



Third Session — Thirty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

33 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Second Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ADAM, Hon. A.R. (Pete)	Ste. Rose	NDP
ANSTETT, Hon. Andy	Springfield	NDP
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BANMAN, Robert (Bob)	La Verendrye	PC
BLAKE, David R. (Dave)	Minnedosa	PC
BROWN, Arnold	Rhineland	PC
BUCKLASCHUK, Hon. John M.	Gimli	NDP
CARROLL, Q.C., Henry N.	Brandon West	IND
CORRIN, Q.C., Brian	Ellice	NDP
COWAN, Hon. Jay	Churchill	NDP
DESJARDINS, Hon. Laurent	St. Boniface	NDP
DODICK, Doreen	Riel	NDP
DOERN, Russell	Elmwood	IND
DOLIN, Hon. Mary Beth	Kildonan	NDP
DOWNEY, James E.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert	Emerson	PC
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
EVANS, Hon. Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
EYLER, Phil	River East	NDP
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	PC
FOX, Peter	Concordia	NDP
GOURLAY, D.M. (Doug)	Swan River	PC
GRAHAM, Harry	Virден	PC
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry M.	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertslанд	NDP
HEMPHILL, Hon. Maureen	Logan	NDP
HYDE, Lloyd	Portage la Prairie	PC
JOHNSTON, J. Frank	Sturgeon Creek	PC
KOSTYRA, Hon. Eugene	Seven Oaks	NDP
KOVNATS, Abe	Niakwa	PC
LECUYER, Hon. Gérard	Radisson	NDP
LYON, Q.C., Hon. Sterling	Charleswood	PC
MACKLING, Q.C., Hon. Al	St. James	NDP
MALINOWSKI, Donald M.	St. Johns	NDP
MANNES, Clayton	Morris	PC
McKENZIE, J. Wally	Roblin-Russell	PC
MERCIER, Q.C., G.W.J. (Gerry)	St. Norbert	PC
NORDMAN, Rurik (Ric)	Assiniboia	PC
OLESON, Charlotte	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald	Pembina	PC
PAWLEY, Q.C., Hon. Howard R.	Selkirk	NDP
PARASIUK, Hon. Wilson	Transcona	NDP
PENNER, Q.C., Hon. Roland	Fort Rouge	NDP
PHILLIPS, Myrna A.	Wolseley	NDP
PLOHMAN, Hon. John	Dauphin	NDP
RANSOM, A. Brian	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Burrows	NDP
SCHROEDER, Hon. Vic	Rossmere	NDP
SCOTT, Don	Inkster	NDP
SHERMAN, L.R. (Bud)	Fort Garry	PC
SMITH, Hon. Muriel	Osborne	NDP
STEEN, Warren	River Heights	PC
STORIE, Hon. Jerry T.	Flin Flon	NDP
URUSKI, Hon. Bill	Interlake	NDP
USKIW, Hon. Samuel	Lac du Bonnet	NDP
WALDING, Hon. D. James	St. Vital	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, 15 May, 1984.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. J. Walding: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services.

HON. L. EVANS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement.

As another indication of this government's support of job creation for our young people, I am pleased to announce that the Provincial Government will be providing \$659,900 for the Northern Youth Corps Program this year, an increase of \$100,000 over 1983. The Department of Employment Services and Economic Security will provide \$459,900 for this program and an additional \$200,000 will be made available from the Manitoba Jobs Fund. The Northern Youth Corps Program provides grants to Northern Manitoba communities, Indian Bands and non-profit organizations who can develop community improvement projects to employ students, unemployed youth and their supervisors for up to seven weeks this summer. The new funding level of \$659,900 will provide an estimated 520 job opportunities for 440 young people and 80 supervisors on about 90 local projects. The program is similar to the Northern Youth Corps Programs of past years. In 1983, 72 local northern projects were approved, providing jobs for 381 young people and 50 supervisors.

The Northern Youth Corps Program affords a special opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for youth in Northern Manitoba to obtain summer jobs and gain work experience while involving themselves in important projects for the betterment of their communities.

The young people will work on community projects such as special programs to assist the elderly or handicapped, community clean-ups and repair and maintenance of public facilities. The provincial grants will provide them with a wage of \$4 per hour and \$6 per hour for their supervisors. Employee benefits of up to 11.5 percent of the wage assistance will also be provided.

The Northern Youth Corps Program will come into effect on July 3, 1984 and will operate until August 17th of this year allowing for approximately seven weeks of employment opportunities for young people in the northern part of our province.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to thank the Minister for this statement this afternoon.

I'm sure the members of the opposition will be looking at it more closely in the days to come and will be asking several questions about it during Estimates, particularly on the Estimates of the Jobs Fund.

I am disappointed to see that the jobs the Minister lists are mainly short-term jobs which will not really, in the long term, help the severe unemployment problem in the North.

As I recall, one of the thrusts of the Throne Speech and the Budget were that there was going to be emphasis on long-term jobs and so that is one disappointment. Another is that it won't come into effect till July when in the interim in these months and weeks ahead there are many many students and others who are desperately looking for work and this will not help them a great deal. As I say we'll be looking at this during Estimates of the Careerstart Program and of the Jobs Fund and we'll be looking for more information on this in the days to come.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation for the year ending March 31, 1983.

MR. SPEAKER: Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

Before Oral Questions, I can inform the House there has been a slight delay with Hansard. It's a technical problem having to do with some of the equipment and is being repaired soon and the Hansard supply will happen as soon as possible.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. SPEAKER: If I can direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, there are 35 students of Grade 5 standing from the St. Pierre Elementary School under the direction of Mrs. Shewchuk. The school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Emerson.

There are 35 students of Grade 11 standing from the Princess Elizabeth School under the direction of Mr. Blackwill. The school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

There are 115 students of Grade 9 standing from the Stonewall Collegiate. These students are under the direction of Mr. Metcalfe and the school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Lakeside.

On behalf of all of the members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Dauphin water supply - Edwards Lake

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs. It follows on an announcement by the Federal Parks Canada that they will not be renewing the agreement for the use of Edwards Lake for the domestic water supply for the Town of Dauphin, a source of domestic water which the town has enjoyed for 73 years. I wonder if the Minister will be protesting this move to the Federal Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Speaker, there have been some ongoing discussions related to the water supply for the Town of Dauphin and as those discussions materialize and develop and appropriate announcements can be made with regard to ensuring of proper supply for the Town of Dauphin, I will be advising the House.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the town has enjoyed the opportunity to have its water supply from Edwards Lake since 1911, and in view of the fact that there are no environmental considerations that would prohibit them from using it, that rather it appears as though it's merely a matter of conforming to new policy of the Federal Parks Canada, would the Minister not consider intervening on behalf of the town and approaching Parks Canada in an effort to try and have them change this policy that doesn't seem to have any rationale behind it?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I didn't make it fully clear in my first answer. The Minister of Natural Resources has been directly involved in the discussion regarding the reservoir at Edwards Lake and I have been kept informed of those discussions. The Minister has taken every action necessary to date to ensure that the water supply of the Town of Dauphin will be protected. Our government has made a commitment to the town and the Federal Government and the Federal Parks Branch is fully aware of our commitment to ensure that the Town of Dauphin has a safe water supply maintained.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Dauphin Town Council appears to be very upset with this move, and in view of the fact that they are not confident of an alternate source of water supply, can the Minister indicate if the water supply that is in discussion is from Edwards Lake?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Speaker, I cannot report all the details of the discussions between the Minister of Natural Resources and his federal counterparts, but I will certainly take that question and any further details the member requires, as notice, on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. G. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the Minister of Natural Resources, himself, has been pursuing policies of preserving lakes in their natural states in provincial parks, is the Minister indicating to us that he's not willing to intervene and that, in fact, the Provincial Government is going to abide by the federal decision?

HON. A. ANSTETT: I don't know what I have to say to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to reiterate that the Minister of Natural Resources has already intervened. The supposition in his preamble that the Minister of Natural Resources has taken an aggressive posture of environmental protection is subsumed in the preamble to an earlier question, Mr. Speaker, in which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said there were no environmental considerations.

The Minister of Natural Resources is operating on that assumption; he agrees with the Leader of the Opposition that this is not an environmental question, but rather a question of guaranteeing an adequate, safe water supply for the Town of Dauphin, both from Edwards Lake and Vermillion Lake, and we're committed to seeing that happen and the Minister of Natural Resources is pursuing that aggressively.

Brandon General Hospital - waiting period

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, a few days ago or last week sometime, the Member for Turtle Mountain asked me a question re the waiting list for the elective surgery in the Brandon Hospital.

There is a real problem. The waiting time for elective surgery in the Brandon General Hospital is about four to six months, whereas two or three years ago the waiting time was minimal. The staff at Brandon, as well as the staff at the Manitoba Health Services Commission are aware of that; they're trying to solve the problem. Presently, long- and short-term solutions are being considered and further to this, the Manitoba Health Services Commission has been considering a review of all urban operations and complexes. The terms of reference are not developed as yet, but such things as slating, staffing, categorizing of cases certainly will be considered and that committee should start functioning very soon.

Health Sciences Centre re personnel

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable Minister of Health. I would ask him whether the pending departure of Dr. John Tyson, head of Obstetrics and Gynecology, both at the Health Sciences Centre and the University of Manitoba, is linked in any way to the administrative difficulties that have been the subject of considerable public examination and discussion at the Health Sciences Centre of recent months?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, this would be a guess on my part. No doubt, when you lose a valuable member of the medical staff, you will always miss him, but I think the problem is probably larger than that.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Well, Mr. Speaker, just so that I understand the Minister's answer, do I conclude from his answer that he thinks that he suggests or he believes that the administrative difficulties at the Health Sciences

Centre are part of the reasons for Dr. Tyson's departure, but that there are other reasons over and above them?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I think the point that I was trying to make is, no matter what is going on when you lose a valuable member of the medical profession or your medical staff in any hospital, the hospital will suffer. But I think the problems that I believe the member is talking about, I think that is a wider range than the loss of Dr. Tyson.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, a few days ago in an exchange of questions and answers between the Minister and myself, we discussed the question of whether his office or the Health Services Commission had been asked to evaluate and review and examine the position at the Health Sciences Centre with a view to helping the board and the administration get a handle on the problems there. Has there been any such approach from the Board of the Health Sciences Centre or any such initiatives suggested to the Minister by the Health Services Commission in recent days?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: The evaluation, Mr. Speaker, of the report was done by the members of the board themselves who recognized some of the problems that they've had where they could improve the situation. They presented those thoughts to me at a meeting that we had I think on the day that I was being questioned in the House. Following that they held a meeting of the full board because this was the officers of the board. They had a full board meeting where they made their presentation and, from my understanding, it was supported by the medical profession as such.

Also, they proposed certain changes and I think that they had a press release to that effect and both the commission and myself feel that they're on the right track. They're trying and we intend to co-operate with them, but at this time they're just keeping us informed. They feel that they could bring these necessary changes by themselves.

MR. L. SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary. Manitobans are aware of some difficulty in recent years at the Health Sciences Centre in maintaining a capability in cardiology and cardiac surgery, both adult and pediatric, and I would ask the Minister whether he is aware of any other impending departures of expertise, professional expertise, heads of departments like Dr. Tyson or like any of those who experienced difficulties in cardiology in recent years? Does the Minister know of any other impending departures of the stature of experts such as Dr. John Tyson at the Health Sciences Centre?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: The departure of Dr. Tyson has been known for quite awhile now by the members of the board and in fact certainly by myself and our department. I don't think there's anything sinister in him, having so many years, deciding that he wanted to move on. Now, no, I haven't heard of any. That doesn't mean that there would be anymore. That's something that I don't know. People are coming and going all the time. Now if we're looking for a reason why they're being chased out of here or whatever; or

if they don't like the condition, I haven't heard anymore on that.

Adoption Moratorium

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

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question, Mr. Speaker, for the Minister of Community Services. Further to my recent questions to her regarding a decision of the Interim Board in Winnipeg Children's Aid Society to block the adoption of a three-and-a-half year old girl who has lived with them since she was nine days old, Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that at the time the decision was made by the Interim Board that of the five members Addie Penner was absent; Dr. Robert Adie, the chairman, did not vote; that Mr. Frank Pearson abstained because of a lack of information; and only two people voted, Kathleen Mallett and Jacqueline Lavallee?

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, that particular case is before the court, so I prefer to make rather brief comments on it. The board is wrestling with a very profound value conflict between people who perceive child welfare with one view and those who see it from another perspective. My understanding is that the board has not yet ratified its decision, but that what they are facing is a case where the different points of view that people on both sides are intending to go to court whichever way the decision goes. It is a case where the board must wrestle with the value issues, we as a department must and I guess we as a community must. The courts probably will be the place where the clarification and the final decision will be made and then of course there'll be the question of whether legislation is as good as it should be. But that's the current status of the case as fully as I feel free really to comment on it.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that she has received a copy of a letter dated May 10, 1984 from Dr. Adie, the Chairman of the Interim Board to Mr. Robert Daniels of the Anishinabe Child and Family Services Inc., in which the Chairman states in the third paragraph: "Because of the way the game was played that day, the Interim Board of CAS Winnipeg was given the information from one side in the issue but was not allowed to receive information from the other side. It is difficult to believe that we, the Interim Board of Children's Aid Society, heard the Anishinabe side of the case, but we're not allowed to hear our own side. This, however, is what happened." - did she receive that letter?

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I did receive that letter, but on receiving it I did reflect on how a board functions and how it has the authority to set its decision-making process and determine how it handles information, decisions and that the board has the capacity to review its procedures and to determine as a board how best to proceed. So I think the remedies to the problem lie within the board's capacity. Remember, they have not been wrestling with this

particular case for very long, that they are wrestling with the complexities of the issue and I trust that they will come up with the best resolution they possibly can.

MR. G. MERCIER: Mr. Speaker, in view of the statement by Dr. Adie in the concluding paragraph of his letter in which he says: "To conclude, Robert, I do not believe in bulldozing these things. I try hard to keep myself from it and resent those who insist on it. In this case, and still speaking only for myself, I feel bulldozed by the decision and your plans for Jerrilin increased the feeling"; - in view of the statements in this letter, a copy of which has been sent to the member, in view of the fact that only two people voted at this meeting, in view of the fact that the Minister and this government have intervened in Children's Aid Society before by firing the whole board and replacing them with this Interim Board, would she not intervene in this case? Surely decisions are required on the basis of the full information and the full information was not presented to the board. Will she not intervene in the best interests of this child?

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it is my devout wish that Children's Aid Societies will, in a process of negotiation, work out the procedures and not leave individual children in a tug-of-war position.

Up until now, most of the issues that have come before the board which raised the very difficult problem of these youngsters who are caught between times, as it were, when decisions were made to place almost all Native children in white homes, working towards the time when we can increasingly make culturally appropriate placements, there are many children who are caught in an interim situation.

My responsibility for that board is to see that it knows what its authority and responsibility is, and that was my reply to Mr. Adie, that I devoutly hoped that they could work out a way of negotiating with the other agency and that they could address the problem of how they made decisions within that board, how information was to be brought forward, when a vote was appropriate and when it was not, that they had the power internally to work that out, and that I urged them to address those procedural problems and come to the very best resolution they could.

There is the probability in this particular case that a court decision will be the result no matter which way the decision goes unless there is some negotiated position that I, for one, am not aware of.

In previous cases, we have often found that after a little difficulty the agencies have sat down again and shared information a little more openly and have arrived at a reasonable solution. I devoutly hope that they will be able to do so in this case, but I think it's inevitable as we go through a transitional period that we are going to come across some cases which will be resolved by the court process.

Adoptions

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Community Services and

ask her whether she can confirm that it takes the Children's Aid Society in some instances up to four-and-a-half years to complete an adoption request where some private operators are meeting them within six weeks.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is, I think, referring to an item that was in some background material which I had undertaken to provide him with yesterday, and which I did provide him with; that is background on the current law and on the procedures in place and on the fact that the group that had placed that ad in the newspaper are being watched. To date, there is no proof that they have gone outside the law.

In terms of the timing, regrettably, I think the history of permanency planning in the child welfare system has not been a completely satisfactory one. There have been some cases in the past that have taken that long. We are working towards providing all the resources to the agency so that permanency planning can take place in a much shorter time frame, but that's the outside range that was identified in the paper. I presume that the promise therefore of a very quick and speedy adoption process which really is not backed up by the legal steps that have to be gone through is alluring to people, but it is a dangerous path and a very unsure path for people to take.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that it is in fact illegal for a private citizen or intermediary to offer financial assistance to a pregnant woman and, if so, how does the Minister explain that this same advertisement, which was called a "Mother's Day Ad" in the Free Press on Saturday follows these lines, quote, "that the couple that you choose will become your extended family. They can help you with some of your stress emotionally and financially." Is it illegal to make a statement of that kind?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The question asks for a legal opinion; it's also hypothetical. Perhaps the honourable member would wish to rephrase his question.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, holding aside the legal opinion, I want to ask the Minister whether there is now legislation which prohibits a private citizen from offering financial assistance to a pregnant person?

