of diseases that are prevalent in pets — is there any inspection program or liaison between the province and the veterinary clinics?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, there is a monitoring goes on of these clinics. As far as any real regulations or compulsory inspections, I'm not aware of any, but I know that the department is monitoring what's going on and keeping track of these particular facilities. I believe you referred to the city of Winnipeg but they . . .

MR. URUSKI: Well, primarily I would think probably Brandon and maybe some of the larger rural areas would have veterinary clinics, private veterinary clinics, but the bulk of them would be within the city of Winnipeg. —(Interjection)—

MR. DOWNEY: I'll just reconfirm what I've said that there is a monitoring of the clinics by the department in those areas that he's referred to.

MR. URUSKI: Yes, there is no change from the past in terms of the liaison and involvement.

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman, no change in the past, but you know we're working on the future and hopefully things will change.

MR. URUSKI: The Minister of Economic Development may by his survey, may just change your program in the event that you're looking for change, Mr. Chairman. I gather under this branch, there is the A.I., the A.I. program is handled under this.

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman, we are — as the Member for Lac du Bonnet says — there is no change as far as the A.I. program is concerned. We haven't renamed it the "super stud" or anything like that.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, are there any areas within the province that are having difficulty or having problems of being served by qualified technicians in the field?

MR. DOWNEY: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. URUSKI: Did the minister indicate that there are adequate or there are numbers in every area of the province being able to have the semen supplied by technicians? There are no acute shortages in any particular region or part of a region within the province?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, not that have been brought to my attention. I could review the situation, if the Member for St. George is interested in that type of work, if I were to find out for him if there was a shortage in some area. Seriously, there has been no immediate problem drawn to my attention, Mr. Chairman, of a shortage of that type of service in the province. **MR. URUSKI:** Mr. Chairman, is there any change in the cost formula and the amount of funds that are available to the technicians practising? Could the minister outline the formula as it is presently and whether there has been change?

MR. DOWNEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I could indicate that it definitely requires some review. The program I guess he's referring to is the subsidy program that is paid to A.I. technicians and I believe it works on the formula, of 1,000 cows you receive \$3.00 per animal, something like \$2.00 per cow from 1 to 2,000 and \$1.00 when it gets up to 3,000 cows, — over 2, I'm sorry, over 2 — so the formula is the same. As far as I'm concerned, there is no change contemplated for this year, but a type of a formula could be looked at.

MR. URUSKI: Is there any funds involved insofar as travelling costs within the — say, regions where there are large populations but the distances between farmers are fairly great — and the area that comes to mind more readily than others would be the northwest portion of the Interlake, in the Ashern, Moosehorn, Gypsumville area.

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, it is my understanding that that's what this subsidy is for, is to offset any of those kinds of anomalies that may be in the areas where there is large distances between the technician and the cows in need.

MR. URUSKI: The subsidy is on a volume basis, but does not take into account the travelling distances that may be incurred. It certainly makes it very worthwhile, where there are farms with fairly large herds, where the technician comes and handles a very large herd, but while there may be large herds in every region, there are some regions that the travelling distance would be far greater than other areas in terms of handling the same number of cattle.

MR. DOWNEY: Well, Mr. Chairman, again I go back to what I had said. I would consider looking at that formula that is set up. I think that the Member for St. George, being a part of a government that brought that in, maybe I should question it a little more extensively, because it might not be to the best interests of some of the people in the province. But I do not want to make him think that I'm questioning his ability, but I'm sure he was involved when the decision was made as far as this program was concerned. I think there is some anomalies in it probably, that could be taken out of it.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Chairman, the beef industry, in terms of receiving the assistance from the province, in terms of the subsidy, has there been any consideration or any discussions with respect to the A.I. program in the poultry industry, whether or not there have been any approaches made to the department in terms of assistance along the lines that are made available to the beef industry as to the poultry industry — not maybe on the numbers so much because there would be, of course, greater numbers — but in terms of picking up some of the costs, maybe even some of the capital costs of the equipment that is involved? Have there been any approaches made?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, I'm sure the Member for St. George brings up a good point. I think it would be quite interesting research to see really what is involved in that type of process. That really is what I feel government's responsibility is in these kinds of areas, to work on the development of research into those areas, and as far as I am aware and the department indicated to me that there hasn't been anybody approach the department on an A.I. program for turkeys, or poultry —(Interjection)— yes, there is, but I'll just go back, Mr. Chairman, to finish what I was saying, that I would think that poultry, in general, I guess he's referring to, that we'd be quite prepared to discuss with them any kind of a program that they feel might be able to be of assistance to them.

MR. URUSKI: To indicate to the minister the A.I. program within specifically the turkey industry, and I'm sure the chicken industry is no different, the breeder flock operation has been operational probably now for 11, 12, maybe 15 years and, of course, the costs involved in that program have increased substantially with respect to providing the services of a . . . It really takes a team of men or people to do a job in that industry and the costs of the program are fairly substantial and they run, I think now somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 cents, 12 or 13 cents a head every ten days, so that for a breeder flock in the season, you're looking at a cost of artificial insemination in the order of say 3,000 birds so you're looking at probably from \$6,000 to \$10,000 to cover the entire season, strictly for the insemination program. I will certainly carry that back to the group, that the government is receptive and would give consideration to looking at some type of program or at least receiving submissions in respect to this program.

I appreciate the comments of the Minister in this respect. That's all I have.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

A MEMBER: I think the Member for Ste. Rose was up first.

MR. CHAIRMAN (Mr. Driedger): The Acting Chairman indicated to me that the Member for Lac du Bonnet and the Member for Minnedosa had indicated the desire to speak.

MR. MCGREGOR: Mr. Chairman, if I could, I think as I carried on, I just took note of those who made notes and there may have been someone before the time I took the Chair, which I think you, Mr. Chairman, would be responsible for as well.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, you know this debate between the Member for St. George and the Minister, you know, has sort of bewildered some of us here, because it sounds as if they are planning to take away all all the fun. But anyway, notwithstanding that, Mr. Chairman . . . —(Interjection)— Fun for the chickens. Notwithstanding that, Mr. Chairman, could the Minister elaborate more fully on the logic of getting away from revolving funding of the — not Pharmacare — Veterinary Medicine Bulk Purchase Program and the AI program? What is the logic of getting away from revolving funds?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, the budgeting of the amount of money yearly required by the department to purchase the needs of the veterinary drug centre, I believe clearly indicate and make accountable the department and the particular division for the amount of money that is going into that particular part of the operation of government. I think it's an accountable way of being able to keep track of where we're at, that there isn't a pool of money or there isn't a fund set up that really, as far as I'm concerned, isn't brought to the full attention of the people of the province

yearly, and this is an accounting procedure that I think has to be carried out.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, my concern arises from the fact that we really don't know the volumes that may be involved from time to time, and therefore an estimated amount a year ahead is sometimes an awkward procedure, in that if the funds are found short strictly related to volume, really not an expenditure of the government but merely a volumetric situation where moneys are needed and then recovered on the sale of the product, would this not have the hazard of running the system short of funds from time to time?

MR. DOWNEY: Well, I think, Mr. Chairman, with respect to the individual who is running that particular department, I think that with the past operations of it, there is a clear indication what has happened to the volume of drugs that are being used and they are pretty close in their estimation of what will be needed.

MR. USKIW: Yes, my concern arises out of the fact that in the bulk purchasing program there are opportunities that present themselves from time to time with respect to bulk purchase pricing. And sometimes, because of this kind of arrangement, it may be impossible for the department to purchase commodities which may be — and I don't know whether you call it surplus supply or what — but at a good price, which would add to the mark-up of the operation and in other words provide us with more income to the operation. Is the Minister not at all concerned that he may be losing opportunities for viability with stringent financial procedures as he has now established? If a revolving fund is properly managed and monitored, it seems to me that it shouldn't be a problem to the department. All we're doing is turning over the same dollars. Surely, I hope the Minister can satisfy me that this isn't going to infringe too much on the flexibility of the program.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Chairman, I think as far as the infringement on the operation, it would be totally not going to deter the operation of the purchase of drugs by this procedure. I'm sure with the goods that are on hand, the purchases of the department or of the drug purchasing centre, there would in fact be a certain carry-over of certain goods; that they would be able to manage the affairs of that particular operation by not ordering long and particular certain goods, they would be able to adjust their inventory in that manner.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, in accordance with Rule 19(2), the hour of 4:30 having arrived, I am leaving the Chair for Private Members' Hour. Committee rise.

SUPPLY — HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

MR. CHAIRMAN, Mr. Abe Kovnats (Radisson): I would draw the honourable members' attention to the gallery, where we have 26 students from Grade 11, River East Collegiate. These students are in the constituency of Rossmere, and are under the direction of Mr. James Harvey.

I would also draw the honourable members' attention to the gallery, where we have 20 Grade 11 students from Daniel McIntyre Collegiate. These students are in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Wellington, and I would ask the honourable members to join me in welcoming these students here this afternoon.

I would draw the honourable members' attention to Page 52 of the Main Estimates, Health and Community Services. The item under discussion is 6. Manitoba Health Services, Item No. 4 Medical Program—pass. The Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, before the dinner hour, I was suggesting to the minister that he should be careful before signing any agreement with the MMA, because it could be far-reaching, and I think that I mentioned to the minister that even with the best of intentions, sometime it is difficult, and I mentioned that the President of the MMA, and I, as the former minister, had tried to settle the discussion that we had or the debate that we were having in 1976, I think, on the question of salary, and because we started at the top it gave us very little room to maneuver. We did all the negotiating, and anything that we could do between the two of us, and then when no side could move any longer because of commitments and because of their own, in my case the government, and in the case of the President of the MMA so it made . . . it became quite difficult, and then that was the appeal to the Premier, who, of course, would have to back his minister, when the minister is doing what has been decided by Cabinet.

So, Mr. Chairman, this, I think, is good advice that the minister might feel that he wants to get closer, the way I did and at times put himself in a difficult situation. Now, I certainly can't see anything wrong with an agreement or a contract, if there's going to be a contract signed, as an

Advisory Committee, or what's the term, not advisory, Consultative Committee. Sometimes I find it odd that you should sign, and the minister remembers what I said, that I wouldn't sign an agreement with a gun at my head if there was a pressure and if it was something that you're negotiating at time of . . . when you're discussing the fees. It doesn't make sense to me, I'm sorry, but it doesn't make sense to me to say, well, we will sign an agreement that we will consult. The very word, to me, "consult" means it has to be in an atmosphere of trust and trying to work together, and if that atmosphere is strained, there is no point, because you know, there is no way that you can force it. You can go through the motions, you can waste a lot of time. But one thing that we did, and if the Minister could go ahead and the Commission could sign this agreement and discuss certain things, I think it should be understood. Maybe they should divide both. You know, when you are talking about the fees and the things that they are — because after all they are like a trade union, they are in effect a trade union — that doesn't mean that anything that a trade union will do is wrong. There are a lot of times that they could do a lot of work, away from fighting with management and so on. But then they fight for the rights and for the betterment, financial betterment and so on, the working conditions of their me

ership, and this is what the MMA does. But I would hope that the Minister will have committees and I wasn't criticizing the Minister when I asked him from my seat, were those meetings that you had in your office profitable? That's exactly what I wanted him to tell me because I had many of those and I think they are the best. I think when you let your hair down and you have a problem and you phone somebody — I used to phone some of them that I respected very much and they would come in and we would discuss things and I think it is the best possible way and I'm sure, and I hope the Minister will not feel that, well, the Commission has this agreement and everything will be solved, but because that is a contract, I don't think it is going to change that much. It might be a way that they can discuss things, but it is, as I say, unless you are ready to wait a long time, there is nothing concrete that will come to that as far as advice — well, I shouldn't say nothing concrete — but they have a responsibility to work in a real democratic way and they have to wait for the membership. One person on that committee cannot do anything until he brings this back to his membership, the same as the Commission back to the committee.

So there is a certain amount of value, there is no doubt, but it is not the end of all the problems. I would hope that the Minister will keep on, and I'm sure he is, with these regular meetings with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, because you know, you can have the same person who will wear a different hat, who will be very easy to talk to when he is representing the College of Physicians because this is a different thing, this is a thing that he is trained for, as when he is representing the MMA, which is worried about the salaries, the working hours and the profit that will be made, and there is nothing wrong with that, I'm not criticizing that at all. But I do hope that the Minister will continue to discuss — I'm sure he is doing it now — with the College and with individual doctors that he knows or that he will seek out, because of their knowledge in a particular field. But the Minister is naive if he thinks that all of a sudden everything will stop and the people will be the best of friends and there will not be any criticism. It is a union; there is nothing wrong with that and no matter if it is a Conservative Government, they represent the other side, they represent the people who are paying the fees and they have certain responsibilities and they will not always agree.

I don't know if this is feasible, Mr. Chairman, and to the Minister, but it seems to me that there is a problem all across Canada and it might be something that should be a priority of the Minister when next he meets with the Ministers of Health of the different provinces and the Federal Minister of Health, and it might be that fee for services, the fee schedule, should be negotiated or at least that something should be done in a national way, taking into consideration of course how rich the different provinces are and the certain working conditions. But it might be that if this could be, if there were some kind of guidelines, at least, even if you left the final negotiation to each government, because I'm sure that the provincial government would be jealous of their right in health and I'm not suggesting here that they surrender this to the federal government. This is not it at all, but I think that the Minister should work together, maybe with the national group of the, what is it, the Canadian Medical Association to see if something could be done and accepted across the country. I think it would be well worthwhile to look at that, and then you wouldn't have this battle all the time. I think that this is important.

So, Mr. Chairman, with those remarks I want to assure the Minister that although he made my job quite a bit more difficult in the past by repeating and parroting this business that it was confrontation, I can assure him, and I think he probably understands a little better now that it's not that easy, that he has it much easier because of the party that he belongs to and because, well, let's face it, I don't think the medical profession feels they have anywhere else to go. You know, I think they believe some of the things that you told them that a Conservative government would come in and there would be no problems; they would run the show and so on, and it's not

that. Some of them are disillusioned and they have nowhere to go, but they can't criticize too loudly because they were the ones that were saying that everything would be changed with a change of government.

So Mr. Chairman, I think that this is very important. I agree with the Minister; this is very important for the future of our country, for the Medicare which could always be improved but it is a good program. It is something that we should be proud of, and I think you will see a program such as ours, with some modification maybe, in the United States, but you will see a program. When that program comes, it will be a little different because they are our neighbours; they are so close to us. It's the wealthiest country in the world, and the members of our medical profession here see what's going on out there, how much money is being made out there, and some of them would like to move. And they don't like our plan at all. But this is about the last place. You know, some of these people came from underdeveloped countries and they stayed in England, or so on, and when the plan came in England they came to Canada, and the plan is here now, they are going to the States. And eventually I think that you will see this thing straighten out.

I want to repeat again: I think that, like my honourable friend from St. Johns, it is a very demanding profession. It is a very difficult profession, and every decision that you make is very, very important. It's important to some people, and if it's a wrong decision it might be the last decision.

So I have no objection at all of them getting proper return for their effort and their education, the many years they spend in education. Having said that, that doesn't mean that I'm ready at any time to give them a blank cheque, nor should the Minister be ready to give them a blank cheque. I think we have responsibilities. I think that we should take these things into consideration and pay them well. And what I said to the Minister previously that if we do that — and indeed we should — but not the only one that should be singled out. Let's remember also that, fine, they deserve this kind of money but they are at the top of the ladder and they're the only ones that should be singled out and then be very satisfied with a 5 or 6 percent or 3 percent increase for the people around the \$10,000.00. That I can't buy.

And I don't think that it has to be all one or the other. I don't think that you have to say, well, all right, if you want to give it to the doctors — and I think that's what the Minister said to me. He took me to task a few days ago because he said I couldn't have it both ways, and I don't understand that at all. I can't see where there is anything wrong with being fair with all the people that we represent, all the people in Manitoba. I can't see why we can't give the medical profession their fair share as much as we can, but not at the expense of the people at the other end, at the bottom of the ladder, who are in many cases at the poverty line, or below the poverty line and who are working very hard. They did not get an education from the State that many of them — that might have cost \$50,000 or so — maybe they couldn't do it, maybe they couldn't hack it, maybe they didn't have what is needed to go through a difficult course like that, but they're human beings and I think that they should be considered also.

So I don't like to see that in society you can only be for either for the poor class or the upper class. I think that there's got to be a happy medium, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (4)—pass — the Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Boniface that I know that he had a difficult challenge in the job and I know that he had a difficult challenge in particular with the Manitoba Medical Association. I don't fault him in any way for his conduct with, or handling of, the MMA situation.

I do insist that for whatever reasons we certainly found that we inherited when we came into office an extremely cool and suspicious climate existing between the Manitoba Medical Association as such — I'm not talking about individual medical practitioners — but the MMA as such, and the Province of Manitoba as it is represented and manifested by government. Whatever the reasons were I do not choose to debate. I know that my honourable friend had his difficulties and his challenges and I would be the first to agree that the MMA are tough bargainers. They're hard bargainers, and we have had our lengthy and our difficult sessions with the MMA ourselves but the climate did present me and us with some initial challenges that I think are being reduced. I think they're being eliminated. I think the relationship and the line of communication has improved.

In any event I have made it my business to try to remove whatever barriers of suspicion existed, and although there's some distance no doubt to go yet, I do believe that considerable progress has been made in that area simply through the many lines of communication and the many forms of consultation and the many shapes of counsel and advice-seeking that we have taken where the medical profession and other professions are concerned.

The Honourable Member for St. Boniface says that I have it much easier than he did. Well,

I would give him an argument on that point, Mr. Chairman. I don't think we want to debate that point but I suggest to him that in a period of tight money, in a period of difficult and recognized limited resources, this field, not only the relationship with the Medical Association and profession, but the relationship with the whole health care field takes on a much more difficult perspective than I think was the case in those years when there was more money available and there was less concern on the part of Canadians generally for the finite aspect of their resources. However, that is a disagreement that I'm sure my friend and I can discuss among ourselves without taking up the time of the committee.