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, I did consult the Attorney-General's Office for advice on the issue and they said there did not seem to be anything strictly illegal about the advertisement, although they were of the opinion it was in very poor taste, which I'm sure we can all agree with.

The actual detail of legality, however, may again have to be tested in the court because there is not in law at the present time a clear interpretation of what constitutes payment or reward, and there hasn't been a charge laid under Section 97 where witnesses have been prepared to come forward and testify; so that

clarification, given our legal system, may in fact have to go the route of the courts.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, following on that same question, is it possible for a person to make a profit or charge a fee or run a business based on this kind of an operation?

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, it is not legal to do so.

Payroll tax

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. R. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask my question of the Acting Minister of Finance or the Deputy Premier and would ask if they could tell us how many Manitoba employers have, or are refusing, to pay the NDP 1.5 payroll tax?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Co-op Development.

HON. J. COWAN: Mr. Speaker, while I can't give you exact figures, I can certainly attempt to find out approximate figures and report back to the member who asked the question.

MR. R. BANMAN: I wonder if the Minister could also confirm that there is an advertising campaign now, ads appearing in the daily papers in Winnipeg, urging employers not to pay this anti-employment tax.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I do not believe that advertising campaigns in the paper are within the administrative competence of this government. Perhaps the honourable member would wish to rephrase his question.

MR. R. BANMAN: Along the same line then, rephrasing my question, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Acting Minister of Finance could inform the House whether or not the individual who is campaigning through ads, and through the media generally, against this particular tax and is spending his own money financing the opposition to this tax, I wonder if he could confirm that that person was an NDP supporter and now, because of this, what he calls a stupid tax which defies logic, that he is now leaving the New Democratic Party.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The action of a private citizen is not within the administrative competence of this government.

Education funding

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to address my question to the Minister of Education.

Firstly, I'd like to thank her for the statement of government support to public and private schools that she forwarded to me this morning.

Mr. Speaker, this statement has a breakdown of all the grants made to various groups within the school system and there is a figure of \$4,189,296 that has been provided to the private and independent schools, a number which I dare say the Minister was most fearful of announcing publicly within this Chamber.

I would ask the Minister if she could indicate what the grant is per pupil and what percentage increase that represents over last year?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, the increase that will be given to private schools this year is going to be - they're going to receive the same dollar increase as are the students in the public school system.

In other words, the increased funding, the funding will increase by the same dollar amount as for public schools and that is \$80 per student. That is an increase of approximately 16 percent, a little over 16 percent. They will also, as the Education Support Program requires, receive the increase in print and non print that goes to the public school system. That's increasing from \$30 per student to \$40 per student, so the regular grant has gone from \$480, in total, with the combination of the two of them up to \$600.00.

MR. C. MANNES: I thank the Minister for that answer, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask her to tell us if she can, how this compares to the support offered on a per-student basis to the public school system?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering how much detail the Member for Morris wants to go into, when we're going to be discussing this in detail, I'm sure, when we go into Estimates in about an hour.

The average - it doesn't match the amount of money that is given to the public school system, as the members opposite know, because they froze the grant at the \$435 level for their entire four years of office.

Mr. Speaker, the only two changes in this grant have come about through our increase last year where we increased it from \$435 to \$480 and the increase that I have just announced this year from \$480 up to \$600.00. The average cost per student in the province will be in the range of \$3,000.00.

MR. C. MANNES: To reiterate what the Minister said, it seems like there's \$600 being given to the private and \$3,000 to the public.

Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the private school system seems to now have funding in an area of roughly 21 percent of the public school system, and given that the government is not willing to fund private schools on the basis of a percentage of the block grants paid to public schools districts and businesses - as recommended, I might say, within the Nicholls Report - can the Minister now confirm that this government wants to see the demise of the independent schools and force all students into the public school system?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Speaker, that comment is absolutely ridiculous and beyond . . . It isn't even worth the breath to make the comment, Mr. Speaker, but I can only say that the concern of the members opposite

is too little and too late because they did absolutely nothing for four years.

Where was their concern for the private schools when they developed the Educational Support Program and didn't give one additional cent for three years? Where was their concern for the four years of their government when that grant was frozen at \$435,000?

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

I note that Beauchesne says that a question should not be ironical, rhetorical, offensive, or contain epithet, innuendo, satire and ridicule, and that answers should be answers to questions and not speeches.

Alcohol Foundation - library

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Health a question.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister agree with the notice that was sent out by the Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba, which he is in charge of - Mr. Speaker, does the Minister agree with the policy of the Alcohol Foundation that says it is with regret that we must inform the book lenders of the film library of the Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba that this library will be closed to the public?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The agreement or otherwise of a Minister is his opinion and so is not a proper question.

The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, then, will the Minister please confirm that the Alcohol Foundation has informed library borrowers that the Alcohol Foundation Library of Manitoba will be closed to the public?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I have no problem with the first question, but this is kind of a ridiculous question. I can't confirm; he's got the letter there. There is no point confirming it. I have never seen this letter before.

A MEMBER: You're the Minister.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, I can't confirm it. I haven't got the letter; he's got it. Why should I confirm it? The Estimates are coming; we'll discuss it. I don't mind the first question.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the Minister who is in charge of the Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba, has he received a letter from the Alcohol Foundation, or a copy of a letter that the Alcohol Foundation sent out, informing all library borrowers that the Alcohol

Foundation library will be closed to the public, the library will be closed to the public effective the 29th, 1984. Has the Minister received this information from the department he is in charge of?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly my point. I haven't received that, and that policy is not — (Interjection) — Are you going to make a speech, or . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Well, shut up then if you are not going to make a speech.

Mr. Speaker, the final policy hasn't been determined by Cabinet at this time, so this is premature.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I have now sent the Minister a copy of the letter. The letter says that the decision to withdraw our lending services to the public is a result of budget cutbacks. The Minister is responsible for the funding to the Alcohol Foundation. What are the budget cutbacks that are closing the Alcohol Foundation library?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: The Minister, collectively, is also responsible for the deficit that we have that these people are squawking about so much. Mr. Speaker, my Estimates, I think, are on ice and I will be very pleased to discuss that with my honourable friend.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that medical students, nurses, the Medical Association, doctors and all people that have any effect from the effects of alcohol that may want to . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Question.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the honourable members seem to think one of the most serious problems within our community today is fun.

Mr. Speaker, I will say - I am just asking - those who are touched by the effects of alcohol, who use this library - Mr. Speaker, I fail to see what's funny about those people who have been touched by the effects of alcohol. All of those people who use this library for their use to study the subject, are they going to be closed from this library so that they will have no knowledge of the subject that this library has?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: I could promise that it'll be open to the members of the Conservative caucus if that's a big concern.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, the situation is I would want to say to my honourable friend that the policy has not been determined. This is premature. Now the decision that was made on the library, as in the case of my honourable friend, the Minister of Culture, it is that the library, what we are trying to do away with, because of the deficit that we have been talking about is — (Interjection) — I don't give a damn what they said. I am telling you what the policy is. How many times do you want to know? This is premature.

Mr. Speaker, this, first, doesn't set the policy for the department and I will inform, I am saying that this is premature; I have said that for the third time. I am explaining the policy that this government has talked about so far as duplication, as my honourable friend, the Minister of Culture, has stated, that if there is some area or some material that is not available except in that place that it will be opened and I would imagine that'll be our policy also. My Estimates will be starting fairly soon and that is the place to discuss these policies.

Remembrance Day to Peace Day

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question for the Acting Premier. Can I ask the Acting Premier if the government has legislation that's intended to come before this caucus to change The Remembrance Day Act so that Remembrance Day will be changed to Peace Day? Is that proposed for this Session?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, no.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, I wonder, would the Acting Premier be kind enough to contact Mr. Walmsley, the president of the Royal Canadian Legion, Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario branch, and express to him and the executive of the Royal Canadian Legion that this government has no intention of bringing forth such legislation?

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, a letter from the same gentleman arrived on my desk yesterday, and I instructed the office to prepare a letter giving the same answer I have just given in the House.

Aboriginal self-government

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

MR. B. RANSOM: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Premier as well.

During the last election, the Manitoba Metis Federation supported the NDP openly. Since that time, the NDP Government has expressed support for the concept of Native self-government and also has voiced some expression of justification behind the Metis land claims in this province.

My question to the Acting First Minister is: What is the government doing to fulfill those expectations which they have raised among the Metis community?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Mr. Speaker, the participation in the constitutional talks with a view to achieving a definition

of how to increase self-government for aboriginal peoples is something we are taking part in, but I would like to call on my colleague, the Minister of Northern Affairs, to comment further.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs.

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I suppose that if the member wants the long answer, we could start by suggesting that the past two years of work with respect to the constitutional process have been largely directed at answering questions about aboriginal self-government. As the member opposite probably knows, those questions remain, to a great extent, unanswered.

I think that there are two separate issues involved in that process. One is the question of who aboriginal peoples are, and I suppose that in the context of the First Ministers' Conference that just ended in March, the Metis people in particular came away somewhat frustrated in the sense that their particular issues were not dealt with, were not addressed by the conference to any extent at all. So the government has been working on that front, I think, in a very supportive way, trying to come to grips with the question of the issue of aboriginal rights, what those rights are, how those rights are going to be defined and in a similar vein dealing with the question of self-government and how it might be dealt with in the different contexts with respect to Indian people, Inuit people and Metis people.

The other question about what the province is doing in terms of my department, we are doing a couple of things. One is that we are dealing with the question of resource area and resource lands for Northern Affairs communities. The department has approached it and I have expressed this to both the MMF and to other Native groups that we deal with it as a question of what local initiatives can be taken to increase input by the average citizen of Northern Affairs communities. So, we have tended to focus the question on community control rather than one of aboriginal control and that's largely because Northern Affairs communities are made up of a variety of people, whether they be Indian, Metis, non-status, whatever, as well as other . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. The matter could be discussed by the members under some other context. The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ADJOURNED DEBATE ON RULES OF THE HOUSE - BELL RINGING

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Speaker, would you call the referral of the report of the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: On the motion of the Honourable Government House Leader, the Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard the concluding remarks of the Honourable Member for Pembina and I thought that the contribution he made to this debate was one that was certainly worthy of consideration by all members of this Assembly. He pointed out five different areas that were essential and had to be addressed if there was to be any sensible, reasonable approach taken to adopting a set of rules for this Assembly.

What I want to add to this debate, Mr. Speaker, I think stems from the first meeting of the Rules Committee that was held on the 12th of March of this present year, and I have to apologize to members of the Assembly that, even though I was a member of that committee, at that time I was not available and wasn't able to take part in that meeting. However, I made sure that I read carefully the remarks of the various members that took part in that and I saw where in my opinion the government got off to a wrong start on the whole issue of change of rules. I refer, Mr. Speaker, to Page 5 of the Hansard of that day, when the Honourable Attorney-General was concluding his remarks and I believe they were the second remarks he made. He said I think something that was quite proper and quite true. He says, "If we don't agree that there's a problem, then we may not agree on a solution."

I think he has quite properly put his finger on the whole issue of whether or not there is a problem and, of course, where everybody's talking about the issue of the ringing of the bells. However, that same member, when speaking, urged "that we not discuss and debate whether or not this was or wasn't a precedent, not to debate when my signature as Government House Leader and that of Mr. Ransom, let it be noted that as Opposition House Leader it was affixed to that document, that it created or recognized some precedent or rule. I don't want to get into that debate." I don't blame him for not wanting to get into that debate, Mr. Speaker, because that is the whole crux of the problem, or the perceived problem that this government is trying to resurrect at this time. I suggest, Sir, that there is no problem, there never was a problem and if the Honourable House Leader wishes to try and create a problem then he will have a problem in this House.

I think you have to go back, Mr. Speaker, and review the activities of last summer and look at the whole picture of what transpired. We had a very early start to a legislative Session last year, Mr. Speaker, and there was a fairly heavy workload. In fact, we were into the month of June before any issue dealing with constitutional amendment was even raised and we went into July and into August still dealing with a constitutional proposal which the government originally said they would not hold any public hearings on. They changed their minds several times on that, but in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, there was other business of the House that was still being carried on or was still on the Order Paper to be dealt with. Basically, Mr. Speaker, I believe there was a log jam. There were some 100 bills on the Order Paper. There were several bills that seemed to be of a contentious nature and there was very little which was receiving Third Reading.

So the two House Leaders, jointly, in trying to move the legislation through, adopted an agreement. I say that they were both acting as very responsible members of the Legislature and they were acting - I can't say

this for the Honourable Government House Leader, but I suspect he was acting on behalf of the government and with the consent of government and probably with the consent of caucus as well. I think he was given that type of authority, Mr. Speaker, to go out and to negotiate, to see if there was some way that they could move the legislation forward and bring legislation to a fruitful conclusion.

I can say from this side of the House that all members on this side of the House expressed their confidence in our House Leader, the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, and he negotiated together with Mr. Penner an agreement. As a result of that agreement, Mr. Speaker, in a matter of literally hours, we were able to push roughly 100 pieces of legislation through this Assembly and complete the major work of the past Session. It was not all completed. In fact, there was one piece of legislation, which by agreement, they had set aside to carry on, but all the rest of it would be moved through the Assembly in an orderly fashion and the House would be left to deal with one piece of legislation only.

I see that, Mr. Speaker, as the result of conscientious work done by two conscientious, dedicated House Leaders. They were able in their negotiations to arrive at a means by which the business of the House proceeded in an orderly fashion and for that I think this whole House should commend both of them because they were acting in a responsible parliamentary fashion in the true tradition, the finest traditions of the Parliamentary system, Mr. Speaker. That became one of the cornerstones, that agreement, Sir, was the cornerstone for the ability for the House to proceed with third readings and move the rest of the business off the Order Paper. That, Sir, was in my estimation one of the forms for proceeding with the business of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't in our rule book because it never passed Rules Committee but it was a form of proceeding that was agreed to by all Members of the Assembly especially at a time when the business of the House seemed to be stagnated. Now we are talking, Mr. Speaker, about the Rules of the House, the forms of proceedings, the orders and all the various other aspects of trying to set up rules that will allow for the orderly debate and for the reasonable progression of business through this Assembly. I hold that agreement that was signed by the two Government House Leaders up as a model to show what can be done in a spirit of co-operation, in order to move the business of the House through to its natural completion.

I don't know why the Attorney-General in his remarks on the 22nd of May didn't want to refer to that because, if I were him, I would take a great deal of pride as a House Leader in being able to move the business through in an orderly manner. But in that agreement that was signed, Mr. Speaker, there was two or three clauses where there always has to be some dialogue and some exchanges, but there was one clause in there that was agreed to by both House Leaders and that was the bells shall not ring for longer than two weeks at any one time. I have been told by the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain, who was our House Leader at that time, that that was not one of the conditions that he asked for. I've been told that that was one that was offered by the government at that time and one

that was accepted by the members on this side of the House. So we see that an agreement that had been signed, that had the approval of all Members of Assembly - at least at that time we heard no dissenting voice - all agreed that the bells should not ring for longer than two weeks at any one time.

I mention that at this time, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's fundamentally important and it is the basis, it is the very basis for any argument when it comes to changing of the rules, especially when you get a specious argument as put forward by the present Government House Leader. The Honourable Attorney-General was very prophetic when he said, if we don't agree that there's a problem, then we may not agree on a solution.

Well, that may be another problem, Mr. Speaker. That may, in fact, be one of the major reasons that we see today because when the House then recessed to hold public meetings and there were meetings held throughout the Province of Manitoba - in fact, I attended every single one of them, Mr. Speaker, that carried on for a process of six weeks - then we sat down and we analyzed all the information we received. We came back into the Assembly in the early days of December and then we recessed again for Christmas and came back in January.

There had been some changes made in the roles that various members in this Assembly had played. We on this side of the House in that period of time had had a leadership convention, one that had been in the works for a long period of time. We came back with a new Leader, we came back with a new House Leader and the government in its collective wisdom felt that there should be more members in the Cabinet and the Member for Springfield, who had in the eyes of many, been recognized as a rules expert, had served as an office boy in this Assembly for several years, became the leading expert on rules in this Assembly. He became the Government House Leader. There's no question that the Honourable Member for Springfield may know more about rules, but when it comes to a question of applying them and the common sense that is used in the application of them, then we find that maybe his judgment is not that good after all, Mr. Speaker.

That could be one of the problems because he apparently seemed to ignore the agreement that had been reached by the Honourable Attorney-General. He seemed to ignore it completely. We came back and we were into a protracted debate on a Constitutional matter, a matter which vitally affected every Manitoban, a matter that was probably the single most important piece of legislation that I have seen in this Assembly in the 15 years that I have been here. That includes the Autopac debate, the changes to The City of Winnipeg Act and others that I could mention.

That affected in such a way, Mr. Speaker, the lives of people, and there was a proposal being put forward that would be entrenched in the Constitution in such a manner that I think succeeding governments would have very great difficulty in ever changing.