The Member for St. Boniface expresses some concern that perhaps the development of a consultative process between the Commission and the MMA will preclude or obviate the necessity for other forms of consultation and communication. I want to assure him that that won't happen; that the consultative committee process and mechanism has been included in the Agreement because the MMA requested that it be included in the Agreement, but that does not for one moment diminish my interest in and commitment to the kinds of continuing consultation and discussion of an unofficial nature as well as an official nature that will be pursued with individual members of the profession and representative groups from the profession itself and from related health professions and para-professions.

For example, the discussions and counsel that we've engaged in in the past year and a half have certainly not been limited to the medical profession or the MMA. They have embraced all components of the system including the College of Physicians and Surgeons; and the Manitoba health organizations; and the Medical Directors of the Winnipeg hospitals; the nursing profession; Administrators of the hospitals; and representatives of consumer groups. So I can reassure the Member for St. Boniface on that point.

He also expressed some concern about the necessity for incorporating or enshrining within an Agreement a proposal for consultation in the Consultative Committee and suggested that that might be a contradiction in terms, and I can understand the point he's making. In fact, the original basis on which we proceeded with the MMA was an understanding reached in conversation and then a letter of understanding, but the MMA itself asked that a formal agreement be drawn up and formalized and that the recognition of the Consultative Committee be included in that and we agreed to do that, Mr. Chairman, in the interest of pursuing the primary objective that I've referred to earlier, that is, going the necessary mile to meet the requirements as we see them for an open and candid and honest and ongoing environment of cooperation and communication. So we agreed to do that but that will not diminish in any way the natural consultation and communication process that will continue from my office.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Johns seems somewhat unhappy or dissatisfied with the answer that I gave him to his question before noon. He said he had asked me for some tangible examples or some tangible evidence of some progress in the efforts we have been putting forth and I'm prepared to try to do that, to try to offer some examples. I must tell him that I interpreted his original question to me as a request for a description of the kinds of things we were doing, the kinds of subjects that we were consulting on, the kinds of subject areas that we were talking about. If that was a misinterpretation of his question, then I accept full responsibility for that, but my answer was proffered in that context.

In any event, the kinds of things that the Member for St. Johns refers to and the kinds of things that I was referring to, do all tie together in one basic subject area and I repeat that that primary subject area is one of effecting an attitudinal change, a change in attitude in terms of all of us with respect to our health care delivery system and our own personal responsibility for health and those things are not, and I think the Honourable Member for St. Johns would concede, achieved overnight.

I know that reference is continually made to the length of time that the government has been in office. In the view of some, 17-½ months is a long time; in the view of others, it is a short time. But I must again say to him what I have said in perhaps other arguments, that in my view, 17-½ months isn't all that long a period of time and we have expended as much time and energy as we could in that period to effecting and promoting this attitudinal change, or a start on this attitudinal change. I think that in fairness, he would concede, or must concede, that general attitudes cannot be changed overnight and cannot necessarily be changed even in 17-½ months. It is an ongoing challenge that may take us some considerable time yet. But there are tangible evidences of the results, Mr. Chairman.

The biggest achievement I would identify for the Honourable Member for St. Johns has been the implementation of and the adherence to by the health facilities and the health professions, rigidly contained and controlled budgets in the health care field. That may sound like a superficial generality to the Member for St. Johns but I want to assure him it is not and it is not easy and if he were a member of a government embarked on the same urgent mission that we feel we are embarked

on, on behalf of Manitobans, I think he would quickly agree that one of the most difficult and all-consuming and time-consuming challenges in the area of policy is just precisely that one, to try to establish parameters of control over public spending and try to effect sufficient support, endorsement and co-operation from all parties concerned to see them carried out, to see them carried through, while maintaining the services that had been in place in the past.

That is a major challenge that emanates from a major policy of this government and takes a good deal of time, effort and energy, and I don't think that it can be dismissed lightly or dismissed as rhetoric because the reality is, Mr. Chairman, that we did, all of us, as Canadians, develop an environment and an attitude in which there seemed to be, in some areas, including the area of public spending, no tomorrow, no day of reckoning and an entrenched frame of mind had been built up in the community and in the province, and in the country to that end or to that effect. The reality is that to change that one has to deal with the very nuts and bolts of the individual components of the whole system. And in the health care field that involves a great many people, a great many efforts and a great many activities and it calls for an enormous amount of consultation, discussion, persuasion, exchange of opinion, examination of operations and budgets, and the result has been a containment of and a controlling of the escalation rate in the public spending area in the health care field that is demonstrable and in fact has given rise to many questions and criticisms from the opposition.

So I point to that as the single biggest undertaking and achievement to date, as a result of the efforts that we have been making and the discussions that we have been having that I referred to, that control implementation.

In other areas, I would point to evidence of the following nature, Mr. Chairman, for the information of the Member for St. Johns. The general pattern in recent years for visits to doctors has seen an increase of 4 to 5 percent per year. In the year just ended the volume on increased visits to doctors will amount to approximately 2-½ percent, a 2-½ increase in that volume as compared to a 4 to 5 percent pattern established in recent years.

As far as hospitals are concerned, patient days in hospitals in Manitoba in 1977 totalled 1,823,000 and in 1978-79 they will be down to 1,777,000. Some of that latter reduction relates to some personal care homes coming on stream in that period of time, but nonetheless the patient day volume of hospitals can be seen to be experiencing, at least for this period of time, a reduction.

There have been intensive discussions with respect to the future course that we should be taking in geriatric medicine and whether the primary requirement in our bed spectrum for the immediate future is extended care beds or extended treatment beds, rather than personal care beds. Those are subject areas of enormous complexity, as the Member for St. Johns knows, and I can assure him that the Consultative Committee has been working for some time seeking cross opinions from the community and the health care field generally, to refine that kind of thinking down to a specific recommendation and a specific direction. It's not finalized yet, but, once again, the 17 months of work has not been sufficient to produce that conclusion. But we do expect in the year in which we're now embarked to have conclusions and recommendations available to us in areas of this kind, in terms of the different considerations in medicine for the future that we face, including the question of geriatric needs and others.

We have seen very active work done by the Maternal and Child Health Committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. There are ongoing consultations and ongoing reviews and assessments of the needs and requirements in maternal and child health care undertaken on that level and, as the honourable member knows, we have recently offered some tangible support to the Maternal and Child Health Care Task Force being initiated by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

The recent fee schedule includes a long overdue, in my view, improvement in the fee for housecalls. I believe that the area of remuneration for housecalls is one that contains within it the possibilities, the potential of solving a number of our problems in the health care field, to some degree. There is no question that our Emergency Departments and Out-patient Departments in most of our hospitals are heavily burdened, if not overburdened and a contributing factor has been the discouragement to the physician of performing housecalls. The improvement in that area is the result of the kinds of discussions and consultations over the past months that I have referred to.

The Honourable Member for St. Johns has raised the question of annual check-ups and the need for annual check-ups, I think that large segments of the medical profession are reviewing that old principle or old cliché, and there are a number of medical practitioners who now are actively in discussion with patients, trying to dislodge them from the idea of the mandatory necessity of an annual check-up.

My own doctor, representing a case in point, his advice to those patients, who in undergoing a check-up appear in relatively good health, certainly has been — and I can tell the honourable member from personal experience — that it is not necessary to come back in a year, that a return visit in two years is ample. So that those attitudes are changing, as a result of the evidence of

the heavy use of our health care system, that have been at the basis of much of this consultation that has been going on.

We have taken other measures as a result of consultation with the health professions that perhaps have not proved quite so popular with some members of the opposition, although I must say that the Member for St. Boniface has been very modest in his criticism of some of those measures. In fact, some of the measures that we have taken he has endorsed. For example, the decision to levy the personal care per diem on elderly patients in active treatment beds who have been panelled for personal care is a measure that I can assure the Member for St. Johns was not arbitrarily or unilaterally taken by the Minister of Health or his immediate office advisors.

It was a measure that had received widespread promotion and support from various members of the major health professions as a practical, reasonable, responsible and just step to take and it has, in my experience having had the opportunity to check its effects very closely been accepted, been broadly accepted throughout the province in just those terms as a measure that was justifiable and reasonable and does not effect a hardship and has been accepted by those of our citizens who have had the fee levied on their stay as a result of their being panelled.

I know some members opposite have been very critical of that, but I cite it for purposes of answering the question that the Member for St. Johns put to me about some of the steps that have been taken, some of the things that have been done to get health care costs under reasonable and humane control as a result of discussions we have had and communication we have had with the health care professions.

There's no question that there's much, much more to be done. I'm not suggesting that we have found the majority of the answers or that there is in fact even a clear-cut answer to the basic challenge that we face in this field, but we are making progress, we are pursuing further steps of progress in consultation with those who have the experience of actual professional and para-professional work in the field as well as with individual consumers and members of the public. For example, with respect to emergency use, use of Emergency Departments and Out-Patient Departments, Mr. Chairman, we are very concerned that actual statistical examination of visits to emergency units in hospitals in Manitoba indicates that 70 percent of the cases are not emergency cases. And that's almost . . . We almost had one there that would have brought the average down to 69. And that condition is not unique to Manitoba, but nonetheless, is something that I think is worth observing in the context of this Debate that 70 percent are not emergency cases.

Now obviously all of us are concerned about that. The doctors are concerned; the hospitals are concerned; the nurses are concerned; the consumers and the patients are concerned, and it's not easy to implement a measure that will protect society and the public Treasury from over-use of emergency units, because who is going to be the nurse or doctor or individual who sits in judgment before the fact to rule on whether an emergency was indeed an emergency or not.

But the improvement in house call fees for practitioners and discussions with practitioners with respect to the over-use in some areas of Emergency Departments is, I think, having its effect and will have its effect in getting that practice somewhat better under control. There may be other things that can be introduced to bring it even under closer controls such as establishment of triage facilities in the emergency units that will provide for a very clear definition of the cases coming in without the danger of error. There is of course always the question of a possible one in a hundred incidents of error and it's difficult to ask any one individual to take on that responsibility.

But these are the things that are being examined with the hospitals and with the medical profession. We have found, for example, that in Portage la Prairie the Portage General Hospital is one of the few hospitals in this province of a major nature, one of the few General Hospitals in this province that does not have a difficulty in this area of over-use of its Emergency unit, of its Emergency and Out-Patient Department. It does not suffer from the same voluminous demand nighttime and daytime on its Emergency Department that many, many other hospitals including the major hospitals in Winnipeg do suffer from. —(Interjection)— The Portage la Prairie General Hospital, The Portage la Prairie Hospital . . . The interesting thing in Portage la Prairie, Mr. Chairman, is that the physicians there seem to have agreed to keep their offices open at night, keep their offices open on Friday nights, to keep their offices open on Saturdays. I'm not in a position to provide any explanation of that other than that this is the way the physicians in Portage la Prairie generally choose to operate within their community, but the results are dramatic. The evidence of the differences in demand on emergency units is absolutely dramatic. There is no over-use of that emergency unit in Portage.

There is, I think we would all recognize, heavy, heavy use and I think one can fairly say over-use of emergency units in many, many other hospitals in Manitoba including in particular the main hospitals in Winnipeg, so that people in Portage la Prairie are obviously finding themselves in a situation where they can turn to their doctor in his or her office rather than descending upon the hospital for various ailments whether minor or whether emergency.

But these are the kinds of things that we have discovered in examination and review, and in consultation that we are discussing with the medical profession generally in an effort to produce answers and solutions to the problems.

We have worked, and are continuing to work with the Manitoba Medical Association on development of a Placement Bureau to provide a supply of practitioners for rural areas in the province. In this respect, we recently confirmed the establishment of a Family Practice Teaching Unit at the new Seven Oaks Hospital which will be the second Family Practice Teaching Unit in the province and which, if it emanates the first one' will go some considerable new distance to supplying family practitioners for areas in Manitoba outside of Winnipeg.

What has happened as a result of the first one is that most of the people taking their training as family practitioners here have stayed here and many of them have gone into rural communities to launch their practices.

So that these are the tangible results and this is the tangible evidence to date of the work that has been done at the communication and consultation level, Mr. Chairman, and I offer them to the Member for St. Johns as a demonstration that the processes under way with the medical professions, plural, and with the hospitals and with the field generally are showing some measurable results even over what I consider to be a relatively short period of time. There is much more to be done and I hope I will be able to report additional progress as graphic as this progress is, and I suggest that it is graphic and I hope I'll be able to report equally graphic progress a year from now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: (4)—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I do appreciate the extensive response by the Honourable Minister and I am pleased to note that he does not appear to be impatient or inclined to rush his Estimates through on this matter which is rather important, and I think that is a good sign.

Several of the matters he mentioned I would like to comment on. Just a small matter, but he says on the question of annual checkups, which I raised — I raised it as an example — I don't know how many other matters such as that would be the kind that could be dealt with in order to save unnecessary use of a practitioner's limited time. —(Interjection)— It is pointed out that maybe it is too many tonsilectomies in themselves that take up a good deal of time. But the question of tonsilectomies, to which the Minister, I think, did not apply himself, is much the same as the annual checkups and in connection with the annual checkups, the Minister said a number of practitioners he knows are trying to dislodge this idea of annual checkups. I am sure the medical profession is constantly attempting to refine its delivery of services, but I wanted to know what the government was doing in this Consultative Committee in that regard and in all honesty, I think the Minister said that it is the doctors who are doing that and did not appear to take credit for the Committee. The point I am making is that I believe that the Minister is inclined to let things happen, relying on the good intentions of the deliverers of the service. But I don't know if he is much aware of the traumatic experience many of us had when we dealt with illegal denturists who wanted to practise their limited dental skills independently of dentists and to work directly with patients, but he would know that vested interest groups are not necessarily the ones who should be making decisions.

He spoke about — I think he said that 70 percent of the use of emergency wards were not emergencies —(Interjection)— Emergency units, yes, thank you. I didn't mean wards; I just couldn't think of the correct term and I'm still not sure that units is the correct term. —(Interjection)— Emergency care available in the hospitals. But I'm not sure that he explored the reason. The reason may well be the fact that people don't have doctors that they know are their doctors. The Minister and I are both fortunate; we know who our doctor is, but there are very many people, maybe even the majority of people, who don't really have a doctor that they know is their doctor. For one thing, too many of them pick and choose their specialist doctors in various fields and often end up with no general service that they are offered by any one doctor. Others don't have the sophistication to do more than phone a doctor on an evening or a weekend and the doctor is not available and the doctor often says, well, go to the Emergency Unit and they will see what's wrong with you, and that's what happens.

What he pointed out about Portage la Prairie, is again letting it happen, not motivating it to happen. Apparently the doctors in Portage la Prairie, from what he reports, have arranged to have their office open for the times that are much more extensive than what is known as normal office hours and that is really a progressive measure which ought to be instituted. I have several friends who practise medicine in California under the Permanente Group, which is one of the earliest established medical group practices, and there they have around the clock attendance at the hospital,

but of course they practise out of their hospitals and that means that patients know that they go to the hospital and that's where their doctor is. I know that the obstetricians, there are a minimum of seven obstetricians in that — there have been all along, I think there are more now. But when there were seven, one stayed in the hospital 24 hours a day for one day in the week and attended to all obstetrical needs because in obstetrics you can't really say come back during office hours when there is a delivery to be dealt with. So that is an intelligent and well planned offering of a service. But that has to be motivated and the Minister says it is happening in Portage la Prairie. Well, it is not good enough, I believe, to let it happen that way, because of the costs that we have. The Minister expressed pride about, I think he said the most outstanding accomplishment of the last 18 months is the rigid budgets imposed on the hospitals and of course we are not really on the hospital item but we have been talking about hospitals, so I did.

The Medicare fees, they have also applied a rigid negotiation. So that is an accomplishment depending on what you think is an accomplishment, and for this government it is indeed an accomplishment. I even feel sometimes that they have pride when they hear complaints coming from social service agencies or hospitals, saying you are hurting us very badly. But that is their problem; I'm letting them deal with that.

What I'm trying to evaluate are the efforts that are being made by the Consultative Committee; that's the item we were talking about. I'm not sure that the Consultative Committee is the one that was involved in applying rigid budgets. I think it was probably the First Minister with the co-operation of a few other members of Cabinet who said, let's do it, with the lesson that they learned from a gentleman named Young who showed them the blueprint of how you operate in a new government when you want to be ruthless. I think that that is probably the blueprint they operated on. Was it David Young — I think it was David Young.

In any event, that was not something the Consultative Committee was involved in. What I would like to see, the use put by the Consultative Committee, is to really work together to accomplish these things, some of which the Minister sees happening. What concerns me is the organizational aspect of the medical profession, and I might say that I believe in all professions. The individual practitioners are dedicated to their practice, are dedicated to their profession, are dedicated to the need to serve the public, but the organized body, their organized body speaks in a different way altogether and that's legitimate because they are a lobby group and they do bargaining. But when you see the president of the Canadian Medical Association, who had his earlier training as president of the Manitoba Medical Association, make statements as are reported in today's newspaper, which I will want to comment on, and here are quotes on an interview with Dr. Wylie: He says, "Canadians will have to make do with a mediocre medical service, and see more dissatisfied physicians emigrate unless the current Medicare Plan is radically scaled down."

What's he saying? You, the government, had better scale down that Medicare Plan, or we will be giving a mediocre medical service; these are my words interpreting what I've just quoted. He's quoted as saying that medicare is too open ended and too costly. Another quote, "I'm not in favour of medicare as it stands; I'm in favour of a basic insurance scheme to provide for the cost of health, hospital and medical service at whatever level the government wants to put it."