So the importance of having a debate at that time was extremely important. However, the government in its collective wisdom felt that that debate should be of a limited definite nature and they in their collective wisdom, tried to impose closure, and in fact, succeeded in imposing closure. Not only that, but they immediately

moved that the question be now put on the question of closure. So we had, in effect, Mr. Speaker, closure on a closure motion. It seemed that power and the use of power by this new Government House Leader, was the single most important thing, the consequences of the changes to the Constitution didn't seem to bother him at all. He didn't seem to care about that. His No. 1 one concern was to get his own way. That was his No. 1 concern and if he had to use the rules of the House to do it he would do it, and he of course sold himself to his leader on his ability and his knowledge of the rules.

I would think that the Honourable First Minister, looking back in retrospect, would say, well, knowledge of rules we can always hire or purchase but the wisdom to use them is a second thing; so we see that there has not been a judicious use of the rules as it transpired in January and February of this year.

The result, Mr. Speaker, was that the government never at any time allowed the bells to ring for the two weeks that was written into the agreement. In fact, after seven days they threw up their hands and announced that they could no longer govern or they were being obstructed by the opposition. Nothing, Sir, could be further from the truth. The opposition was only using the rules of this Assembly, the forms of proceeding that were agreed to by this government some few, short months earlier; so if there was any breaking of the rules, it was done by the government, not by the opposition.

We come back again to that statement of the Honourable Attorney-General when he said, "if we don't agree that there's a problem, then we may not agree on a solution."

Mr. Speaker, this constant refusal of the government to recognize the facts in the case is to me, to their detriment, because to be honest in this Assembly, I think, is one of the foremost attributes of any politician, and for them to refuse to be honest, to say that the legislation was frustrated for the wrong reasons, I suggest, Sir, is not being intellectually honest with the people.

As a result of that, we find that a meeting was held to change the rules. This is by our rules expert. We will change the rules because we will get our own way, regardless, so we're having a report from a Rules Committee, even though there is no consensus and we're going to move in this Session to change the rules.

I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that is the wrong way to proceed. I urge the members to take some time in sombre reflection on what they are doing. I refer the honourable members to the House of Commons where they, some two or three years ago, evidenced the ringing of the bells in that House. Again, in that particular case, I believe the public of Canada agreed that the opposition was correct in using every means available to try and persuade the government to break down a piece of legislation, that, in the form they presented, was totally unacceptable.

As a result, the government did change their mind and the bells rang for several days; and the House of Commons has not seen fit to move yet to put any limit on the ringing of the bells. They have been told, urged by the Speaker, who has, in the opinion of some, been placed in an untenable position, but the whole thing is not being rushed into. It will be dealt with after you've

had some time to sit down and think about it and to assess what is transpiring in the House at the present time.

We have seen no evidence in the last two years of a repetition of the bell ringing in Ottawa. We've seen no evidence of that, Sir, and maybe that might well be because the government has seen fit to bring in proper legislation, has not tried to ram through something that was unpopular or controversial, so we see that it is unnecessary to change the rules. At least, up to this point in time, they have not changed the rules and they were into this thing two years before we were, Mr. Speaker, but this present Government House Leader is insisting that we change the rules now, that we rush right out and change the rules.

I suggest - in fact, he already knows, Mr. Speaker, that if we did that, if we followed his advice and did exactly what he wanted us to do, that the Attorney-General would now be working for a salary of \$1.00. That point was very well raised by my colleague, the Member for Pembina, so I won't deal with it to any further degree.

HON. A. ANSTETT: That's not true, Harry, that's not true.

MR. H. GRAHAM: The honourable member says it's not true, but the honourable member . . .

HON. A. ANSTETT: The Whips consult with the Speaker. That's what's in the proposal. You know that.

MR. H. GRAHAM: That's right. The Speaker had no authority in this particular case.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Of course he does. Read your rule book, Harry.

MR. H. GRAHAM: We were in committee.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Right. Who's got authority in committee?

MR. H. GRAHAM: And if the Speaker is not here? What do you do when the Speaker is not in the Chair and he's not in the building and you've got 15 minutes? What are you going to do? What are you going to do if the Speaker could not be found. The Speaker doesn't have to be in the Chair. You're in Committee of Supply. The honourable member just shakes his head and smiles.

Mr. Speaker, I just point out that some of the problems that could occur he has not thought about yet. We have seen one that arose. There may be others, and the only reason I raise the issue is to point out to the Government House Leader the need for sombre, second thought and reflection.

There is another thing, Mr. Speaker, that in this Assembly when we have changed rules in the past, we have quite often, in fact, in most cases I believe, brought in proposals for rule changes and they were purely proposals but, by mutual consent, we tried them out and there was always a trial period. When we did that, then probably at a later date, they did become the rules of the Assembly.

I have seen no evidence - in fact, there is nothing - in any of these Hansards that we have had on the Rules Committee, that this member, this Government House Leader has given any indication whatsoever that this would be a trial period. He has said nothing about it being a trial period. He has given no indication whatsoever; he has said, we will try - yes, we will try consensus - but on our terms. Now that is consensus, Mr. Speaker, a one-way street.

Mr. Speaker, the member may know something about the rules, but he knows very little about dealing with people. He knows very little about how to protect his own respectability because, Mr. Speaker, the way the present Government House Leader is going he will not be gaining the respect of this Assembly. I doubt if he will be gaining the respect of the people of Manitoba, and Springfield constituency can make up their own mind when the next election is here.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot at this point in time agree that this report, ill-conceived as it may be, should ever go to the Committee of the Whole for discussion by the House and, if found favourable by the weight of government authority, pass and become the rules of this House.

I plead with the Honourable Government House Leader to withdraw it, take it back to committee and see if there is some other thing that he can do that might make it more palatable. At the present time, Mr. Speaker, it is not acceptable to me and I would urge all Members of this Assembly to do a little reflection on this and think carefully about what you're doing because what you're doing is going to have significant impact on those few members on that side who will come back after the next election.

So, Mr. Speaker, I close by saying that I cannot support the movement of this report to the Committee of the Whole at this time. I think the report should go back to committee, have them take another look at it, see if there are some weaknesses, if there are some places that it can be changed.

You note, Mr. Speaker, I have not made any mention of constitutional points which other members have raised. I have tried to stay away from the points that other members have raised in this debate because I think that their contributions should be considered very carefully as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I thank the House of the indulgence of their time, and I hope that members will take seriously the few remarks that I've been able to make at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm a relatively new member of this House, being able to participate in a Legislature or Parliament of this country, and I have had since I was a wee child a tremendous amount of respect for our parliamentary system. I was brought up with a great amount of respect for the system. It was encouraged in my home - perhaps it wasn't in the Member for Sturgeon Creek's home, I don't know. In my home it was encouraged. My parents took me through the Parliament Buildings of Ottawa when I was about nine or 10 years old so that I could see Parliament in practice, so I could see what

Parliament meant to the people of this country so that I could understand a little bit and gain some respect for the institution of Parliament.

Soon thereafter, when I was about 14 years of age, I was very keen to follow in my brother's footsteps of participating in Older Boys' Parliaments at that time, and I was very proud to have participated in pushing change of policies so they became a Youth Parliament with boys and girls participating in the democratic process to learn more about what democracy means. There was no flagrant disrespect for the rules of that Chamber, of those Youth Parliaments, and I was to about seven of them I believe in the various years that I participated in it. I rose to virtually all the different levels in it to the highest level, which was the Speaker, and in that it inculcated in me even more a respect for the parliamentary process.

It is odd that we had the Manitoba Day. Just last Saturday was Manitoba Day. Manitoba is 114 years old, 1870-1984, 114 years. When Sir John A. Macdonald and the Parliament of Canada established this province, did they establish this province for it to be hamstrung in its operations by an opposition, by an opposition who disagreed with something? For them to be able to destroy the parliamentary system that democracy relies on and what democracy has been built on throughout the world around the examples . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. D. SCOTT: . . . of what democracy means, and here we have interjections from our Opposition House Leader who is supposed to have some respect for it and he's one of the loudest members in this House. He seldom shows his respect for the House.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition has continually referred in their comments thus far that we will be changing a rule, that we will be somehow hamstringing the ability of the opposition to present our arguments to this House. Mr. Speaker, that is absolute nonsense.

What we have, as proposed by members opposition, by following precedence that they have established in this House - this House has a precedent now - we have a rule that says when the bells ring it's to call members in. They, through their misconduct, through their disrespect for our parliamentary system, have taken the bells as a signal to get up and to leave, to run away from. — (Interjection) — The Member for Lakeside says it's their belief in democracy. Well, the belief in democracy - the people elected you to come to this Chamber, to debate in this Chamber, to present your opinions in this Chamber and to vote in this Chamber, not to run outside in the hallways, not to run away from your responsibilities as elected members of this Legislature.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Order please.

The Honourable Member for Lakeside will have the same opportunity to participate in the debate as any other member.

MR. H. ENNS: Alas, I already have, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. D. SCOTT: Alas, I shall refer to some of your comments.

Mr. Speaker, you have requested some direction from this House so that you, in exercise of your duties as Speaker of this Assembly, can better interpret what the needs of the Assembly are through a precedent established by the rules of this House, so that it is not resting upon your shoulders and your shoulders alone as to whether or not there shall be a vote.

We have had after the fiasco here earlier this year, and it can be considered nothing other than a fiasco, following some 11 times this past Session, this previous Session, when the opposition rang the bells for over six hours, 11 times, irresponsibly ringing the bells and running. Several of those times they rang them until the hour of adjournment, most of them actually ran to the hour of adjournment. It was up to the government to bring back the proposals the following day.

They have tried and they have attempted to say that they rang the bells to protect the people of Manitoba when actually what we were trying to do was protect individual's rights in this province to communicate with the Province of Manitoba in the language of their choice. That is now before the courts. But the sad part is that they rang the bells over trying to limit the bell ringing to two hours in this Chamber. That's what most of the bell ringing was about last Session, not what they try to refer to it as, not what they called them. — (Interjection) — Yes, they called them the "bells of freedom."

Once again I say and reiterate to the members opposite that their interpretation of the bells of freedom and the freedom bells is the same thing as Orwell's Big Brother, in Orwell's 1984 book, when he refers to ignorance of strength. That goes along with ringing those bells - ignorance of strength, freedom of slavery, that's what they want. Freedom is the opposition to hold up, to destroy the parliamentary process, that's what they are saying that's what freedom is. That's what they are saying freedom is.

If anything, they should know from the experience that this world has gone through in this century. In this century when we have had Parliaments, democratically elected Parliaments, overthrown by tactics such as those suggested by the members opposite to destroy the parliamentary process to, in effect, cause a great amount of disrespect for Parliament in the process because when you destroy the public impression of the value of Parliament, you destroy democracy. You should have learned that from the German experience; you should have learned that from the Italian experience in the 1930s; you should have learned that from the Spanish example. You should know that from the example in Chile just in 1973. You should know that in all dictatorships where they have overthrown democratically elected governments by building up a disrespect and a lack of confidence in the parliamentary process. I hope that is not your goals. I hope to heavens that is not your goals.

Mr. Speaker, last year we had the opposition saying, and I understand this is when the previous House Leader was in, he made the reference that they would never would be so irresponsible as to ring bells unlimitedly,

that they would never be so irresponsible as to ring bells for anything approaching two weeks, that there was no need for any kind of a limit on bells because the opposition would never be so irresponsible to ring the bells indefinitely.

That is what the Member for Turtle Mountain, I understand, inferred or told our Government House Leader at the time, the Honourable Attorney-General, when they were in negotiations to try and bring to a close the adjournment of the Session of last summer. That is where the Member for Turtle Mountain was dead wrong because his party, the Progressive Conservative Party in this province, which is a right-wing . . . of the Conservative Party in the whole country, but they lacked to have any respect for the parliament, that he could not trust them obviously when he said that they would never allow the bells to have rung that far.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition House Leader, in his comments last week, made reference that the public would not understand what we are doing by bringing in a limit on bells, that the public would not understand that somehow or other there was not anything in our rules previously that stated that the opposition could ring bells indefinitely and walk out, that that was an omission of direction in our rules of this Legislature that permitted them to pick up and to walk and to castrate Parliament.

What we are trying to do with this is to close off that so ever-dangerous precedent that they established in the past year. He is saying the public will not understand that. Well, who is going to go out to the public and tell them differently? Who is going to go out to the public and tell the public that some future government is going to try and ram something down their throats that they don't like?

A MEMBER: I will, I will.

MR. D. SCOTT: You will. That's it. You see, the opposition, Mr. Speaker, in that is declaring already that they will go out and obfuscate this whole issue by trying to tell the people of Manitoba that this government has some intention of forcing upon Manitobans something that is not good and proper for the Province of Manitoba. I would be more afraid, quite frankly, of them doing that.

But even if they did do that, in our parliamentary process, if you have any respect for the parliamentary process, you have respect for the electorate; and if that electorate disavows itself of the principles established by that party when they are in office; and the government, they shall turn them out. There is no room for plebiscites in the British parliamentary system; you should know that. That is not a part of our British parliamentary system of having plebiscites especially on areas of civil rights or human rights. There is no precedent for that in our system of government.

A MEMBER: Why did he change the act to allow plebiscites?

MR. D. SCOTT: When we changed that act, Mr. Speaker, we never suspected that any city government, that any opposition, that any municipality would be so

low as to use a referendum process to try and raise a public frenzy up on an issue to take away people's civil rights or to take away people's human rights.

Human rights and civil rights in this country, in our parliamentary system, from 1215 up, have never been accomplished by plebiscites. They have been accomplished by responsible parliamentarians going out, in most instances, ahead of the opposition and saying it is right, it is proper that our society move in this direction; and successive elections have proven them to be right in that in the successive elections those governments have in most instances been re-elected; and that is the process of democracy, is going to the public every so many years to get a confirmation and a support for the government that is in office, or a rejection of it and its policies.

The only government recently that had that happen, and overwhelmingly, was the government when they were in office and the public, in 1981, turfed them out of office on November 17th of '81, the first time that any government in this province's history has even been turned out after one term of office. We are seeing well why they were turfed out now when the kind of attitudes that they are exercising in this House as opposition still, with their backs up against the wall, that they have this inferiority or superiority complex when they make references to us as not being of the proper kind to govern, of not the proper backgrounds to govern. Or when they have a member last week standing up in a committee room and making references to the black people of South Africa and saying that they are free, that they can go wherever they want, that there was no prejudice there, they can go on buses.

Well, for God's sakes, open your eyes as a party. Discipline members who come out and make racial statements like that. That is the sort of thing that maybe they would like to see; the government of South Africa, perhaps they wish to implement some of the policies you opposition has in mind, but this party shall never have any part of that.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are continually playing games in this Legislature. They are playing games with the essence of Parliament itself, and Parliament is far beyond games. Somehow or other, they can lower things to games and they can then go out to the public and try to misinterpret the intentions of their intentions, or the intentions of the government, in particular, to try and mislead the public as to what is actually the intention of the government and what is actually happening.

We have now precedents in this House, we have precedents in the House of Commons in Ottawa regarding bell ringing. If I could quote, Mr. Speaker, from a ruling from Mme. Speaker Sauve, the present Governor-General of this country, when she said, following the episode of bell ringing a couple years ago in the House of Commons, that, and I quote, "I merely point out that there is a problem. In the meantime, the Chair will continue to be vulnerable until the House provides it with guidelines which would lead to settled practices regarding those very difficult and highly controversial questions where the rules and practices appear to be less than satisfactory."

She was referring to the bell-ringing episode in Ottawa. She followed, Mr. Speaker, concluding her statement by saying: "It is my hope that such a situation

will never occur in this House. However, should it occur again, the Chair, unless it is provided with firm guidelines, would need to consider its course of action with great care under the new circumstances, the new circumstances being that there has been a precedent set. I trust that in the overriding interest of the honourable institution, this House will take steps to make known its will as to how the Chair should act before any such situation arises again." Unfortunately, that House did not, and they had more bell ringing just this past year.

We have, Mr. Speaker Francis, in this same ruling, and he was quoting Mme. Speaker Sauve, but he made reference specifically to the Manitoba situation as well as the situation in the House of Commons when he said on March 30th of this year, and I quote, "Let us understand the implications of allowing the bells to ring indefinitely. When taken to an extreme . . ." - Mr. Speaker, I repeat that again - "When taken to an extreme, the practice can paralyze parliament completely."

"We have seen in Manitoba," he goes on, "how the government was forced into proroguing the Legislature because of an indefinite bell that was used by the opposition to prevent a vote in an important government matter." Mr. Speaker Francis further says, "Do we in this House of Commons really want to enshrine this device permanently in our practices?"

Do we in this House, in the Legislature of Manitoba, do we want to enshrine this device of bell ringing, of parliamentary castration indefinitely? For if we do not act in this Legislature to correct that, we now have precedence and we shall not be able to correct it. We shall not be able to correct it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker Francis finished off that day of March 30, 1984 - and it's interesting that this was after the Manitoba incident again - after it had taken place, he reiterated in his concluding statement - I will quote once again - "Until the House comes to grips with this problem, it will remain a constant threat to the efficiency of the House and the security of the Chair. I suggest the credibility of the parliamentary institution is at stake. I believe we have a duty to protect it."

Mr. Speaker, that once again is the critical element. We in the NDP, through Stanley Knowles in Ottawa, through, more recently, Ian Deans in Ottawa and Bill Blaikie in Ottawa, have been working to protect the parliamentary institution. We in this Chamber are doing the same thing to protect the institution of Parliament. We understand, through all of their talk that the opposition has, that they're supposed to cherish the parliamentary institution very highly. Well, how can they at the same time talk about the supremacy of Parliament when they at the same time open it up to be destroyed? That we open it up and talk about the credibility of the parliamentary institution being at stake, as Mr. Speaker Francis, did that they want through a loophole that they have created in the laws, in the Rules of this Chamber, to expand that, to use that at anytime, so that an opposition, so that a minority in any Legislature of this country can hold the government and the people of the day up to ransom.

That is what they want to do, Mr. Speaker.

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. D. SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, I have a quote, from the radio, of Premier Richard Hatfield - not an NDPer, sometimes he acts like a very progressive Conservative, a very progressive Conservative, far more progressive than the Conservatives in this House you could certainly say - and on February 28th, that he hoped that the precedent established in this Legislature would never become a precedent in other Legislatures in Canada.

We have seen how other Legislatures in Canada have reacted to it even since our fiasco in this House led by the members of the opposition by walking out of this House and frustrating Parliament to the ultimate. We've had Prince Edward Island, on March 24th, 1984 adopted a five-minute limit on bells. We had other members refer to other Legislatures across this country: an eight-minute limit on bells in Alberta; B.C. - no more than five minutes; New Brunswick, no more than five minutes; Newfoundland no more than 10 minutes; Nova Scotia, a reasonable length of time and in no event longer than one hour.

Once again after the episodes here in Manitoba, we had in Quebec, given the power to the Speaker when the Speaker has considered sufficient time to turn off the bells that the Speaker shall order the bells turned off. That was just on March 13th of this year.

So we have other Parliaments reacting to a situation caused by a precedent where the rules were not sufficiently explanatory as to the true intent of the rules to call members in, not to send them out. You didn't understand them at all, that's your trouble. The opposition did not understand the rules at all. They took the rules and they tried to twist the rules around and say they said something totally opposite to what they said. In other jurisdictions of this country, the Parliaments . . .

SOME HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. D. SCOTT: . . . of other Legislatures in this country are reacting on it. The Speaker of the House of Commons is pleading with the House of Commons to act upon it and we have the members opposite here say, no, we want to broaden it. We want to have bellringing at any time, we want the opposition to be able to hold up using their dictatorial powers to hold up this Legislature.

This institution of Parliament, Mr. Speaker, is far greater than any of us. Far greater than any of us, far greater than any of our little personal peeves, far greater than any of our political ambitions. I'm glad the members opposite appreciate that, that this institution that we serve and that we have a duty to protect is far greater than any of us and any of our thoughts and ideas or any of our political ambitions — (Interjection) — Well, you're not with me on that one, the Member for Lakeside. He's not with me at all on that, because he wants to continue a process where Parliament can be frustrated at any time. That is not respect for Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Sherman made reference to the special circumstances. Well, I say, the Parliament is supreme,

that there are no special circumstances where you can disrupt to the point of dissolution of Parliament. You can disrupt when you have sufficient members to be able to defeat a government on a motion of confidence, you can disrupt and go back to the people and ask the people to decide. You do not disrupt by frustrating Parliament, by using not even a filibuster, at least in a filibuster people are speaking, people are talking.

That's what they're doing on this issue right now. It's been before the House for a whole week and we haven't even got referred to committee because they're filibustering by once speaking, by only one person a day speaking and then adjourning the debate. That's what they're trying to do. Their exercise so far in this motion to refer the report of the committee to the Committee of the Whole, they are showing that the opposition had delaying tactics. They want, in addition to the traditional tactics which they are using right now to try and delay this issue, to try and push it off so the government will be maybe forced to use closure. This is what they really hope. It is what they really want to see. Are they then going to ring the bells indefinitely on the bell limit? They've already done it once. Look how often they rang the bells last Session - for 263 hours straight on an issue of bells. Will they do it again? Will they do it again? — (Interjection) — How the sweet the sound, the Member for Lakeside says, how sweet the sound of the bells? Well to me the bells are not a sweet sound when they are used to frustrate and to castrate Parliament. They are a sweet sound when members opposite and members of elected Legislatures in this country respond to them and come in to do their elected duty and to vote.

We have had many references, Mr. Speaker, to the issue of Autopac in the Autopac debate. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some references to the Leader of the Opposition back in those days, the Honourable Sidney Spivak, and he in a radio interview which I taped and then had typed out, said that the bell-ringing episode in Manitoba was, and I quote, "an awful period for us in the history of Manitoba," an awful period. This is their former leader, the one that they kicked out, the one that they tossed out and look what they got in his place, and he's gone again already. The one decent leader they had, they threw him out.

Peter Gzowski, the CBC commentator, the host of the program, asked Sid Spivak if there was any justification for the practice of ringing bells. As you know, far better than I, Sid is not a person that usually says yes and no to answers. He usually talks around answers like many politicians do. In this instance, he said flat one word, no; no, there was no justification for the conduct of the Conservatives of this Legislature.

If I could quote again from this, referring to Conservatives, he said, "They had an opportunity to here to do a number of things. They can certainly present an argument against the position as far as the resolution is concerned. That's what an opposition is there to do, but it did not have to be done in this atmosphere and they did not have to create or heighten the atmosphere or intensity of it by their actions. There is just no need for this." A very emphatic statement.

A little later in the interview he said, "There was an opportunity with the change in leadership for Gary Filmon to take a look at the national scene, to follow an example of their national leader Brian Mulroney.

What he should have done is allowed a free vote by the Conservatives." Now he challenged us to a free vote. We responded and said, yes, let's have it right now and then all of a sudden he backed off and no way they wanted a free vote, no way they wanted a free vote on this. I don't know if he was afraid of any of the members opposite bolting from the ranks - I'm sure he was.

I know the Member for Fort Garry at one time told me he was ashamed of some of the conduct and some of the presentations that were being made to committees when he wanted to get off the committee. He told me that personally once, but what do we have? What do we have now? He's taken a more stringent line; he's taken a line stronger than Sterling Lyon on the issue.

Sid Spivak, further on says, "The role of the opposition is to prevent every position that is possibly presented, if they oppose it, but recognizing democracy is to work in our parliamentary system, at that point having expressed the opposition, a vote takes place and a majority of the House rules."

He made direct reference to the Autopac debate. He said, "This is not the only example referring to the current debate or debate of last spring. This is not the only example in which there has been an intense feeling on the matter that has been important as far as affecting Manitobans. I refer back to Autopac debate, going back several years, when the NDP came in power, when Ed Schreyer was Premier of this Province and when they had a minority government and they introduced the Autopac legislation. The feeling at that time was as intense as it is today," Mr. Spivak stated.

He went on to say, "It did not have this racist overtone," and I'll repeat that for the members opposite for their benefit once again. "It did not have this racist overtone and I say that because it does have a racist overtone, without question," without question, he said, Mr. Spivak, of the racist overtone of the opposition's conduct.

He talked about over 100 presentations at the Legislative Committee on the Autopac hearings, the tremendous opposition that there was, even of two former Liberals voting with the NDP at the time, one of them crossing the House, who I'm very pleased is still on this side of the House and presents our position and adds greatly to our party.

He then goes on to say that, "The feelings were intense and they went on for weeks. No matter what took place at that time, there was nothing that took place that was destructive of the parliamentary system. Ultimately, it came down to a final vote and the government was able to get the majority, and it passed. Notwithstanding the intense feelings, the process itself wasn't fussed up because of what took place and there wasn't intent to block whole proceedings and, in fact, to incite the kind of hatred that is developing now." Close of quote from Mr. Sidney Spivak.

That is his reaction to the Member for Minnedosa, to all the members in the opposition benches, who he shared the opposition benches with at one point in time before he kicked them out, one of the more honourable members that this House has seen, and certainly one of the more honourable members that the opposition has had in this House and far more honourable than any members they have there presently.

We have had members of the opposition expressing concern and talking about the constitutional amendments being special amendments. What they want to put in, in this rule that we discussed in Rules Committee, their proposal was to have unlimited bell ringing on constitutional amendments. If we had unlimited bell ringing on constitutional amendments, the opposition, no matter what it be of Manitoba, could stop a constitutional amendment of the whole country. Now what kind of dictatorial powers is that, when you give an opposition in one particular Legislature, and it's the only one in the country that wants it. Let that be very clearly understood. It's the only opposition in this whole country that wants a dictatorial power to stop a constitutional change, be it in their own province or in the country as a whole.

To change the amending formula you must have the concurrence of all the governments in the land. The opposition here wants that to be changed and their proposal is anti-constitutional. I think that if someone challenged our rule in the courts, it would probably be thrown out of court. The court would perhaps overrule the legitimacy of a law of this Legislature, which is a very unusual thing for a court to overrule the process of a Legislature; but a Legislature cannot pass an act that is anti-constitutional. We should know that from the 1890 bill, that a Legislature cannot pass a bill, cannot introduce a process which goes against the Constitution of this country. It's already been thrown out.

Now we have the opposition proposing exactly that same thing again and I can't understand why they do it, because they already passed another bill which is before the courts now which I'd be surprised if they don't rule that's non-constitutional as well. So, if there's anything about the rule of Parliament, the law of Parliament, and within that a provision for the role of the opposition, it is to recognize the responsible role of an opposition.

If I could quote from our Government House Leader back on January 23rd, in a presentation to this House when he talked about oppositions and co-operation, quoting from Mr. Charles Robert, on Page 50, of the Journal of Society of Clerks at the Table, when he stated that, "Co-operation can exist only when there is mutual understanding of the role to be played by the government and by the opposition. This, in turn, is founded on a recognition that the transaction of public business must be secured in an orderly manner while, at the same time, acknowledging the right of the minority to be heard."

The minority has numerous ways to be heard. They have not found ways before. Why have they never used bells before 1980 in this country?

A MEMBER: Because we had a responsible government that didn't bring in the kind of garbage that you brought in. They didn't affront the people of Manitoba the way you did.

MR. D. SCOTT: Mr. Speaker, because they didn't know that loophole existed. They had a respect for Parliament back then. They didn't have a precedent beforehand. They didn't have a precedent beforehand that they could act upon to ring the bells indefinitely. Erik Nielsen hadn't invented this new law for them, hadn't invented this

way to frustrate Parliament, to kill the parliamentary process. They just copied old Erik Nielsen, that's all that they have used, and any Parliament that uses that process; and if it's Blakeney and the NDP in Saskatchewan, I'll condemn them here and I'll condemn them in Saskatchewan for using bells. I just did. Have I heard any of you? I haven't heard you condemn your colleague for his comments about the blacks in South Africa being free. We haven't heard any condemnation from you on points of principle. No, these are all little family disputes that are supposed to be settled within the family. Well, your family is a bunch of independent fiefdoms that doesn't know where the heck it's going, with no kind of co-ordinated approach to this House.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition in this House and on this issue of bells has backed itself into a corner and that is why it is barking like a mad dog who's backed himself foolishly into a corner. Most dogs aren't that foolish to get themselves into a corner. They try to get out of corners, but when they're in corners, they growl, they snap, they flash their teeth and that's what we have here. That's right; that's what we have, is an opposition trying to make an issue out of a non-issue, trying to get themselves out of a box that they have gotten themselves into. They've boxed themselves into that corner.

The Honourable Minister of Health is a former boxer, knows that when you're in a corner, you've got to get out, that when you're up against the ropes in the corner you have to get yourself out, and you have to fight your way out; so that is what they're trying to do, is fight their way out of a corner by arguing a total unacceptable and anti-parliamentary position. They want to get out of the corner. If they have any respect for Parliament, they want to get out of the corner and I think they have a respect for Parliament. At least I used to think the Conservative Party had a respect for Parliament. I don't know how much respect they have any more, but they certainly were at one time, under John Diefenbaker, they were a party that had a great respect for Parliament.

Now they're a party where, in Ottawa at least, their leader doesn't even have enough respect to attend Parliament. He's hardly ever there, a tremendous change around from the days when John Diefenbaker, who was more of a populist than he was a Conservative.

A MEMBER: John was a fine, honourable man.

MR. D. SCOTT: That's what I'm saying, is that John was a fine and honourable man and too bad some of you didn't follow the traditions that he established.

The rules we have in this House, Mr. Speaker, are for the protection of Parliament. That's what rules are all about, is a protection of Parliament and you do not get a protection of that institution, of Parliament, when you have members opposite trying to create, out of a lack of clear definition in the rules, for the actual intent and the instruction, the instructional nature, and rules are instructional; and that is why, Mr. Speaker, in this Chamber, felt that there was not sufficient instruction for him to act to shut the bells off when they were ringing earlier. That's what rules are for.

Rules are there to give instructions and when the instructions are not clear enough, as Madame Sauve

urged, as Mr. Speaker Fox observed, as Mr. Speaker Francis from Ottawa, as he has observed and as I quoted earlier, is a request that the rules be clarified so that there is not that question of ambiguity, the ambiguity of ambiguousness of the rules itself. They want clear direction so that the Speaker is not put in a position where he must choose sides, so the Speaker is not in a position where he could be accused, not that he ever would, but that he could be accused of showing a favour to one side or another in this House. That's a very dangerous position for any Speaker to be in because a Speaker must be respected equally by both sides of the House.

I would plead with the members opposite to stop their filibuster on this issue, to stop standing up and adjourning debate every day without having hardly spoken or just after one person has spoken. We've had it before us a whole week, and it's just a motion to refer to get it to committee. Then we'll have a debate, but I fear that they want to put up 23 speakers, and then they want to put up another 23 speakers next time around. — (Interjection) — Well, my imagination, I hope it is only my imagination. I hope it is only my imagination and if you want - now they're threatening us to use closure again. I see the Member for Kirkfield Park is saying we want to use closure again. Well, we have no intention and no wish to use closure on this issue. Why? Well, all we know is from past practice when you have called for us to use closure in this House before we've used it.

In the last Session of this House the Member for Minnedosa has told us if we had any guts we'd bring in closure. Is that what you're telling us again now that to move this on that we have to bring in closure to get you people on your feet to debate an issue? Or do you want to put up 45 days of debate in this House on whether or not we're going to have the rules changed? Because that's the road that you're leading down now. I don't think it's too late for you to turn around. You were in a relatively untenable position of, if you agree with the rules change, you say we were wrong last year. We shouldn't have been ringing the bells, that we were abusing Parliament.

The sooner you admit that, the sooner you agree towards the acceptance of a rules change - it's not even a rules change, the rule always intended to do this, just the clarification is needed to give that instruction. It's not too late for the Conservatives to give up their tactics, to turn around and to once again restore the faith of Parliament that their party has been famous for in past years, that their party has been famous for and let them give up these tactics that they are doing right now. Let them show the people of Manitoba that they have a respect for the institution of Parliament.

Let them stand right now, Mr. Speaker, and vote in this matter and let us move it on to committee instead of delaying it any further. We've had more than enough debate.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER, P. EYLER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: I tremble with fear. I wonder, could I have leave now from the Honourable Member for

Inkster and the House to move, seconded by the Member for Kirkfield Park, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Acting Government House Leader.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I move that we now go into Committee of Supply.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Opposition House Leader.

MR. H. ENNS: This is to the Acting House Leader. I believe there's a disposition to dispense with Private Members' Hour this afternoon. In that event, as has been the case, the House will adjourn at 5:30 p.m.

HANSARD CORRECTION

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell on a point of order.

MR. W. MCKENZIE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Page 616 of Hansard on the right-hand column, it's got, alleged to my statement, .2 million; it should be 2.9 million.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the assumption then that there will be no Private Members' Hour today, it is moved by the Minister of Health, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for River East in the Chair for the Department of Education; and the Honourable Member for Burrows in the Chair for the Department of Municipal Affairs.

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY — MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

MR. CHAIRMAN, C. Santos: The committee will please come to order. We are in the process of considering Municipal Assessments, Item No. 4.(a) Salaries and 4.(b) Other Expenditures - the Member for Virten.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, last night we noticed that in assessment there appears to be an increasing number of appeals every year to the Court of Revision on assessment and I think we established that most of the grounds for the appeal was mainly on the farm dwelling, because of the move by the department to send letters to - oh no, it's not because of letters that are being sent out.