Well, that's fine, he says, you, the government, you decide the level. Then what does he say? He says that it should be like hospitals, where patients get basic care; patients wanting semi-private or private rooms must pay extra for that right.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we're talking about something else. When a patient wants a semi-private or private room, it's a question of additional comfort, and I'm sure it's better medical care. Unfortunately, we still have patients who are forced to stay in rooms where there are more than one to a bed; and the gentleman I referred to this morning, named Friesen, he made the statement that patients ought to be — really ought to be in single bed rooms, because he says, a patient cannot live in the hospital environment with others next to him, and have the same success in convalescence and in cure, and he elaborated on it. But I'm just saying that what Doctor Wylie says is give them the basic in medicare, but then let them charge more to the patient on the system, I suppose, that the medical profession has been arguing for.

He says, and I again quote from this article which appears in the Tribune of today's date, as I said, "Government underfunding of medicare has forced the physician to practice assembly line medicine, and to over-utilize the system to try to maintain his income." Now, Mr. Chairman, I do not fault the doctor for working hard within the scheme; I fault the doctor if his president is saying that the physician is practicing assembly line medicine, and over-utilizing the system. That I do fault, because there is no sense of dedication; no sense of responsibility to service of the public, which every profession has to have foremost in its mind. Every professional is obligated by the whole concept of professionalism and the self-governing powers of professional society, and the fee for service concept which this Minister has espoused in the past. He is obligated, first of all, to serve the public; and secondly, to provide for financial returns.

Mr. Chairman, I say that in full knowledge of the fact, and in full and sincere belief, that the medical practitioner is one of the most important members in society; and I regret the fact when I see a doctor earning whatever he earns — let's say it's \$50,000 a year — living side by side with a manufacturer, or a vendor, or a person who is not servicing the public but servicing himself by the sale of a commodity or a service, who earns three times as much as a doctor. I resent that, and that's where the First Minister is happy to talk about two and one-half times something.

Mr. Chairman, there is an imbalance in our economic society, and we have to know it; but as I say, the First Minister seems to say, "That's good, and we have to increase the imbalance, sort of widen the gap," which is the opposite to the two and one-half principle. But I would like to see the doctors earning the top, and they are in the highest income group, but there are many who earn more than doctors, and I regret that; but I come back to saying that no doctor — no doctor — to my way of thinking, is entitled to say, "I'm a member of the profession of medicine." And say in the same breath, "I am practicing assembly line medicine; I am over-utilizing the system to try to maintain my income."

That's not the proper attitude, and that's something I would like to see this Minister of Health denounce, to hear the president of the Canadian Medical Association make that statement. It's a lengthy interview, and it deals more and more with that, but what he is saying all along is that doctors are being forced — for economic reasons — to practice this assembly line system.

If he said that the demand for professional help is so great that a doctor has to work hard and can't give as much time as he wants to give to any one patient, that's a different thing. If he says I have a large community to serve; there are not enough of us doctors and therefore I must divide up my time a little more than I would like to because I have to serve the community; that is responsible. But for this Doctor Wylie to admit that this kind of assembly line practice is for economic reasons is, I think, a slap in the face of every one of the members of his profession who are sincere in their efforts to serve the public.

I am saying that this Minister, who talked about attitudinal change that's needed; about the climate that existed when he took over his ministry is being changed — I don't see how it's being changed, if a man like Doctor Wylie is able to say 17 months after this Minister started to change the climate, that he's not budging one bit — and I interpret this article as saying that he's not budging one bit from the desire to foist on government the full responsibility of providing the incomes which doctors want to have.

And I say, and I want to make it clear that I respect the medical profession and the service it does, but I say that they must be made to feel that it is their responsibility to help limit the cost of the delivery of the health service; because they are the ones best able to control it — not the Minister. But the Minister's responsibility is to work with the medical profession, and if he has such a good liaison, such a good relationship which didn't exist before — as he says — if he has that, then he should be actively involved with a committee — the consultative committee — to get together and discuss these things, not impose them, but to discuss them. I think that all he has told us he is doing is waiting to see that it happens, and report progress in that regard.

So, the only thing for which he has taken credit, which I think has nothing to do with the consultative committee, is the rigid budgeting that has been imposed on health care delivery, and that is, I think, the wrong thing to do. It's not enough to say, here is a limited sum of money, go bash your heads against the wall. It's much more important to say, how can we work together to make these changes? And one of the ways to work together is one of the ways, I believe, that this Minister is not helping, and that is any attempt for group practice, which I think involves — and I assume does involve — around the clock availability of health practitioners as I think is available in some of our Community Health Centres. That is one of the ways where one can approach that effort.

Here you have the large clinics in Winnipeg, and outside of Winnipeg in the province, large clinics — when I say large, 10 to 40 doctors; 10 to maybe 100 doctors in one group; and I don't believe, Mr. Chairman, that they practice around the clock medicine, and I think they should. I think that if you have 20, 30 doctors, that they could take turns providing that, so that the emergency care unit which is probably a very expensive one to maintain does not have that 70 percent of its people coming there, when they ought to be dealing with their own doctors. But when somebody is sick, it's hard to wait; especially when he's nervous and scared. And for that, that's a sacrifice; and for that we ought to pay, and I don't want anything I've said to be interpreted to mean that doctors should not be paid and paid well for the services they provide. I think that's important. But doctors should assume a responsibility of participating in the planning program.

I must say to the Minister, I listened to what he had to say; I've yet to see the participation between doctor and the department in this consultative committee to bring this about. I think it's happening and it will happen perforce, but I don't think it is being directed by either the medical

profession as exemplified by Dr. Wylie's interview in today's paper, or by the government as exemplified by what the Minister had to say about the work of the consultative committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4—pass — the Honourable Member for St. Boniface.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, before we're finished this, I just have some information I'd like to have before we pass that. Could the Honourable Minister give us for 1977 and 1978 the number of physicians in Manitoba; the average payment that they are receiving also; and how many were opted out during those years?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes, I can, Mr. Chairman. The total numbers of physicians receiving annual payments over \$10,000 for 1977 in Manitoba was 1,184; and for 1978 was 1,193. We generally use the figure 1,600 for the province in total but that includes those who are part-time and these figures that I've given the Honourable Member for St. Boniface are for those receiving annual payments over \$10,000.00. Opted out: accumulative opt out totals for 1976 — this is 1976, Mr. Chairman — 141. .

MR. DESJARDINS: Out of how many?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, the total number of physicians in the figure I gave the honourable member for 1977 — I don't have the 1976 figure, but for 1977 — was 1,184 of those earning over \$10,000.00. The opted out figure for 1977 was 135 and the opted out figure for 1978 was 125. Now since the end of 1978, the first three months of 1979: January, February and March, the opted out figure in Manitoba has risen by nine from 125 to 134 as of the end of the first quarter of the year.

MR. DESJARDINS: Out of how many doctors?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, 1,193 was the total for the end of 1978. The gross figures, Mr. Chairman. . .

MR. DESJARDINS: I've got 1,193 but the Minister then gave us three months for opted out and I was wondering, if he has the opted out, he must have at the end of three months for the same period, that this has increased by nine. What is the number of physicians over \$10,000 because I think that's important? You don't have that?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, we don't have the income tables off yet, Mr. Chairman. These are just the doctors on the MHSC registry with the opted out or letters received to opt out that have been received, but perhaps I could give the honourable member the gross figures for the number of licenced medical practitioners in Manitoba. This is from the College of Physicians and Surgeons. For 1978, well, let me give you 1976. Gross total was 1,657; 1977 was 1,679 and 1978 was 1,683.

MR. DESJARDINS: I don't know what the Minister is giving me now.

MR. SHERMAN: That's the gross total of physicians in Manitoba; that includes everybody. In 1976 was 1,657; 1977 was 1,679; 1978 was 1,683. In all cases with just slight numerical variance, it breaks down to approximately 1,200 of them in Winnipeg and approximately 400 of them outside of Winnipeg. There are fractional numerical differences but I don't think that I need to offer those, but in each case, it's 1,200-plus in Winnipeg and 400-plus outside of Winnipeg for a total of 1,600-plus in the province.

MR. DESJARDINS: Did the Minister say that he didn't have the average payment to each of these doctors and I'm talking only about those that he mentioned that are earning over \$10,000 a year? For 1977-78 I was looking for.

MR. SHERMAN: I have them for 1976 and 1977, Mr. Chairman. Average payment for 1976; all physicians. . .

MR. DESJARDINS: The same people that were. . .

MR. SHERMAN: Well, this is the number over \$10,000.00. Calculations are included only for those physicians earning in excess of \$10,000.00. The category shown here is all physicians but it means

all in that category. Average payment in 1976: \$56,010; average payment 1977: \$60,440.00. Average payment 1977 \$60,440.00.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, to make sure that there's no misunderstanding. Now this is the average payment for these doctors from the Manitoba Health Services Commission. That is not the revenue. This has nothing to do with the part-time or for some other group or the work that they are doing for teaching and so on? This is just the payment, fee for service payment, right?