Well then, Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can ask the Minister a very simple question: I understand that some ratepayers throughout the province, when an assessment is being done, do receive letters asking

them for information as to whether or not their income would place them in a position where their farm dwelling was not exempt from taxation. Is that correct?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The Assessment Branch, where it believes that an individual does have income from off-farm sources, will send a letter to that individual asking them if they are still eligible for the exemption. I believe honourable members have seen and I believe we have tabled in the past copies of the letter that is used. Mr. Chairman, the letter is not sent to all ratepayers, although momentarily last night I thought the honourable member was suggesting that it should be, I'm not sure that would be desirable. The letter, that was sent that members raised a question about in the House earlier this Session, related exclusively to oil royalties and was sent out to, I believe, something in the neighbourhood of 164 ratepayers in five or six municipalities, which would be a very small percentage, but would be those who are specifically identified as in receipt of oil royalties, not necessarily compensation payments, but royalties themselves I believe. I stand to be corrected on that. I believe those were strictly royalties, but there was also a question related to compensation.

So the incidence of the sending of letters requesting income information is not high in terms of a percentage of the total number of properties assessed. What has occasioned the increase in appeals with regard to the assessment of farm dwellings has been changing economic circumstance.

Honourable members will appreciate that when that provision was first introduced in the legislation over half a century ago that there was no such thing as a pension at age 65, that the opportunities for employment off the farm and participation of farm spouses in off-farm employment opportunities was somewhat limited. The opportunities for income from off-farm part-time employment was less extensive. So in fact in the last 10 to 15 years the opportunities for off-farm income, the entry of farm wives into the labour market has occasioned the opportunity to have sources of off-farm income that were not available even 20 years ago, let alone 50 years ago. I think that's the first factor that has to be born in mind. Total income to the farm sector from all sources has structurally changed in a very dramatic way in the last 20 to 25 years.

I think the second factor is the reassessment program and the fact that our assessors are aware of that structural change and have started the last 10 years or so to ask those questions. As they ask those questions and as they get positive responses to off-farm income and then require the income information to be provided, they find that they are classing fewer and fewer farmers as being eligible for the exemption. This leads to the appeals through Court of Revision, which lead to the percentage change upwards in the number of appeals that relate to the farm dwelling exemption. So it's a long-term thing that's developed over time, that's related to some structural changes in the labour market, farm incomes and also in the way the reassessment program has picked up on this structural change.

So, I wouldn't suggest that there has been any policy change or administrative change in the department.

Other than that, as these things are found, they are acted upon and the department is following the guidelines provided in Sections 30(1) and 30(2).

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I believe the Minister indicated there were some 164 letters sent out and that dealt only with oil royalties. I also believe that there were some 300 appeals in the Rural Municipality of Ritchot.

Could the Minister indicate how many oil royalty appeals or how many farmers in the Rural Municipality of Ritchot would have revenue from oil royalties?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I don't believe that any farmers would have income from oil royalty on property they owned in the R.M. of Ritchot. There may be farmers in the R.M. of Ritchot who have oil wells in other parts of the country or the province though.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister indicate whether letters were sent to any of the ratepayers in the Rural Municipality of Ritchot requesting information on their income?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Yes, certainly, Mr. Chairman. Letters are sent to any ratepayer who on reassessment either indicates, or for other reasons the assessor has reason to believe that that ratepayer may have off-farm sources of income. I used the example of the oil royalty income because I knew the member had been interested in that by virtue of the question he had asked in the House, and I provided the member with the statistics on letters sent in those five or six municipalities, but I did not mean to suggest, and I would not want the member to think for a moment that that's the only source of off-farm income. In fact, I thought I made it quite clear that there are many other sources.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Well, Mr. Chairman, could the Minister indicate what basis the department uses and what information they use to decide who to send a letter to?

HON. A. ANSTETT: A certain amount of judgment is involved in determining whether or not the assessor believes or has received information that an individual has off-farm income. If the individual is home when the assessor calls, and we usually try to ensure that the assessor does a reassessment with the ratepayer or homeowner at home, that question is usually asked. The local ratepayer usually provides that information as to whether or not they have farm income. I received a letter recently from an individual who complained that his dwelling had been reassessed and he stated right in the letter that he didn't believe that his dwelling should lose its exemption. The next line was I told that darn assessor when he called that I haven't made money on this farm for 50 years and I've always had to have a job off the farm and that's why I think I should keep my exemption. Clearly, the understanding of how the system works and the rules in the system is somewhat lacking in those cases.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, does the department act on information that they receive from private individuals?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Yes, Mr. Chairman, that is one source of information - information received from private individuals.

MR. H. GRAHAM: On another question somewhat related, Mr. Chairman, if a person's dwelling is assessed, is that assessed for one year only?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, when an individual has provided the information to the assessor, or to the Court of Revision, that indicates that individual is either entitled or not entitled to the exemption, that matter can be reopened at any time if there is a change of circumstance. But once the exemption is granted, it stands until there is a change in circumstance or the assessor or the local council has reason at Court of Revision to change that, and that can be appealed either by the assessor or by the local individual, or it gets picked up on a reassessment some years hence. Certainly, when information is provided, that is verified and checked with the ratepayer using the procedures that have been outlined for the committee.

MR. H. GRAHAM: The basis for that information, it's that on just one-year's activities, or does it take an average of the last five, or what is the basis that is used?

HON. A. ANSTETT: When the assessor examines income information, he uses the immediate preceding year.

MR. H. GRAHAM: It's only the immediate preceding year?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, yes, the courts have determined under Section 30(1) and 30(2) that will be the basis on which qualification for the exemption will be considered.

I am given to understand that some discretion is on occasion applied by some local councils that may technically be outside of that established judicial precedent.

MR. H. GRAHAM: When the department decides to assess a person's farm dwelling as being taxable, and I imagine the person is so notified, and at the same time does the department provide information to the farmer that if at any time his income off the farm is less than his farm income he should appeal his assessment? Does the department give them that notice as well?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, did the member ask if his income on the farm is less than his off-farm income or the reverse?

MR. H. GRAHAM: I asked the Minister if the department, in saying that a person's dwelling is now taxable because of his off-farm income, do they also notify the ratepayer that in future years his off-farm income is less than his farm income that he should appeal his assessment at that time?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, the notice provides, the notice to the individual who - and I think we should

for the record understand what the notice is. It's not a notice that the individual's dwelling is taxable. It is a notice that the individual is not entitled to the exemption, not going around the province taxing farm dwellings. What we are doing is determining who is eligible for an exemption. It is that exemption that is provided for in the act. All real property is taxable, I think that's the first thing that should be understood.

When the notice goes out, the individual is advised whether or not they are entitled to the exemption and the notice also provides information on the mechanism for appeal, and the notice provides that that assessment notice applies to that specific tax year. The next year there is another notice which may or may not be different from the one received the previous year based upon information which the ratepayer provides to the assessor. The ratepayer then can go to Court of Revision and has vested appeal rights from Court of Revision as well.

MR. H. GRAHAM: The Minister said that the following year he may receive another notice. Is that correct?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, if there is no change in the assessment or the classification of exemption that the ratepayer has with respect to his or her real property, then there is no subsequent notice. There is a tax bill which shows exempt property and taxable property on the tax bill.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I'm not really concerned except I think that there should be some effort put forward to try and advise people of their rights. I would think that it might be a good move on the part of the Assessment Branch, especially when we're talking about have our "mad days" and we're trying to establish a dialogue, and basically I think what I'm saying, trying to establish a feeling of confidence in the part of ratepayers in the fairness of the assessment practice. I'm just asking the Minister if it probably wouldn't be a wise move when notice is sent to a farmer advising him that his buildings will be taxed unless he provides information to prove that his income off the farm is less than his on-farm income, would it not be also prudent to advise them that this we are doing at this time, but if next year your off-farm income is less than you should then appeal your assessment and have the injustice rectified?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Member for Virden for that suggestion. I think it's an excellent one. The idea of providing as much information as possible to ratepayers about the assessment process, about their rights in Court of Revision. The advertising that councils do every year certainly isn't the kind of advertising and information because of the public notice character of those ads in the classified sections, the weekly newspapers, to really inform local ratepayers and the whole public information campaign. The series of brochures that I announced last night, when I introduced my Estimates, could be well-served by inclusion of the kind of information the honourable member suggests. I have not seen final drafts of the scripts for the brochures, but if that information is not already included I will ensure that a recommendation

to ratepayers, who may be entitled to exemptions in subsequent years, is made to them to pursue those exemptions if they become eligible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a) - the Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask the Minister if he will be spending any time updating municipal people during the regional meetings that will be held in June with respect to the assessment reform? What state is it at?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I did give a brief review of the status of assessment reform to the municipal seminar at the beginning of March. Some progress has been made since then. I will be giving them an update on that at the regional meetings in June and hopefully we'll have for them if not final copies, samples of the information brochures so they'll have an update in terms of not only what's happening internally but also on the public information campaign that we'll be launching this year.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister could also indicate whether he has the opportunity to meet with the Municipal Advisory Board recently to update them as well regarding the state of where the assessment reform is at.

HON. A. ANSTETT: No, Mr. Chairman, I met with the executive of both municipal associations, however, in March and in April. I had an opportunity to brief them rather than just brief the members of the board. So I perhaps did one better - met with the full executive of the UMM and then was also able to give briefing to the MAUM executive when they had their annual meeting with Cabinet. I advised them on the status of assessment reform.

MR. D. GOURLAY: I believe the Minister indicated that the provincial assessor would be attending a meeting in Toronto in about a week's time with respect to - was that computerization or with respect to assessment from Eastern Canada? I wonder if you could just clarify that.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, actually the provincial assessor was going to be taking a brief personal trip. I imposed on him and asked him to tie together with that trip a visit to officials in Toronto with whom I had met early in April. He's agreed to that and has scheduled those meetings. They will be discussing the equalized assessment formula, the factoring that's used for that formula, computerized assessment in Ontario, basically those angles of the system there that impact directly on the kind of assessment reform recommended by the Weir committee here.

MR. D. GOURLAY: At the outset, the Minister indicated that the provincial assessor would be retiring sometime in the coming year and I'm wondering, in view of the fact that the assessment reform is under way and requires the expertise of the best possible people we can get, does the Minister have any role to maintain this expertise after the provincial assessor retires? I understand he'll be retiring in the next couple of months or so.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not too long after assuming responsibility for this portfolio my Deputy Minister said to me, "You know, we're going to lose the key person in assessment reform when Jake Reimer retires next spring." Then, luckily Jake decided to stick around till, I think, it's the end of August and during that time some discussions had been held on our being able to continue to take benefit of his expertise on some sort of perhaps consulting basis or whatever after his official retirement. We have an agreement on that and I'm sure members on both sides will welcome the continued expertise into the whole assessment reform process. I think members also appreciate that Mr. Reimer's commitment to provincial assessment in this province is such that he too wants to be part of assessment reform since he's waited so darn long for it.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Mr. Chairman, I'm pleased to hear that. I think Mr. Reimer has contributed a lot to the field of assessment and I don't think we can afford to lose that kind of expertise at this stage of the game in our whole assessment reform of changes. So I welcome that information the Minister has brought here today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a) - the Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, some time ago I asked the Minister in the House whether or not the compensation that is paid to a farmer for the loss of income because of oil activity on his land, in other words, surface rights compensation. In the original letter I believe that went out to 164, I think the intention was at that time, or it certainly left the impression that surface rights compensation would be considered as off-farm income. Has there been a clarification by the department on that particular point?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the original intent was that royalty income would be considered off-farm income. I think there may have been confusion initially as to whether compensation for crop losses, compensation for loss of productive land in whatever way should be considered as potentially lost farm income much the same as crop insurance payments have over time come to be considered that way. The department has taken a broader view of that and consistent with past policies will be including that in the farm income category.

MR. H. GRAHAM: The compensation will be considered as farm income category, is that correct?

HON. A. ANSTETT: My understanding is that for all intents and purposes that has been the past practice, but I think some confusion arose over that because of the question of oil royalties.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a) - the Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, on a somewhat related matter, can I ask whether the property that is taken by oil sites, they may take an acre and a half or two acres for an oil site when they establish a well, whether

that loss of two acres is reduced from the farmer's total acreage for taxation purposes?

HON. A. ANSTETT: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. H. GRAHAM: So the area that is, say a farmer has 16 wells on a section of land, he could lose 30 to 35 acres in well sites, plus the various hydro lines and the roadways, the service roads that are so necessary to service the wells, and that is not reduced from his assessment? The land that he has lost is not reduced?

HON. A. ANSTETT: The Surface Rights Act passed by the Legislature specifically provides compensation which will be payable to the landowner shall take into consideration the municipal tax liability. So the member's question is asking that the farmer receive, in effect, consideration twice with regard to the same tax liability. I'm sure the honourable member wouldn't want us to do that.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister is misunderstanding. He's mixing apples and oranges.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Sorry.

MR. H. GRAHAM: The compensation that the farmer receives in surface rights legislation is for the loss of production that is caused by these various things. What I'm trying to get at is I believe we are finding that the same piece of property is being assessed and taxed twice, because I believe the oil companies, if they've got so many wells, pay so much, they are assessed on the property that they have the wells on, is that correct?

HON. A. ANSTETT: No, Mr. Chairman. That is not correct. The oil company pays on the real property they own. They do not pay on land in which they do not have an ownership. Their ownership is on mineral rights and they own the oil well or the pipeline and they pay only on that real property.

MR. H. GRAHAM: I thank the Minister for that clarification.

HON. A. ANSTETT: I would ask the honourable member, Mr. Chairman, does that then clarify that we're both talking about apples, we're both talking about the same thing then because I wouldn't want the impression left that anyone is paying twice or receiving compensation twice with respect to the same real property.

MR. H. GRAHAM: I was under the impression that there was in fact double taxation taking place.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Has that been clarified?

MR. H. GRAHAM: You have told me that it is not occurring.

Mr. Chairman, I have before me a list of the things that a farmer should include as farm income for determining his production from the farm and I notice it includes sale of vegetables, fruits, dairy products,

eggs, honey, breeding fees of farm livestock, sugar beets and straw. It does not apparently include hay. Is there an explanation or reason for that?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I would refer the honourable member to the decision of Judge Vern Simonsen, the case in Dauphin involving George Blake Lyle and - sorry, wrong one. It was a case heard in County Court in Dauphin within the last year, heard by Judge Vern Simonsen, in which he ruled that hay produced for sale would be included in farm income, and the assessment officials in the province will be taking that decision into consideration and including hay in the farm income in the future.

MR. H. GRAHAM: The list that is here listing sugar beets and straw should also include hay, then, is that correct?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I believe the honourable member has a letter which is probably about as old as the court decision. The court decision was within the last two months - I believe in the month of March - and certainly future lists of items of produce to be considered as farm income will include hay.

I would point out to the honourable member that all of these decisions tend to have a broadening effect on the interpretation of Section 30, which create even greater problems in the administration of the act and, for that reason, I can only emphasize that it is my hope, as was indicated by the Honourable Member for Swan River last night, that in the long term we address this by dealing with one of the recommendations in the Weir Report.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I raise the matter because I received a copy of a letter and I believe the Minister also received a copy from a constituent of mine from Miniota who, I believe, wrote a letter to the Honourable Attorney-General. I believe the Minister has a letter there from Mr. Dieter Schwanke, I believe, and he had raised the issue in his letter.

Is the Minister attempting to answer the questions that Mr. Schwanke has posed in his letter?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I am not familiar with the letter and I don't know the questions that were posed in the letter, and staff do not have either the letter or their response to the letter with them here today. If the honourable member has particular questions, though, please feel free to read them into the record and I will attempt to provide answers here today.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I think it may be an abuse of the committee's time to go into it. I received this and it says a copy to myself, to the Honourable Andy Anstett, to the Honourable Bill Uruski, to Grain News, Manitoba Co-operator and the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Minister of Justice.

I would hope that the Minister would answer, or maybe he might wait for the Attorney-General to answer it, because it is addressed to the Honourable Attorney-General, and I would hope that Mr. Schwanke does receive a reply to his inquiries.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the honourable member what the date of the letter is? That may explain why I have not yet . . .

MR. H. GRAHAM: May 7th.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, it may well be that I have not yet seen that across my desk. I would expect that if it deals strictly with assessment, the Attorney-General would refer it to my office for reply. I will ask staff to ensure the Honourable Member for Virden receives a copy of my reply to Mr. Schwanke, or of the Attorney-General's reply, when I receive it.

MR. H. GRAHAM: I am quite willing to give the Minister my letter.

HON. A. ANSTETT: I am sure you are, Harry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a) Municipal Assessments, Salaries—pass?

MR. H. GRAHAM: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: So far, we have dealt in assessment practically entirely with rural municipalities and have left untouched probably the No. 1 issue in assessment, and that is the problems that exist in the urban area.

I can tell the Honourable Minister that as a rural person, probably I'm not as familiar with all of the problems of the urban area as I should be, but I can assure the Minister that I have tried to understand some of the problems as they have been pointed out to me by various people.

There does seem to be some very large discrepancies in urban assessment that, as we pointed out earlier, the longer it remains unresolved the greater the problem is going to be and, in particular, I think it has its rather devastating effect on the downtown area; and, in particular, when you deal with residential areas, I think it affects adversely the people of the inner core and the older residential area of the city, people who - I don't have to tell the Minister, he knows from the results of the last election - these are basically people who have been supportive of his government and its causes. When you deal with land assessment only, and I am not talking about buildings, we find that areas in the downtown area, residential areas, are 5, 10, 15, even 20 times higher on land assessment than some of the more lavish areas of suburban Winnipeg.

We also find that in the business community those discrepancies are even more marked, and it was brought to my attention, for example, that the area, for instance Eaton's store, the land assessment of Eaton's store on Portage between Donald and Smith, or Donald and Hargrave, I guess, where the land assessment there is greater than that of the entire Polo Park Shopping Centre, plus the Unicity Shopping Centre, plus Grant Park Shopping Centre, plus St. Vital Shopping Centre.

Mr. Chairman, that does seem to be a little bit out of the ordinary, but it does point out that where one business place in the downtown area is paying more

land tax than some of their suburban stores, plus most of their competitors, and to operate in a climate like that where these people can only deal with a competitive value of their product to determine whether or not it is sold in the open market does place them at a serious disadvantage. I raise the point only to plead with the Minister to try and do everything possible to expedite the review of assessment so that we can try and alleviate some of the huge discrepancies that are occurring at the present time in the urban area.

I don't think that we will see the downtown development of the City of Winnipeg until we have a complete rationalization of the assessment system. I believe that the downtown area is assessed out of all rhyme and reason with the rest of the city, and until that is rectified I see little hope of downtown development taking place. Those problems are going to increase and we are now getting to the point where governments have become so concerned about it that they're not waiting for private enterprise to move into the field, and we're finding that it's only governments that can afford to establish in those areas. We see this with the North Portage Development; we see it with numerous other cases. I think you'll find that the Province of Manitoba itself has leased many many properties, has many leases in the downtown area, No. 1, because I think the rate is fairly competitive, but secondary, may be an overlying concern is to try and retard the decay of the downtown area.

So I raise this at this time because I believe that assessment, while it may not be the only point, is certainly a major point that has to be addressed and addressed as quickly as possible before we can ever hope to have any resurgence of growth and renewal of the downtown area in this city.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 4.(a) - Mr. Minister.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I find little I can quarrel with in the statements of the honourable member.

I think all of the statements he makes were true, and just as true, just as accurate five years ago, when the Weir Committee was established. I think the inequities, particularly as they relate to the downtown core of the City of Winnipeg, were a major impetus in the establishment of that committee. We are not capable at the present time of doing an analysis of the impact of those recommendations to determine how those problems can be remedied. We know several possible options for a solution and those are under examination.

I should point out to the honourable member that right now the city is dealing with some of those difficulties through their Board of Revision. It is currently considering some decisions flowing from the Supreme Court decision of last December, and those decisions and the information we get from them will be important background information for our analysis, and we're not prepared to make particular recommendations or specific changes in process until we have that information.

Furthermore, we have begun, as I mentioned last night, discussions with the city on computerization to ensure that we have a completely compatible system between the city and the province. We're looking at

uniform standards. The position of deputy city assessor is currently vacant and that's unfortunate in terms of the time frame, but we understand that will be filled as soon as possible and that will help expedite, as the member has requested, the kind of work that must be done and the kinds of impact analysis that must be done.

Certainly, the original green book analysis done 16 months ago by my department indicates that there will be fairly serious changes which will impact on certain classes of residents within the City of Winnipeg and also certain classes of commercial property. All of that has to be examined and assessed so that those changes can be made with the least possible disruption to achieve the ultimate goal of equity in local property taxation.

So I can't concur anymore than that with the honourable member. I think we agree that there's a problem, and I hope we also agree that the solution must be one that's fair and doesn't create more problems than it's trying to solve.

With regard to questions asked by honourable members, Mr. Chairman, last night, I think perhaps if we're almost done with this item it might be an appropriate time to provide some additional information to honourable members and provide to the Clerk for the Member for Virden who asked for data on appeals against assessments the last three years; I have actually four years, '80-81-82-83. The appeal figures are 3,044 in 1980; in '81 they dropped to 2,094, and then went back up to 2,580. So actually the highest year was 1980, the year immediately following the appointment of the Weir Committee. I suspect that the increased awareness of the appointment of the committee probably caused - and I make no reflection on the fact that year was won when the previous government was in office. I don't think that had anything to do with the number of appeals, it's a function of the system and the heightened awareness.

I would expect that members opposite will note a higher level of appeals for 1984 based upon our attempt to increase information about the system this year. So, Mr. Chairman, I would provide this to the Clerk for the Member for Virden.

Members also asked yesterday about Gimli Industrial Park, and Keewatin Community College and grants in lieu of taxes. We've got more copies of this for all members. I'll just go over the information very quickly, Mr. Chairman.

It indicates a drop from '82-83 in the grants in lieu of taxes, Mr. Chairman, for Gimli Industrial Park from 217,000 to 183. I point out to the honourable members - they'll see from the table - that the mill rate for general municipal purposes dropped 8.8, and the residential dropped 26, and the commercial dropped approximately 11.

Mr. Chairman, the reason for that is because of a dramatic increase in the total assessment, whereas the actual assessment for Gimli Industrial Park was not affected as much. I expect there was a fair amount of found assessment and the total mill rate required decreased fairly dramatically.

Basically, the same principle applies with regard to Keewatin Community College, that a reassessment produced a higher assessment for the whole municipality and the relative share of the government-

owned property with respect to the total tax load of the municipality dropped accordingly.

Mr. Chairman, the other piece of information I should provide to honourable members is just a reference to Section 28 of The Surface Rights Act, which specifically provides, in its heading, no duplicate compensation and deals directly with or indirectly with one of the matters raised by the honourable member with regard to compensation with regard to surface rights.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have provided information then requested by members last night. If there's any further queries, I'll be pleased to try to provide any further information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

What's the pleasure of committee?

4.(a) - the Member for Lakeside.

MR. H. ENNS: I haven't been attending all the sessions of this committee on the considerations of this department's Estimates, but I can't help but inject just briefly at this time to indicate to the Minister that his understanding and his agreeing with the position that is being put forward by my colleague about the seriousness of the assessment situation in the province is hardly enough.

I want to point out and put on the public record that he has an unique opportunity where there is obviously a willingness on the part of the opposition in the Manitoba Legislature, which also recognizes the severe problem that has not come about overnight, but has developed over a period of years, that it needs addressing.

I would like to challenge the Minister and his government to indeed bite the bullet on this one. It's fair for the Minister to come back and say, well what did we do while we were in office?

I remind the Honourable Minister that, of course, it's been the other side that's been government three times out of the last four times, and with that comes some responsibility.

This government has a great track record of being courageous in all kinds of things, particularly if they see a political value in it. They don't mind taking over private sector insurance business and sometimes they do it successfully with respect to automobile insurance; they're prepared to tackle such other elements within our social structure, but have shown a dismal lack of courage to tackle some of the fundamental problems facing the people of Manitoba.

On that score, I remind the Minister of the kind of courageous actions that past governments have done in the past. Certainly, the fundamental reform of the educational system that was undertaken in the mid '60s, throughout the '60s; whether it was the major decisions for flood protection that transpired during those years - dating back to previous administrations of the '50s, their courageous decision to bring about rural electrification at a time when government budgets were not anywhere near what we have today, but what I am trying to encourage the Minister into taking seriously and indeed the opportunity for the Minister to leave his mark during his relatively short period of public service that he will have to offer Manitobans; surely he wants to be remembered for something other

than bell ringing or constitutional amendments that were not that well received; and also put on the record in a most serious way, there was no question that the previous Conservative administration recognized the seriousness of this problem. They had for those very reasons set about, certainly in recent history in the province, the most intensive review process known as the Weir Assessment Review. It was not given our opportunity to bring about and to implement a number of the recommendations. I am not that naive politically or otherwise not to recognize that those kind of implementations are tough, the winners and losers in the shaking down the whole situation to where it makes more common sense, but the Minister has the wherewithal to bring about some of the needed changes.

What we're getting from him is stonewalling and what we're getting from him is a willingness to put off addressing this question and a preoccupation with all kinds and numbers of things that really, to quote the Premier, his Premier's expression ranks somewhere 57th or 58th in the list of priorities that they've occupied so much of this government's time. Whether you want to count it 7, or 8, or 9 months on language questions and other issues that do not really address the kind of structural changes that have to be made.

It's not very often that a Minister of Municipal Affairs comes into office, as indeed his predecessor had, with at least a blueprint of which - I'm not suggesting that carte blanche acceptance of the Weir Report was necessarily the answer or that we would have accepted it in that way, but nonetheless there was - unless I haven't heard from this Minister or indeed other government spokesman - that there isn't substantial value in the Weir Assessment Report for action to be taken in addressing some of the inequities that have developed in the assessment picture in Manitoba. It's not very often that a Minister or indeed a government walks into office just about the time that the report is completed and laid on their desk, and a government with a substantial majority should then have the courage to act on it.

I just put on the record, Mr. Chairman, that it seems to me that this Minister has frittered away valuable time on the issue that I think is of utmost importance. I think the Minister has had some difficulties in prioritizing his own responsibilities with respect to the government that he serves, really scoring Brownie points against the Opposition House Leader in the House or being able to debate fine points of orders in the House or to demonstrate that we taught you good when you were our employee as an Assistant Clerk of the Legislature. That shouldn't detract from the fact that you are first and foremost Minister of Municipal Affairs and there's problems in that department, not in the department, but in the major challenge that department faces. I've seen no evidence that the Minister is seriously addressing them.

Mr. Chairman, having put that on the record, certainly allow me to also put on the record, as it probably already has on the part of the opposition, that we certainly wish to acknowledge the many years of public service that Messrs. Reimer, Fulsher, who I understand is also taking retirement, have made to the people of Manitoba and on different occasions it's been our pleasure to be able to work with these gentlemen.

Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: I believe, in putting forward some comparisons for the Minister, I may have inadvertently left a wrong impression. I think I might have mentioned Polo Park Shopping Centre when, in fact, I meant Kildonan Place; so for the information of the committee, perhaps I should read into the record the actual figures that I received from the City of Winnipeg Assessment Branch and this information is a year old. It's from last April.

In the Unicity Shopping Mall, with 1,746,712 square feet of land, at 25 cents per square foot, there was a total of \$436,680 of tax.

For the Kildonan Place, with 1,527,649 square feet at 25 cents per square foot, a total of \$381,980.00.

The Grant Park Shopping Centre, with 1,383,901 square feet at 40 cents per square foot was \$552,120.00.

The St. Vital Shopping Centre, with 2,162,536 square feet at 25 cents a square foot, with a total tax of \$540,640.00.

That gave a total of \$1,911,420 of land tax on those four shopping malls, whereas Eaton's downtown store, with a total of 122,510 square feet paid a total of \$2,058,380 in land tax at a rate of approximately \$44 per square foot.

I put those figures on the record, Mr. Chairman, because I believe earlier I had mentioned Polo Park rather than Kildonan Place.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the correction of the Honourable Member for Virden. I understand and concur with him, that regardless of the actual data and whether the figures are 10 times or 20 times or 15 times out of whack, there is absolutely no question that the inequities exist and I think all members agree on that and I don't think we need to debate that any further.

I do, Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the Honourable Opposition House Leader who admitted at the beginning of his remarks that he'd missed part of the proceedings, want to fill him in on some things as quickly as possible that he did miss which might help provide some elucidation with regard to his remarks.

MR. H. ENNS: Don't filibuster your own Estimates. The first thing you've got to learn when you're government, the opposition has the last word. When you're government, you just sit and take it and get your Estimates passed. That was gratuitous advice that I don't charge for.

HON. A. ANSTETT: It's worth what I paid for it.

Mr. Chairman, the Member for Lakeside attacks this government for an abysmal lack of courage. — (Interjection) — Oh, but now from his seat, he says we've got courage in all the wrong places. Mr. Chairman, we could debate what the right places are but certainly the member's already backing off from any suggestion that there's an abysmal lack of courage.

When it comes to assessment reform, if there was a lack of courage anywhere, it was those who skated

it to the boards in 1979 instead of proceeding with reform. I think it's only fair to say that the opposition, had they won the election in November, 1981, would have been just as cautious as this government to ensure that any changes they implemented were a solution to the problem and did not compound the problem.

If the honourable member is saying that we are doing nothing, then he missed my remarks last evening. I think it's fair to point out that we've been proceeding apace, and my predecessor, the Minister of Government Services, started many of these things. We're continuing them and doing them aggressively. They include a public information campaign, computerization, increased staff commitment to computerization. We passed Bill 105 last year, providing for classification and portioning. Members opposite voted for that legislation.

We're moving on uniform standards; we've accelerated the farm dwelling assessment and out-building assessment program so it will be done in approximately 16 months; and I have stated repeatedly, and I think the commitment I announced yesterday and all of these steps indicate that it's certainly the No. 1 priority of the Department of Municipal Affairs.

I noted in the remarks of the Member for Lakeside that he differs slightly with the Member for Virten. I don't fault him for that, but I think what is important here is that members opposite would be the first to admit that they do not completely endorse every single recommendation in the Weir Report and that they would want us to examine the impact and be able to tell them and show them and the people of Manitoba what the impact would be before we implemented it. Mr. Chairman, that wouldn't be any different than Doug Campbell in rural electrification. He told people what it would cost. They planned where the lines would go; they acquired the easements. They held public information campaigns; they held public meetings all over the province. It was a very complex thing and a very expensive program and it was introduced, cost a lot of money, but it was introduced responsibly and it was introduced in such a way that people understood what was happening.

The Roblin Government, of which the Member for Lakeside was a member in its latter years, didn't go out and dig a ditch without first planning it and doing the engineering studies, knowing what the impact would be, knowing where they had to move homes, analyzing impact on water supplies, groundwater, everything else. The honourable member suggests that governments in the past have in some way moved more quickly. I would think that this government proposes to move just as prudently but at the same time just as aggressively as those governments that did very positive things that are monuments to progressive government action in the history of this province and I think assessment reform will be the same thing.

And, for the benefit of the Member for Lakeside, I expect to be around long enough to see it done and I do not have the same opinion that he does of the position of the electorate or the position of members opposite. I can only remind him that six months ago his federal counterparts looked much better than they do today and I can only remind him that the winds of change which he saw blowing last winter have been blowing from a different direction for the last several months. So his ambitions should not be clouded by desire for power.

Mr. Chairman, I think the other point he makes, and I take some personal umbrage at it, is the suggestion that because I had responsibility as Government House Leader for certain activities during the last six months, that in some way predicated neglect of assessment reform of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the problems that face that department. I noted he withdrew any reflection in that statement that might be implied on staff of the department and I'm glad he did because I have the utmost confidence in that staff.

But, Mr. Chairman, I must point out to the honourable member that if that's where he views priorities as being assessed in terms of responsibilities assigned, then I say that never in the history of this province in recent years has a lower priority been assigned to the Department of Municipal Affairs then it was assigned by the Lyon Government in 1977 when the Honourable Member for St. Norbert was named Minister of Municipal Affairs, but before Municipal Affairs came Attorney-General, Liquor Commission, Government House Leader, Urban Affairs.

Mr. Chairman, for the honourable member to suggest that there has in any way been any neglect or any movement from a No. 1 priority to see assessment reform proceed in this province by this Minister on the basis that this Minister has a dual responsibility is to forget very recent history.

So, Mr. Chairman, I reject that out of hand. I reiterate, as I did yesterday, this is a No. 1 priority of my department. We have been moving aggressively on it. We have more activities to show in the last few months than have occurred in the past in terms of assessment reform and those activities are proceeding apace and we're beginning to see results. Now, certainly I would like them to proceed faster, but at the same time members opposite would be the first to criticize me if I couldn't tell them what the impact of any specific change would be. The Member for Swan River would be the first to say: but if you make that change, what will happen on the ground? And if I couldn't tell you, I would feel that I wasn't doing my job properly. I think that's a fair question. I think it's also fair of you to allow me the time to be able to do the analysis to provide you with the answer.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Municipal Assessments, 4.(a) Salaries—pass. Municipal Assessment 4.(b) Other Expenditures—pass.

Resolution 115: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,977,100 for Municipal Affairs Municipal Assessments for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1985—pass.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, just before we pass that, I believe there was one question that I wanted to ask the Minister, dealing with assessment. I think it's in a breakdown that he gave us yesterday afternoon dealing with, I believe it was automobiles. I noticed there was a significant increase, even though there was a decrease in staff, there was a significant increase in automobiles for the Assessment Branch. Does that mean that this will be a one-year only increase, are all their cars coming due at one time, or what is the reason for it?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, the honourable member will find that this occurs in all departments

where there are fleet vehicles in use. There is full cost recovery of depreciation now for the first year, whereas up to this point, the cost recovery did not include depreciation. So that's a charge back to Government Services and members will see a reciprocal amount in the Government Services accounts.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 5.(a) Municipal Services - Salaries. 5.(b) Other Expenditures.