MR. SHERMAN: That's right, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I will try not to go over a lot of new ground at this late date, and I apologize for not being in here through part of the discussion on the medical program. At the same time, I guess now is as good a time as any, Mr. Chairperson, to register a complaint that undoubtedly has been registered by Opposition members in past years, and I hope will not have to be registered by Opposition members in the future, and that's that in the Estimates I think it's really unacceptable at this stage to have \$482 million of Estimates covered in five or six lines in the Estimates book, while \$220 million in the Estimates book for the Department of Social Services, we're dealing with social services and public health, is dealt with in six pages of Estimates broken down. I think that that's been done in the past and is being continued and I think it's a tradition that should be discontinued. I think that when we start talking about an item like hospital program, \$287 million. That's a one-line entry in the Estimates book.

The medical program \$110 million, a one-line entry in the Estimates book. I think that's just insufficient, and really, I don't say this in a partisan way, because obviously it was done this way in the past. But it is insufficient. And it makes it compounded when you have for example for this an annual report which, in my estimation, doesn't provide as much detail as it could. And again it's a year old and I don't fault the commission for that, because it's difficult putting it all together. But again, you know, I just look at the comparisons and verbosity doesn't necessarily mean that it is informative, but if you look at the annual report of the Department of Health and Community Services, it's far more detailed than the report of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, and I really think that we have to provide more information — just general review and Estimates review of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, because this is the largest item in the Estimates. There are some other items like this in the Estimates process that I think are one liners as well and we'll have the University Grants Commission in the Department of Education, which will be just as bad, Mr. Chairperson. I don't want to make a big issue of it this particular year; I want to serve notice, though, that I hope that it is considered by the Minister. I hope he takes it up next year and I hope that it's a tradition that's discontinued.

I'd like to ask some specific questions about medical care. The Minister gave us information just when I came in regarding the number of doctors. He said something in the order of 1,650 to 1,680 doctors were listed as being doctors. I wonder how many are actually practicing because from what I gather, there are a number of doctors who aren't practicing, so perhaps you could give us an indication of how many doctors are practicing. I think that's an important statistical consideration that I haven't been able to find and that I haven't been able to find in the annual report. Maybe it's there, but I've missed it. But I've not seen that anywhere and I would think that that's something that should be taken up. Perhaps there's an annual report of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. Maybe there's that. I haven't seen that either. I don't know if I've received a copy of it; perhaps it's in the pile of annual reports that I've received, but I certainly don't have that information at my disposal and I think if we're going to talk sensibly about the medical program, we have to have information of that type available to us.

You have indicated how many doctors have opted out. There's been an increase, I think, of nine. I don't know how many doctors have moved out of Manitoba. And if they've moved, do we have any statistics as to where they've moved? Are they moving to other parts of Canada where they would still be part of a Medicare system? Or are they moving to the United States? I think that is an important consideration for us, if in fact we are going to monitor and be in charge of

our medical program, which I think is the responsibility of government to be in charge of that.

I think it's important to find how many people are coming in to the stock of doctors. Where are they coming from? Are they immigrants or are they graduates from the university? That's another important statistic that perhaps we don't have right now, but I would hope in the future would be put into the annual report of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, or perhaps there would be a special annual report put out with respect to the, in a sense, state of the medical profession. Maybe that report exists and again I don't want to belabour it. I don't have it at my disposal right now. Or perhaps I haven't paid attention to it when it's passed my desk. That's why I'd like the Minister to comment on these points.

I'd also like the Minister to indicate what the situation in our universities is right now. How many people are entering medical school? Is there a yearly average? Is it somewhat constant or is it increasing or is it decreasing. Those are things that we don't know. When people graduate, are they going out as general practitioners or are they specializing? What percentage are specializing and what percentage are keeping on as general practitioners? Again that's another important thing that we as a Legislature and you as the Minister surely should be fully on top of. How many people who graduate are leaving the province immediately without practicing in Manitoba. Again, how much generally does it cost to provide education for a doctor for a year? What is the yearly cost of providing medical education?

And the reason why I raise this is that, you know, when we start talking about doctors opting out or leaving, as people have over the last, oh, three, four, five years, it's important to look at the intake as well as the leaving aspect of the medical profession. Some people, for example, argue that we don't have enough people enrolled in medical school. That we aren't, in fact, training enough doctors. That's one argument. Another argument is that it's not the quantity of doctors that's important, it's the quality. And some people have said, well, you judge quality by the intellectual ability of the applicant to medical school and the academic standards that that person brings. And again, that's not entirely sufficient, I think. I think the evidence at McMaster University indicates that if you start changing the criteria, if you start changing the emphasis a bit and just don't take into account intellectual ability, and academic ability, but also take into account another aspect and that's the interest of the applicant in people, and that's very very important.

You can have people going through university who might have a high intellectual ability; have a high academic ability, but they really don't care very much about people at all, and in fact, they might view medicine or view dentistry as a nice safe secure profession from an economic perspective. That's right; they see it as a money machine, and some people may. And if you're a bright person doing well academically and you want to pick out that area that is most secure, you may not do the Ph.D in medical research because you feel, well maybe because of government cutbacks and the fact that the private sector really doesn't provide sufficient funding for medical research; maybe your skills which could be used to find a cure for cancer or for one of the various types of cancer, maybe that won't really provide sufficient economic return for you over your lifetime. So you play it safe even though you're better geared to be working in a laboratory and you make the decision that even though you don't like dealing with people; even though you really wouldn't like house calls; even though you don't like this human interaction because you're not suited to that, you will enter medical school.

I think that's happened in the past and when I reflect back on some of my university colleagues who entered medicine, I would say that there were a good number who were interested in people and were interested in society, but frankly, there were a good number who really weren't. They didn't look at medicine in the sense of really dealing with people. They dealt with it solely in monetary terms, and I'm wondering what's taking place then within our universities in this respect, and I also wonder what's taking place within the Manitoba Health Services Commission; what the Minister feels about this. What is he doing in his consultations with the Manitoba Medical Association on this to see whether in fact people are just treating medicine as a money making proposition and not in the way that we think that doctors used to think about it in days long since gone by, when we put up the village doctor or the town doctor as in a sense the epitome of the person who is community-minded.

I've had it told me and I've never had the opportunity, I've never checked it out specifically, but I've been told that if you go over the proceedings of the Manitoba Medical Association or the Canadian Medical Association you'll find that over the last ten or fifteen years, the substance of debate of these conventions has changed somewhat. The emphasis isn't on medical matters any more; the emphasis seems to be far more on building procedures, on monetary matters, on economic circumstances. I'm wondering whether in fact that's not because we really don't have a sufficiently well rounded set of criteria when we admit people into medical schools. So, you know, some people have said: "Well, let's admit more", and other people say: "Well, that wouldn't help." I don't know what the answer is; maybe the answer is to start changing the quality of people who come out

as doctors.

I also would like to see if the Minister has any statistics regarding the number of women doctors and whether in fact that's changing. I know that in the past the medical profession itself discriminated against women entering the medical profession. People say that isn't happening right now, but again, I think that I'd be interested in finding out how many people taking medicine right now are women; what proportion are women, and whether in fact there has been any change in the percentage of women in the workforce of doctors in Manitoba over the last ten years. Those are statistics, Mr. Chairperson, that I hope the Minister would, if he can, provide some answers to now, and if he can't, I know that the senior people of the Manitoba Health Services Commission are here, I would hope that they would take that up with the College of Physicians and Surgeons and provide that material in a manner that we can have access to and in a manner that we can assess what's going on on a continuing basis.

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, just to respond to the Honourable Member for Transcona, most of the statistical material that he's asked about is certainly available. Records of the kind that he's referred to are kept on a continual basis by the College of Physicians and Surgeons and is available. Certainly I can obtain and provide for him statistics from the College of the kind he has discussed in his remarks.

Generally speaking, we have had a net increase in doctors, in physicians, in Manitoba in past years until 1978; that is, the migration into Manitoba of doctors from other provinces and other countries exceeded the out-migration but in 1978 we had a net decrease of doctors for the first time in many years. I'm just trying to recall what the actual net decrease was; whether it was something between 10 and 15, but generally as I say, we have experienced a net increase. Last year something more than 800 Canadian doctors emigrated to the United States; 143 doctors, I believe, left Manitoba. The number that left Manitoba for the United States worked out to 5 percent of the total and the reality of the situation in Canada today is that all provinces have faced severe recruiting drives from the United States and the lures and attractions of different life styles, perhaps better earning opportunities in the United States and all provinces in Canada are equally concerned with the problem. Our total of the number that went to the United States was almost precisely equivalent to our total proportion of the population so that although I'm not happy with the situation, I don't accept it as something that should be ignored. Nonetheless, it is a situation that when viewed in context, it can be seen to be a problem for all provinces as well as our own.

With respect to the product of our medical college, in general terms, my understanding and recollection of my discussions of that subject with the Dean and others is that approximately one-third of our graduates stay and practice in Manitoba, but approximately two-thirds seek opportunities elsewhere or respond to opportunities that are offered to them from elsewhere. We take 94, 95 students a year into our medical school. There has been considerable discussion from time to time as to whether that number should be reduced rather than increased. —(Interjection)— I'll just finish the point I'm making and then I want to make a correction, Mr. Chairman.

There has been considerable discussion as to whether that number should be reduced and whether we should be looking at 75 admissions a year rather than close to a hundred, but at the present time, it's 94 and in the view of the Dean and the University and the profession, we can accommodate 94 and it's a practical figure to work with.

The honourable member asked about the incidence and participation of women, of females in medicine. That has increased substantially in recent years. At the present time, in the current first-year class, the Manitoba Medical College, approximately one-third of the students are female and the proportion of females has been increasing each year so that probably we're not far away from the point in time where it will be almost a 50-50 distribution.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make a correction. I've left a wrong statistic on the record. I had my statistics reversed when I was talking about the product of our medical college and where the majority of it went to practice. It's the other way around from the figures that I gave the honourable member, approximately 60 percent, close to two-thirds stay and practice in Manitoba and approximately one-third leaves the province to practice elsewhere. So I do want to make that correction. It's an important one, and I apologize for having given him the figures the wrong way around.

As far as the problems in terms of our medical graduates and our medical field generally in dispersal of the product of the college, they really relate more than anything else, Mr. Chairman, to the distribution of our practitioners. We have had difficulty as a province for many years in achieving an equitable distribution of our practitioners throughout the province. The vast majority are located in Winnipeg and efforts are being made through the northern fee differential; through the medical manpower committee and through the placement activities of the MMA to achieve a better distribution in rural and remote areas of the province.

I believe, as I said earlier, that the establishment of another family practice teaching unit, this

one to be at Seven Oaks, to complement to one already in existence at St. Boniface, will have the positive effect on that kind of distribution because that certainly has been our experience with St. Boniface, that family practitioners training here have stayed here and have gone in many many instances into rural communities to practice.

Our doctor-patient ratio is good and we are certainly at the current Canadian average of one practitioner, one physician, per 625 persons in the population, but as I say, that's heavily imbalanced because the majority of them are in Winnipeg.

On the question as to whether medicine is just a money-making proposition, I don't feel we have any reason to be especially concerned in that area, Mr. Chairman, certainly not more so than any other jurisdiction in Canada. I think that we've been extremely well served by our doctors here in Manitoba. They have had delivered, what I think, a highly commendable record of staying in and operating inside the parameters of Medicare, and even those who have opted out, in many many cases, don't extra-bill. We have had, I believe, an excellent and a dedicated service from the members of our medical profession.

MR. CHERNIACK: How do they know?

MR. SHERMAN: Well, the opt out figures have been constantly around the 10 percent mark; 10 percent of our physicians opted out; approximately half of those I am advised by the College, by the Commission, by the profession itself; by those who work in and with the profession, that the percentage of those who have opted out, who extra-bill, is only about half. —(Interjection)— Yes.

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

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Chairman, I do thank the Honourable Minister for permitting an interruption, but I heard some radio debate — I call it debate — that he had with the federal minister, and he said several times that it's not a question of opting out, it is a question of extra billing. And I heard him say then, as he said now, why they're not extra-billing to any extent, or I think he today said only half; but is it correct that he doesn't really know of his own accord and is only informed by people who have not given any supporting evidence or documentation or statistics than that the statement he's making is really in a legal sense, I think he must know the legal interpretation of the word "hearsay" evidence?

A MEMBER: Or a guess.

MR. CHERNIACK: Or a guess?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister.

MR. SHERMAN: Well, it's not a guess, Mr. Chairman. It is the evidence and the argument that is offered to me from persons within the medical profession' within the MMA, who consult with themselves, who consult with me, who know what the practices are of those who have opted out. And in terms of those discussions, and I accept the assurances that I have received from those professionals, that to their knowledge and through their association with those in the profession who have opted out, that they are aware of a certain number who do extra bill and of a certain number of their colleagues with whom they discuss the subject, who don't extra bill; and that in actual practice it works out to approximately 50/50.

Now the Honourable Member for St. Johns can choose to reject that argument if he wishes — that's his prerogative — but I accept the assurances that I've received from those within the profession, on their knowledge based on discussions they have with their colleagues, and some personal experience with persons who deal with opted out physicians, that it is probably an accurate educated guess — educated assessment.

In any event, there's certainly no wholesale incidents of extra billing by doctors who have opted out, because if there were, I certainly would and most members of this Chamber certainly would have experience of that, and I have quite the opposite experience. So, I put it to the Honourable Member for St. Johns, that it is a figure based on the credibility and the voracity of those who work in the profession, and I accept it on their word and on my experience with them.

In any event, the argument that has been raised in recent days by the Federal Minister of National Health and Welfare that the Medicare System is threatened here by the opting out of physicians, by the rejection of Medicare by our physicians, is one that I cannot accept, Mr. Chairman, that I reject very strongly, and that I suggest the statistics refute very clearly.

I think, on the contrary, that we have been well and loyally served in terms of Medicare by our medical profession. Even if one looks at an opted-out figure of 10 percent, you can hardly argue that that denies our citizens accessibility and universality and universal choice to medical services, with 90 percent of the practitioners in the province still practising within the system.

So I think, as I've said before in this House, that it is a manufactured issue that is neither demonstrated by fact nor that does proper service to the kinds of loyalty to Medicare that our profession here in medicine in Manitoba has observed and maintained over the 11 years that the Medicare agreement has been in effect.

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

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to know how many doctors in active practice, according to the record of the Manitoba Health Services Commission, in Brandon, and I'd like to have that until April 1, 1978, and April 1, 1979, if I can, Mr. Chairman; and how many of them are opted out, how many are opted in, and of those that are opted out through that guesstimate of my honourable friend, how many are extra billing?

MR. SHERMAN: Mr. Chairman, Brandon and the Brandon area is the one area in the province where there has been some excessive opting out and where there has been some concern expressed due to the situation in terms of accessibility that could, not necessarily does, but that could result from the opting out process.

In Brandon at the present time, the total number of doctors in active practice is 68. The number of doctors . . .

MR. DESJARDINS: What date?

MR. SHERMAN: April 1, 1979. April 1, 1979. There were 64 in October of 1977, 68 as of April 1, 1979. The number of doctors opted out . . .

MR. DESJARDINS: That's from that 68 you're giving us?

MR. SHERMAN: From that 68, yes. Is that figure still in effect? The number of doctors opted out in Brandon has been 36, Mr. Chairman, and we've had notification from six of them that they're coming back in, and will be back in by May 1st. So that on May 1st, the number of opted out physicians in Brandon will be 30 out of the 68, for an opt-out rate of 44 percent, which is certainly significant and certainly something that we're concerned about, but is unique in terms of the province generally.

I can't tell the honourable member how many are extra billing; that I don't know, but we are attempting to monitor that and determine what the degree of extra billing is. In any event, extra billing or no, a 44 percent opt-out rate is certainly a cause for concern. But as I say, it represents a particular condition in one part of the province that is not applicable generally.

Further to that, the reduction in the opt-out rate in Brandon has been substantial. It has been as high in that area as 76 percent opted out, with 47 doctors opted out of 62. But it will be as of May 1st, down to 44 percent, Mr. Chairman.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, I don't think that the style, and of course that's not up to me to change anybody's style, but the style of debating of my honourable friend during this committee is quite correct, or honest. And I am referring to the Minister trying to place our back against the wall, talking that there's no danger, and if they're opted out, we shouldn't say that there's that many opted out, extra billing, because we've been served so well.

Nobody is debating the service that we're getting, or the interest of the medical profession in taking care patients. This is not an issue here at all. And there is nothing wrong, and they can be just as loyal if they decide to opt out, that's not wrong. And if we bring this thing up, I don't want it done the way the Minister seemed to try now of backing us to say that we're against the profession.

That is not fair, Mr. Chairman. Nobody is criticizing the work we're getting from our medical profession. I'm certainly not. And I don't think that it is being less loyal to the people of Manitoba for a doctor that wanted to opt out. The law is clear, he has a right to opt in or opt out. There is no doubt about that. It is to the advantage, and that's what keeps this balance, of the government to keep as many opted in as possible. And if there's a few opted out, no problem, as long as there's enough that are in or — like the Minister said and I agree with him — that are not extra billing, to be able to keep on with this good plan that we have here.

So, as I say, there is nothing wrong with that at all, and we shouldn't be placed in a position because we ask these questions' that we doubt the medical profession. That is no good in a committee to have this kind of talk, and if we talk about a certain profession that's sacred, and you have to bow and you can't accept your responsibility, and be as thorough and be demanding to make sure that the facts are there, because you're dealing with a certain profession.

—(Interjection)—

Well, we'd also with our Minister . . . okay, let's talk about the national minister. I'm not interested in defending her or accusing her at this time. But I think that as a minister, national minister, she has to be concerned, and what would we say if she waited until it was too late, and then blow the whistle. They would say, it's your fault. You didn't do anything when you could see that there were signs that we were in trouble.