5.(a) Municipal Services - Salaries—pass. 5.(b) Other Expenditures—pass. 116 - the Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Municipal Services is the area where Roy Fulsher had served the department and I just want to put on the record the best wishes to Roy in his retirement and the members on this side certainly appreciate the dedicated work that he performed for the Department of Municipal Affairs.

HON. A. ANSTETT: I'd like to thank the Member for Swan River and members opposite for those best wishes. I will ensure that they are conveyed to Mr. Fulsher, both immediately and on his retirement.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 116: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,357,500 for Municipal Affairs Municipal Services for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1985—pass.

6.(a), 6.(b) Municipal Planning Services. Salaries; Other Expenditures - the Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister give us an update on the progress of the grand planning scheme for the Province of Manitoba and the whole planning concept that has gone into planning districts and so forth?

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, there is no grand planning scheme for the Province of Manitoba but there are provincial land use guidelines and there is a system of formation of planning districts. The member could consult Page 3-31, which will provide a summary in map form of the location of all planning districts that have been formed to date. The status of planning programs in planning districts is summarized on Pages 332, 333, 334, 335, 336 and 337. Basically, it's a complete summary of the status as to whether or not it's in the planning scheme stage, basic planning statement, development plan, or already finalized rezoning by-law.

The summary data is that there are 20 planning districts formed in the province now, involving 57 municipalities; so we have made excellent progress in the last eight years since the legislation first came into effect.

As well, there is some planning going on in remote northern communities involving half a dozen of those communities as listed on Page 348.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Those planning districts that have been set up now, has there been any glowing reports that have been extremely favourable, or are they still in the formative, tentative status?

HON. A. ANSTETT: I think, generally, the reports received have been favourable, but certainly there have

been areas of the province where the planning process has not been well-explained and not been well understood, particularly of the zoning by-law stage. I think there is room for improvement in communication to the public at the local level in some of the planning stages, but generally as the plan develops with good communication, we get very very excellent response and the commitment of local officials at the municipal level to planning is one that has impressed me a great deal.

During the month of March, I attended a planning district's meeting in Morden and the attitude of local elected officials to the need for planning and to the whole planning process and their co-operation with the department has really been exemplary. It's the kind of thing that was envisaged when the legislation was enacted in '76, and I am pleased to say that real progress is being made.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(a) Municipal Planning Services - the Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: I believe it was indicated yesterday that there were two or three positions that were discontinued in this - was it this area? I wonder if the Minister could explain what positions they were.

HON. A. ANSTETT: There were two drafting positions here in Winnipeg that were determined to be redundant because of the amalgamation of the planning and assessment drafting functions. We have amalgamated them here centrally to avoid duplication and it's allowed some increased efficiencies. Those two persons, it is our hope, will be redeployed shortly.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 6.(a) Salaries—pass; 6.(b) Other Expenditures—pass.

Resolution No. 117: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,843,000 for Municipal Affairs, Municipal Planning Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1985—pass.

7.(a) Provincial Planning, Salaries, 7.(b) Other Expenditures - the Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Does the Minister sit on the PLUC committee as chairman or vice-chairman?

HON. A. ANSTETT: The chairman of PLUC is the Honourable Minister of Agriculture. I have been a member of PLUC since my appointment to Municipal Affairs.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Can the Minister indicate whether there will be any policy changes to the provincial land use policy this current Session?

HON. A. ANSTETT: There have not been to date, and I don't anticipate any changes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, that just prompts me to ask one question. I can go home resting, assured and peaceful, that agricultural land will still be continued to be preserved for agricultural purposes wherever possible, is that correct?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to imply that there have been no minor changes in the application of the guidelines, but the overall policies have in no way been changed. They were first developed under the Schreyer administration, implemented and passed into regulation by the Lyon administration, and continued without change in terms of the overall guidelines. As minor changes are made, those changes are always made with a view to further protecting our agricultural land resource base. Not only can the member go home assured and sleep well at night, but he can rest assured that over the next 20 years this government will continue to protect that land base.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 7.(a) Provincial Planning, Salaries—pass; 7.(b) Other Expenditures—pass.

Resolution No. 118: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$354,100 for Municipal Affairs, Provincial Planning, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1985—pass.

8.(a)(1), 8.(a)(2) Expenditures Related to Capital Assets - Capital Grants: Main Street Manitoba, Urban Transit Bus Purchases - the Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Yes, I wonder if the Minister can indicate how much of the \$1.5 million that was allocated for the Main Street Manitoba Program actually flowed during the year.

MR. H. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order while the Minister is seeking that information . . .

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

MR. H. ENNS: . . . I believe there is a disposition that you, Sir, would agree that we could probably conclude the consideration of Estimates for this department if you chose to call it 5:29 for the next few moments.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is up to the committee.
Mr. Minister.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I am prepared not to notice the clock.

Mr. Chairman, the actual cash flow of Main Street Manitoba in 1983-84 appears on Page 3-7 - \$461,024.00. There has been authority to carry forward approximately \$890,000 for cash flow this year. For the member's information, I anticipate that we will have some difficulty with the total amount appropriated this year because of that carry forward and because of the forward commitment of funds for the current year. So, although the cash flow did not occur last year, we are now at the stage where the program, because of its popularity, involves close to 60 municipalities in total at various stages and we expect an amount of activity well in excess of the appropriated funds for this year and may well be in excess of those funds, plus the carryover.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Just to clarify my mind on the flow of funds to the municipality, when a project is approved,

how do the municipalities obtain their money? Is there some advance payments or just how does that work?

HON. A. ANSTETT: There are progress payments based upon the construction activity that reflect that activity with a hold-back provision on final completion.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Then when the project is completed, is there final inspection by municipal staff, and approval to pay out the final funds to the municipality?

HON. A. ANSTETT: That's correct.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, probably on a technical point. I believe the Minister indicated there was an \$890,000 unexpended authority that was being carried forward. How does that occur? I thought all authority lapsed on the 31st of March?

HON. A. ANSTETT: There were contractual commitments in the year before, funds which didn't flow under those contracts, so we have authority to pay those funds out of this year's funds, and to commit those additional funds against '85-86, but I expect that I will be approaching Treasury Board and Cabinet, if necessary, to examine whether or not all that money will flow during the current year. We may have to still examine that, I can't give a firm estimate on that. The program has proven more popular than even the expectations of the Minister, who was known as Main Street Pete.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Swan River.

MR. D. GOURLAY: Have any municipalities to date, that are involved in the program, completed their projects and have been paid out completely?

HON. A. ANSTETT: I presented the final cheque to the Village of Erickson about three weeks ago. There are other projects in progress with agreements in place and progress payments being made, and I'll be signing the final agreement for Morden on Thursday of this week.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Capital Grants: Main Street Manitoba 8.(a)(1)—pass; 8.(a)(2) Urban Transit Bus Purchases—pass.

Resolution 119: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,650,000 for Municipal Affairs expenditures related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1985—pass.

Going back to Minister's Salary, Item 1(a) - the Member for Virden.

MR. H. GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, when we get back to the Minister's Salary and the closing remarks, I think it's only fair to note that assessment is our No. 1 problem. We have to look at the way the public will perceive our moves in that direction. I think it is a matter of some concern on the part of the people of

the province to note with some regret that Mr. Reimer is retiring and we certainly wish him well in his retirement, but when we find that the key person, the head of the Assessment Branch of the province, is retiring when the program is just in the growth stage, and we also find that the position of the key assessor in the City of Winnipeg is presently vacant, there has to be some concern, because we do urge that assessments proceed, or the complete review of assessment proceed as quickly as possible.

So, we're caught in a position where maybe some of the words of the Weir Commission should be considered when Mr. Weir suggested that in the Computer Program outside help should be used. I would suggest to the Minister that while he'll be starting with a new deputy and a new head of assessment, and the city - I don't know what their program is at the present time, whether they want to appoint an assessor knowing full well that it would be a short-term period - I would urge the Minister if he feels it is necessary to seek outside assistance, because it's so important that this program proceed as quickly as possible.

We view the whole process as being essential for the revitalization of the downtown core in the City of Winnipeg, for fairness and equity to exist throughout the entire province. We realize that this Minister has only held the office for a very short period of time. I was awfully tempted to follow the traditional movement on the Minister's Salary.

So, Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Swan River, that the Minister's Salary be paid.

MR. CHAIRMAN: 1.(a)—pass.
Mr. Minister.

HON. A. ANSTETT: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank honourable members opposite for the way the Estimates have been expedited, for their comments, for their suggestions. I appreciate that members feel that assessment is the No. 1 problem facing my department; I hope they will recognize that we have also made it our No. 1 priority.

I thank honourable members for their participation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 112: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$965,300 for Municipal Affairs, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1985—pass.

SUPPLY - EDUCATION

MR. CHAIRMAN, P. EYLER: Committee, come to order. We are considering the Estimates of the Department of Education, Item 3.(a) School Grants and Other Assistance - the Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, unless the Minister was going to make a statement, I will begin. As I made reference during question period, I would like to thank her for the format of this breakout which her department has provided. Maybe this is a statement that has been

provided to the education critic in other years, I don't know, but if it hasn't been this is obviously the first time I have seen it. I appreciate what it does because I think it will provide the base that will expedite discussion now, anytime that the Minister makes an announcement regarding any grant, because it places together the large picture of this massive area of spending.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to use the statement that was provided to me by the department and ask some specific questions. However, I would just like to make some general comments to begin and then I'll let other members in opposition make a few comments of their own.

Mr. Chairman, we will be asking some specific questions as to the total expenditures of school divisions throughout Manitoba. As the numbers in these tables here indicate, by way of the Education Support Program, some \$520 million will be directed to public education by way of that program. But I will be interested to know a little later on specifically how many school divisions have had to increase, firstly, their special levies. I would imagine quite a number have not had to, but I would be interested in knowing specifically how many have had to. Secondly, I would be interested in knowing whether the levies, the support levy which is fixed I believe at 43.7 mills on farm and residential, and 81.7 on other balance, whether those two figures will bring in the same amount of tax dollars, or whether in fact there have been some changes in assessment that would have the government receiving a larger revenue take as would be their case under this program.

Mr. Chairman, I would also be devoting a fair amount of time to the support that has been offered to the private schools. I think at this time there is a member that has asked that he be able to speak specifically to this issue and I would invite him then to make his comments now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I notice that the Minister indirectly announced today that there would be an increase in the amount of support for private and parochial schools. I say indirectly because the Member for Morris, who must be the Deputy Minister of Education, made the announcement on behalf of the government — (Interjection) — well, I didn't get it either. The Member for Roblin-Russell and I are just old pros from the mid-60s, but the official critic and the Minister were both aware of the fact and now the rest of us have followed suit.

I notice that the Minister is not banging the drum or trumpeting the fact that this action has been taken, so I don't know whether she is embarrassed by providing additional support or embarrassed, either by giving too much or too little. It's uncertain, from the peculiar manner in which the announcement has come to the Chamber, and I notice that the Minister of Health is here and I'm sure that he had an opportunity to make his views known as he has in the last 25 years, for more aid, because that has been his consistent position and his entire political life has been, in part, devoted to that proposal; so I note, Mr. Chairman, that an

additional amount will be provided for private and parochial schools.

Mr. Chairman, I find that a peculiar position for this Minister and this government to take, because of the fact that for the past 50 years the CCF and the NDP has, in effect, opposed aid to private and parochial schools, and all of a sudden, a year ago, the Minister announced to the Assembly that there would be a 10 percent increase; and when I say this was announced to the Assembly, Mr. Chairman, I mean the Assembly, because caucus members and party members were taken aback and taken by surprise. This was a Cabinet decision and a government decision, but one which had no involvement on the part of caucus and no involvement in terms of the New Democratic Party.

I am surprised that the Minister would bring in a change on something that is as fundamental a question as that without having the support of the Annual Convention. I don't believe the Minister went to her political party convention and announced her intention to do this. I have an impression that the government is simply acting on its own, with or without support, as they have done on other issues and hoping that the party rank and file will then fall into line. I don't know whether that's a good way to operate, but some day the government may turn around and find out that nobody's standing behind them, neither the public nor the party and that would indeed be a shocking state of affairs.

My concern is this, Mr. Chairman, that once the question of aid is opened up, because for many decades there was no direct aid to private and parochial schools in the province. I recall quite clearly, because I was a teacher at the time when Duff Roblin introduced shared services. That was a compromise that was hammered out on a difficult issue by the Roblin Government and then the Conservatives under Sterling Lyon decided that they would provide direct aid and I note, Mr. Chairman, and I believe I'm correct in saying that there was no discussion whatsoever in the election of 1977 about aid to private and parochial schools.

There was debate in the House in the '70s on the question and we all remember that, those of us like the Member for Roblin-Russell and the Minister of Health, among others. We remember that debate well, but all of a sudden the Lyon Government came in and they decided, at some point, Keith Cosens, being the Minister of Education, to provide aid. I say that question should have been discussed; it was a fundamental question. It should have been discussed in an election or should have been widely discussed in public before there was such an action taken, but it wasn't; and then the Government of Howard Pawley came in, and now, a year ago, the Minister announced a 10 percent increase without the knowledge and support of her own caucus and her own party and I would say, Mr. Chairman, of most of the people of this province. Now, in a peculiar fashion today, the Minister indicates, as opposed to announces, that there is in fact aid going to be increased on this question.

There's a couple of problems here. One is, once this question is opened up, then it becomes a case of the two major parties attempting to outbid each other. Just as within the New Democratic Party, it is felt in some quarters - not in all, but in some quarters - that if you're for a higher minimum wage, you're better than

somebody who is for a lower minimum wage, so that if you want 50 cents added to the minimum wage, you're only half as good as somebody who wants \$1 added or \$2 added or \$3 added. They are stronger supporters of labour. They believe more in the trade union movement and in the dignity of labour.

Mr. Chairman, my concern here is we appear to be in a system now where, without public support, the political parties are going to start looking for votes by enriching aid to private and parochial schools in the hope of garnering the support of people who, for one reason or another, wish, choose, can't afford, desire, believe, want to send their children to an alternative school system; and I don't want to get into all the pros and cons of the issue at this time, other than to say that it is the responsibility of the government to support the public school system. That is their responsibility and we know that not everybody supports that system or not everyone wishes to send their children to that system, because they don't believe it's disciplined enough or good enough or teaches enough ethical content and so on; and then we always have heard, and I think this is the case since the 1890s that, unless there is more support given, the schools will close and the children will come into the public school system and the schools will disappear.

I don't know for sure. The Minister could enlighten us on this question, but my impression is there are more private schools, more parochial schools today than for many decades, if not in Manitoba history, and I'd like to hear some numbers forthcoming on that because I know there are lot of little ones starting up. Maybe the larger ones are finding it difficult, but I know there are a lot of small schools in small towns, somebody's basement, somebody's building, somebody's home, somebody's barn, some empty school, starting up to continue on.

Mr. Chairman, my concern is this, I believe the public school system is under attack from a number of areas and there are demands on the public school system, all kinds of demands, and some people want it to go in a certain direction, some want it in others, some want everything taught in the public schools. Some want new courses; some want less History and English and more Computer Science, some want a lot of French, some want some of the money to go for the support of private and parochial schools and the public school system is always caught in the middle and the Minister's always caught in the middle.

When we get the curriculum, I'll try to deal with some of the curriculum suggestions about history should be taught from this perspective and not from that perspective; and of course, whoever is speaking wants their view of history taught and sometimes someone else is excluded. I simply say that on this particular question, I find it curious indeed that now we have two political parties, the two major parties in Manitoba suddenly both advocating increased support for private and parochial schools, but none of them talking about it at election time.

I think if the Conservatives or the New Democrats are going to promote this concept and channel funds or siphon funds, whatever you like, from the public school system into private and parochial schools that I want them to talk about this at election time. I don't want this slipped in or snuck in or done in between

elections. I think this should be with an airing and a free debate. — (Interjection) — It's a hot issue in your constituency, yes. Well, it probably is in some ridings, but in terms of most ridings, I don't hear any discussion, and in terms of the Conservatives taking a stand on this or the New Democrats, that hasn't been true in any of the last elections.

It's a hot issue, it's a historic issue and my concern is that the government is contradicting its own political philosophy, and I'm familiar with that philosophy, so are members opposite and so are members on this side of the House. They know that it is not a policy, it is not a plank, it's not part of the New Democratic platform to support this, yet the government is moving in this direction and that is something that concerns, I think, not only members of the party but members of the public. It appears to be another attempt by the government to look for votes. I'll use this in quotation marks, Mr. Chairman: "to buy votes, to bribe people with their own money, to offer to people who believe in something more money, of course, in the hope that they will then support the government regardless of the conviction of the people in government. Give them what they want. So you look then for where you can pick up votes and then you tailor your policies to different groups."

We've seen the Minister of Cultural Affairs do this. He runs around and waves \$50,000 cheques at meetings. He had a meeting here not too long ago with a couple of hundred people from the ethnic community and he waved two \$50,000 cheques before them, and then made a speech on the merits of the French Language position of the government.