This is what I've read in the paper, I didn't see these accusations until lately when I heard part of it when the Minister of Health of Manitoba was discussing whether . . . and that could be political. I happened to be in Ontario a few months ago where the Minister of Health in Ontario is very concerned for the plan and he was threatening, not me, it's not a Socialist government. A Conservative Minister of Health was threatening the medical profession.

Now I see it as a Minister of Health, I see our duty here is to make sure we improve the plan but keep that plan. And what are we saying? We are saying, all right, the people of Manitoba now providing that everybody is protected and providing everybody has a chance to get a reasonable chance to see a doctor when he needs to, the Government of Canada will give so much to the provinces, and the province will pay the rest, and they will have a universal program. Now, nobody is forcing the doctors, it could be that the doctor could be exactly the way they were before Medicare came in. Now they are saying, the government of every province will negotiate, will try to arrive at a fair fee, to keep the doctors here.

Now, if there are some that opt out, if the plan is not in danger — fine, it's a free country. There's some people that will go to those people that are opted out. I go to some of them myself. I see nothing wrong with that. The danger is, and I took it that the national Minister of Health was expressing these concerns the same as the Minister of Health of Ontario, that he felt if too many of them are opted out, well then the plan is in danger. And it's true.

Now if they would have kept on, and there's an improvement in Brandon, but for instance, let's take Brandon — And that dated before we were in government — that dated from the first year that we had the Medicare plan, there was this trouble in Brandon. In fact, I think that I had suggested that the Minister of Health of Manitoba should go to Brandon to see what the situation is. Now I think that any good Minister of Health, regardless of what party it belongs to, should be ready to keep this plan going; and if, for some reason, it might be very legal, that there will be too many people opting out that you will not have the plan the way we see it now, that it will be a joke, the people will not be able to be served, or they will be extra billed; I think then the government of the day and the Minister has to be ready for that.

And that's what I see happening in Ottawa, where some people, and I think they were members of the NDP Party in Ottawa started the concern, mostly because of Ontario. And as I say, the Minister of Ontario agreed to that. I wish I had the clipping that I brought back from Ontario. So therefore they are saying, well, let's be careful. And the Minister, as I said, the Minister of Ontario threatened the medical profession. He said, if there are so many people opting out, we'll have to find something else.

Now, it might not be very popular, but the first responsibility of a Minister in any province is to see that the people are well served. And if he can keep that by keeping everybody happy, he's a genius, and more power to him, and this is fine. But his first responsibility is not for the people that are doing the serving, and I'm not saying by that that you automatically have to be against them, but it is to the public. And if there would be, legally, too many people opting out, he would have to find a different way. He might have to look for more people on salary. He might have to look at clinics, establishing more clinics. For instance, if there's problems in Brandon he might have to hire people and go to Brandon and set up a clinic where the people will get the service. And that's all we are saying. And you know, if there is too many that opt out then you will have to do something and change the law and the provinces are not dealing with this all in the same way.

For instance, in Quebec they have a different case. They have people that are opted in. They are treated the same way as the opted in doctor here. There are people that are opted out for a question of principle. They don't want to deal with the government, they don't want to say we have an agreement with the government although I don't see that any government has ever interfered with the practice of medicine. They have negotiated and sometimes hard for salary but not — I don't remember seeing any politician in a doctor's office and telling him what to do. So in Quebec there are some that as a question of principle which they have the right, if they really believe that,

they are opted out but they are not extra billing.

Well, then they are doing the same thing as we are doing here with all the medical professions that are opted out, that is they pay the patient the same amount that an opted in doctor would receive directly.

But they have another category in Quebec. They have a category where if they are opted out and they do extra bill well then they are on their own. And the great free enterpriser will feel that the government should not — they don't believe in the plan and they believe that they should deal only with their patient. Well then, they are not any worse off then they were before Medicare came in. They have to collect and they don't get any money from the Commission or the government and the patient doesn't get any money. He is free to stay within the plan and that is not — I would much sooner not have that but it might be one of the plans, that after everything else is tried that the Minister might have to resort to. You see this is a possibility. That doesn't mean that you are against the medical profession if you do that.

The medical profession are not elected representatives but are free people if they want to say, I want to deal directly with my patient, I want no part of your plan and if we are not getting enough people in the field to make this plan viable well then we have to change the rules. Either try to get more, that might be what you will start and a lot of people I could just see the headlines in some of the newspapers now, but you might have to start to recruit these people and enlist them in the Faculty of Medicine. That you say, okay we'll lend you the money for your course you pay the whole thing and we'll lend you the money. And then if you are so many years in your province, after all it is not the Conservative government or an NDP government that is actually doing the actual paying. It is the people of Manitoba. And it is for their benefit that they are educating these people. I don't like this but I say if worse comes to worse, you might have to look at these kinds of solutions. You might have to say that they will have to pay and then you loan them the money and if they stay so many years in Manitoba, fine, it will be forgiven. I'd sooner see the people coming and going. But if it is the case and I'm very pleased that the statistics of the Minister are saying that — I think he said that 60 percent are now staying in. That's an improvement. It's an improvement over my days, I'm sure of that. It takes a few years to find out. And that is a good indication.

I would agree with the Minister that it seems on the surface that there's no problem in Manitoba at this time. But when you have people nationally, or people speaking for the medical profession, are saying this is what we are going to do, this is what we are going to do, then the politician and the person responsible to see that this plan is a good plan and that the people would be protected has to step in and say, okay fine. This is what we are going to do. He has to be ready. And my only concern here in Manitoba is that the money that we get from Ottawa is not going in. And there's been some threat from the medical profession nationally and provincially who are saying, well, we're going to go. And there is some that if they had their wish they would organize a whole bargaining union, the MMA or the Canadian Medical Association and say, okay we're going to boycott this. And this is what a government has to be ready for.

As I say I didn't see until this thing started about the figures — and that's something else. But I saw an article where the Minister was saying, you know we might have to take steps. Well that was one of the conditions. I must say before somebody else reminds me that I wasn't in favour of Medicare. I must admit it. When it came in I was in favour of the principle of it but I thought that we had the best system in Manitoba before Medicare came in and I would have gladly gone along with the Conservative government of the day that they were saying, / "Okay, we'll give you the money providing that you cover so many people." I think it would have worked, but it didn't go like that, so to say that I was reluctant, not of the service but of the system. There's more people covered, but I think we could have been given a chance to try, if we could get the same coverage. But I think it is costlier and I don't think it has hurt the medical profession at all. It has helped the medical profession, Mr. Chairman.

It is true that I was concerned, but now we have the plan and it is quite difficult to go backwards, and I think that a national minister who is responsible for the dispensing of the funds to the provinces and they're not changing anything. They are saying that it has to be universal. They are saying there has to be coverage, I don't remember what the percentage is, but the majority have to be not only covered but a chance to see a doctor in Manitoba. It is the taxpayers' money that pays for this. There's no premiums and in certain places I think it could be argued that we are not delivering, that the government has a contract with the people of Manitoba but they are not delivering. You know, I'm not blaming the Minister, it was the same in other days. It could be touch and go in certain northern areas. So I don't think that the Minister should be offended. I agree with him that it doesn't seem that there's that many problems in Manitoba.

But you must admit, Mr. Minister, that you scare the hell out of us with some of the statements that you make when you say that you are talking about flexibility in payment, that there might be

user's fees but going directly to the medical profession. I think there's where some of the concern that the plan will be changed and it won't be the same plan that we have today. So I'm very pleased with the improvement in the medical profession that are staying here. I agree with the Minister. I don't think that there is that many people that are opting out. I don't think I am quite as naive as the Minister seems to think, that I'll accept without asking for any proof that there is only a certain amount of people that are opted out that are extra billing. I hope that he is right.

And at this stage I'm very pleased to see what's going on in Brandon. Because Brandon was a danger area and there is no doubt that there is a big improvement. But the Minister should not, if we talk about this he can give us the figure, he can defend it and say "in my view," fine but I don't think that we have to worry and say that we question this. I'm a little fed up with this well then we're against the professionals. I don't think there is anything wrong and I think it is the role of the federal government, any federal government and members of the opposition to keep reminding, to make sure that these things are not going in the direction. And you know as well as I, Mr. Minister, in this system of government that pressure is an important thing and the public views are an important thing. Because you know because you fly enough balloons, you fly enough kites to find out exactly what the reaction is of the public. And you are not the only one. Many politicians do. I think this is the only way but if, you know, people are saying we are discussing, like you did last year, we're discussing about being able to extra bill and we're discussing the possibility of having assignment and you did say these things. At one time you seemed to favour this. And another time, well then no, you felt it wasn't any good. And nothing has been changed. I feel quite good that we're having improvement in many ways. I don't think it is in danger but the minute you bring in assignment.

Assignment, for instance, would have everybody opted out. You know, because an assignment would permit the patient to sign a document, send it to the Commission and the Commission would then be instructed to send the money. And I'm talking about opted out doctors.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 4:30, Private Members' Hour. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

The Chairman reported upon the Committees' deliberations to Mr. Speaker and requested leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

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

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. JORGENSON: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Kildonan, that the House do now adjourn.

MOTION presented and carried and the House was accordingly adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 p.m. Monday afternoon.