Mr. Speaker, the government is looking desperately for votes and they are contradicting themselves at every turn. I was in the House when we raked the Conservatives on the amount of money they spent on advertising, raked them time and time again with fire.

Now the government is spending more money on advertising on new projects, on the Budget never done before, on the Jobs Fund, never heard of before and all sorts of other things. The government is contradicting its heritage and it's using the public purse to promote the position of the New Democratic administration.

I say that's a very slippery game, Mr. Chairman, because if they're going to betray their old supporters and they're going to ignore all that background. I think Tommy Douglas was one who used to say, "we see far because we stand on the shoulders of giants." Meaning that Tommy Douglas didn't start the CCF, Howard Pawley didn't start the NDP; what happens is that many people for decades built up a party and a movement and a philosophy and then along comes the latest group and they presumably add to it and continue on in the tradition.

What the Minister is doing and what her government is doing is that they are turning their backs on their own supporters and looking for new groups, looking for new supporters who have no ties with their political party and their political philosophy because of their desperation to get re-elected.

Now any government wants to be re-elected, any government feels some desperation when they feel that the ship is sinking. But I simply say, Mr. Speaker, that this is not the way to go about it, and the Minister will not only have to answer to me, who is only one person

in this House, but she's going to have to go to her own constituency, to her own party and to the people of Manitoba and tell them that she believes in aid to private and parochial schools and run on that platform in the next election. Unless the government is willing to come out in public and make a clear stand and a clear statement, then I think that they are going to get into a great deal of hot water, because all they're doing at the moment is adding a little more and a little more and a little more.

The Member for Morris is encouraging them in that direction and I say that both major parties should make a clear statement and should debate this at their conventions; but in particular, should put this in their plank at the next provincial election and go to the people on that basis and then we'll see what the people of Manitoba think.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I want you to note that I am not in my usual seat for obvious reasons, but I would like to take part in this debate.

I'd like to take part in this debate to refute some of the statements . . .

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

MR. R. DOERN: I would like very much to hear what the Minister says, but it is not the custom of this House to go into other seats to make speeches. That is simply not acceptable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I recognize the point that the Member for Elmwood is making, however, it is practice in this House for a Minister on the second row to present his or her Estimates from a seat in the first row. If in this particular case the Minister is occupying another person's seat who wishes to speak, I see no reason why the Minister whose seat is being occupied cannot speak from another seat.

The Honourable Minister of Health.

MR. R. DOERN: On a point of order. Are you then saying that . . .

HON. L. DESJARDINS: He's saying that I'm not in my seat . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, if I may, Sir, and I know the member is speaking from his seat, but I would like to say that it was a decision in this House, and I think if it was checked back that during committee if a member or Minister who is not in his seat for reasons that are obvious, that if they were allowed to speak from a position in committee. I think if the Honourable Member for Elmwood would check he will find that is the case, but he's in his seat now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to refute some of the statements made by the honourable member who just finished speaking. It's odd to me and it's hard to understand how a former teacher and a would-be historian tries to maneuver history and his recollection of facts to suit himself. Now he's talked about this business of changing things, of trying to buy votes, which is the most ridiculous thing that I have ever heard coming from this member after what he has done these last few months of being the great defender of majorities. So that's going to be taken with a grain of salt and the only member that's talking about principle, who then joined the Cabinet, the Cabinet of Mr. Schreyer when he was the Premier, after the Premier stated that he was going to bring something in as far as he was concerned about private schools. He joined this knowing very well that was the intention of the Premier of the Day, but he joined this Cabinet, he wasn't too worried about it at this time. — (Interjection) — I let you speak and you spoke a long time, so just keep quiet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please, order please.

HON. L. DESJARDINS: And then somebody was talking about changing his mind. I remember my honourable friend who came in, I think it was 1963 or 1964 when there was a guest historian who came in to speak and give his point of view on the French issue and Mr. Doern they said, who was reportedly a great historian, was incensed because the member had dared mention that this was not understood and the French had no rights according to the Constitution at all.

The statement of Mr. Doern at the time was that if that is his understanding of history, he has convinced me more than ever now to be the defender of the French-Canadian and I'll endeavour to get all the members of my party to support the French-Canadian from that time on.

So you know, you have to take with a grain of salt what has been said today. My honourable friend saying that this was not discussed in caucus. He hasn't been a member of caucus for a number of months now, so I don't know how he can state that these things were not discussed in caucus.

Now, to refresh his memory, there has been discussion on the aid to private schools for a number of years now. In fact, that was the principal - he's right in that instance - reason why I entered politics in 1959 following the McFarlane Report on education, and in those days that was before the quiet revolution in Quebec, and before the separation of the language issue and the religion, and the French teaching was also done only in private schools. In those days, you had to hide your books when the inspector came if you had any French books or anything like that. We're talking about the time when they had French as a subject, not as a teaching language, as a subject taught only from Grade 7 on, that's about the time that I entered politics here.

I might say also that one of the main reasons why I supported the Schreyer Government and left the Liberal Party, there were two main reasons, I think that I don't have to convince anybody on the French issue, when I see that my would-be Leader of the time, what

has happened to him since then and the former Premier Campbell also, I think that now the situation is quite clear why I couldn't live with that party. The second part was the commitment of this party to do something about the private schools. It wasn't only the Conservative, yes. There was something that was brought in, shared services. My honourable friend very conveniently forgets that in this time when he was in Cabinet also, that many agreements were signed between the Minister of Education in the different schools, we bent over backwards, and the instruction of the day at the time - I can certainly say it now - was that anything goes. That is why the Conservatives when there was a change of government, why the Conservatives said we're going to do same thing. They didn't increase the funds, but they said let's make it legal, if we're going to have it let's make it legal. That was his friend, the former Member for Inkster was saying also that it wasn't legal.

Now, he's taken this party to task for his support of private schools. Now, if a party believes in freedom of the individual, of parental rights in education, and equal opportunity for all students, what else can they do? When you're talking about freedom, when you're talking about fair play, I think that the people here and the parents have a right to choose the kind of education that they want. It is not up to Mr. Doern or the Member for Elmwood to choose the kind of education my children are going to have. This is not something that I'm ready to turn over to him or anybody else. Yes, the government, any government has a responsibility for the public schools, and, I think that the Minister of Education has shown that she's certainly taken that very responsibly.

Now, as far as I'm concerned - I'll be very clear - I think that anybody, any student is entitled to the same amount of money, not a percentage. I know that could be acceptable, but, in principle, I think that there is such a thing as parental rights in education, and I'll defend that anywhere, anyplace, and even more so than that is equal opportunity for the students. You might have a youngster who doesn't even want to go to a private school, whose parents are saying that's where you're going to go, and that's possible. Now, he will be deprived because of the big difference between the grants that are going from one school to the other and he might get inferior teaching, and so on.

I'm not arguing the value as such of the private schools. I'm not even sure that I would send my children to a private school, but I'm arguing that the responsibility is to the parents, and there should be equality between the two.

Now, as I say, the story, it's unfortunate. The Honourable Member for Elmwood talked about the public schools caught in the middle, that's also a joke. Who is caught in the middle, it is the parents of students that are in separate schools. Why are they caught in the middle? Because they've been trying to introduce this in politics like the member did this afternoon.

It started so many times, it was going through, but some political manoeuvre was done because of that. It started all right. In the days when Schreyer was here, my honourable friend was sitting somewhere around there where Schreyer had more than the majority of his members that were supporting him, more than the

majority of them without any pressure. Normally, there would have been many Conservatives that would have supported it, but he made one mistake. Schreyer said that if I don't get that I'm quitting as your Leader, and that's all he had to say for the Conservatives to say, we can kick the hell out of Green, but we'll have trouble with Schreyer. It was all he had to say for Green to leave the party and to go out and try to organize so he could defeat them into thinking that Schreyer would resign.

Some of the people who had changed their mind, who had come to the fairness of the argument of equal opportunity by such as Cherniack and Miller and many of them, they convinced the, all right, we're going to support you, but you don't state that you're going to leave the leadership of this party anymore. So, that was done, and that was that everybody on that side voted against it except one member that did not run for the Conservative after the that. So, unfortunately, who was caught in the middle because of this power play, who was caught in the middle? It was the students that were going to these private schools.

MR. R. DOERN: How did Howard Pawley vote?

HON. L. DESJARDINS: Ask him or look in the book. I'm not your reference, I'm not paid to do your reference — (Interjection) — I don't care. I know you voted and I know that you joined the Cabinet, you accepted to go in the Cabinet, although you knew where your Leader was going. — (Interjection) — He must have been the only guy in this House, just like now, he doesn't know what's going on if he didn't know what Schreyer was doing at that time.

Now, Mr. Chairman, it doesn't matter which side I am, I believe in the principle of equal opportunity and I will support that no matter at what cost. That to me is more important than anything else, and the thing is, I know that in the period of restraint it's very hard to have the policy of giving everything that might be necessary, and I accept that. One thing though that I would ask the Minister that I'm speaking as a private member for St. Boniface today, I would like the Minister and some of the members of the Cabinet to look at the possibility of at least recognizing in principle a formula, and I think that is important. People cannot go in this day and age of not knowing what's going to happen next year. I don't care if there's not one penny more that goes this year, providing there's some kind of a formula that you're going to get as, I think - recommended vaguely by the report that was done by the gentleman in front of us - quite rightly stated that this was a political matter and they did not want to go into detail, but I think a formula should be arrived whereas you're talking about percentage. I'll buy that. I still have no trouble in saying that in principle that every child should have the same amount of money, but I'll buy that. Maybe it's better for the private schools if they got to struggle a little bit, but at least make it possible for them to survive, providing, of course - that's what I think is missing and that's what I don't like, providing that we announce fairly soon that there has to be a situation where the people running these schools know that eventually at a certain number of years, 3, 5, 10 years if need be, that they will arrive

at a certain percentage of that and then that'll stay with that.

I have no hesitation in, and I think that I had every, not only the right but the duty to speak on this today because it is true as was said. I came in politics for, that was the main reason 25 years ago, and I don't think that I would suffer that anybody would prevent me from speaking on this issue. I spoke to refute many of the things that were said by the Member for Elmwood, who is trying to manoeuvre history. Even his relating the facts, he's changing them to support his stance. I would praise for the Minister for saying that there will be some recognition of the fact that these people are not second-class citizens, that they need help if they're going to get the education needed in this country. I would hope that the Minister will discuss with the members of her Cabinet and the party the possibility of recognizing some kind of a formula that could be passed on to the supporters of the private schools to enable them to plan for the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. R. DOERN: Mr. Chairman, I think I would like to make a few comments on what the Minister has said. I'm not going to question his beliefs or his conviction. I don't appreciate it when he questions mine, but I want to remind him of a few points, and that is that he seems to think that it's a big central point that former Premier Schreyer believed in aid to private and parochial schools, and that, therefore, everyone in the caucus should fall into line because of that. I think it's true, Mr. Chairman, that the former Premier did have that view in general, but his party didn't and his caucus didn't. So, the Minister says that when I entered Cabinet, I knew that those were the conditions of the game. Those were not, in fact, the conditions of the game.

If we want to play by his conception, then I would simply say to him that he knew when he entered the Cabinet of the Honourable Howard Pawley, that he was against aid to private and parochial schools. Because the present Premier of Manitoba has up until very recently always stood against to private and parochial schools. And when there was a vote in this House on the question in the '70s, some 10 years ago, there were four Ministers who opposed the government's stand.

Mr. Chairman, without getting into the issue, because it was a complicated thing - it was about a resolution to study the question, etc. We all knew what it was really about, but on the surface it was simply a resolution and there were four Ministers who voted at that time. I was one of them. The Honourable Howard Pawley was another. The Honourable Sam Uskiw was another, and I believe the Honourable Len Evans was another, and then there were seven or eight backbenchers who also voted. So there was not quite half of the NDP voted against aid to private and parochial schools and the Conservatives voted 18-1 against.

I say, Mr. Chairman, that I think the present Premier should make a statement about his views on this question because they have obviously changed somewhat, and I say that the Conservative Party should also make a clear statement on this question because

they have historically been opposed. All of a sudden, starting with Keith Cosens a couple of years ago, the introduction of aid and now with the Member for Morris, who presumably speaks for caucus, there are more people on this side of the House who are insisting on aid.

So I am simply saying to the Minister of Health that I know that his voice is heard in caucus on this issue time and time and time again. That isn't my concern. I want to know whether the other voices are silent or whether the other voices are enthusiastically supporting this position because the Minister doesn't seem to have much enthusiasm and I am not complaining about that, but I simply make note of that particular point.

It would also be interesting, Mr. Chairman, to hear the teachers. There are a lot of teachers on that side of the House, public school teachers, to hear their positions on this particular question because we haven't heard from any of them, but I would like to hear some of them.

I simply say to the Minister of Health that he is also playing with words. He says I am playing with words; I say he is playing with words. He says everyone has the right to send their children to private and parochial schools. Well nobody in this House will deny that. Not one person will deny that.

The question is: Who has the responsibility of providing the funding? That is the question. That is the only question. If someone says I am sending my son to Harvard University, all of us would say, good for you. Terrific! Make sure you have a lot of money to pay the \$8,000 fees and the \$12,000 or whatever it is for room and board, but that the Province of Manitoba should not be on the hook for that.

So then we get into, of course, more complex issues where you get little people who are making decisions to send their children to parochial schools as opposed to people who have a lot of money who don't need a penny, not a penny, to send their children to St. John's Ravenscourt or to Balmoral School for Girls or whatever. That's their privilege. The question is what demands can they legitimately make on the public purse?

Mr. Chairman, you cannot make the point that you do not have children in the public school system and, therefore, you shouldn't pay your school taxes because that isn't how the system works. It doesn't matter whether you have no children, if you are a childless couple or a bachelor. It doesn't matter whether you have 15 children and they all go to the system, and it doesn't matter whether you put your kids in a private or a parochial school system. All of us pay taxes that go to the support of the public school system.

So the question we are debating here isn't whether people have the right to send their children where they choose; they do. The question is: should the public school system provide - should the government fund private and parochial school systems, competing school systems, what will the effect be on the public school system which is, in fact, the great system which embraces everyone and which presumably raises the level of our society and teaches children their background and equips them with some skills to go out into the world and earn a living, or to be intelligent citizens.

Mr. Chairman, I think that we should hear more from some of the members opposite because all I hear is

an ominous silence and all I hear is people who are saying to themselves, well let's keep the lid on this because we'll simply put a few bucks over there, shift a few dollars over there into the private and parochial schools, and we'll pick up a couple of thousand votes. That seems to be the name of the game. As my friend from Turtle Mountain says, that's a crass political motive and it simply isn't good enough for the Minister or the government to simply slide it in every year unless they are prepared to make this an election issue and put it as a plank in their platform and go to the people and see whether or not the people of Manitoba and their own supporters, in particular, who have opposed this for generations will support them.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I have to smile just a little at the reference to the ominous silence. I didn't hear any silence. I've been waiting to get up to have a chance to say a few words for about three-quarters of an hour, so there's been anything but silence in this Chamber.

I want to, I think, deal with a few points that were made but have no intentions of getting into very lengthy debate with the member. I think he wants to put on record, as he did last year, and he is entitled to do that.

First of all, he made the suggestion that it was handled in a peculiar way because there weren't big drums and a big announcement. There were no drums and no announcement for any of the grants. This is being handled in exactly the same way in terms of the information coming out as all of the grants that are in my Estimates, except for the funding that was going out to the school divisions when they needed the information by the 15th of January. So it isn't being handled in an exceptional or a peculiar way.

I think that the increase is a reasonable increase and a fair one, but it's not exceptional and it isn't intended to be an exceptional increase. I think that I quite agree with the points that the Member for Elmwood made, and I've said them repeatedly myself. The fact is that with our tradition and history, we do not have a system, as some other school divisions do, where they have combinations of public, separate or public, separate and private schools and where, by tradition and history, money is funneled into one of those two systems.

It is the main responsibility of myself and this government to maintain and strengthen the public school system. There is no question about that. I see that as my main responsibility, and I take it very seriously. I think that it is — (Interjection) — thank you. Now I've lost my train of thought.

So I don't mind going on record, and I did last year, saying that within the existing system my main job is dealing with the deficiencies of the public school system, strengthening it, and dealing with its major needs. I don't think that I or this government have any apologies to make about what we have done and the efforts that have been made and the level of funding and the support and the priority that is given to the public education system.

So I think that there was a reasonable basis for the grant. They said that we will give the same dollar increase this year as was given to the public school system. It's an \$80 increase and still, as the Member

for Morris said, doesn't bring them nearly in line with the public school system nor was it intended to.

There was no intention on our part when we considered the resources that were available this year to suggest that in this year of limited resources that we could or should consider moving in a way that would bring them within a very high proportion of the funding for the public school system. That wasn't the intention. In terms of the overall funding, I think that the increases and the proportion of all education spending on private schools has remained very low and it's about 1 percent over the last five years. So I don't think we need to sound extremist alarms that the public school system is under threat, nor that there is a serious problem in our ability to meet our needs, because of the level of funding that is being provided for the private schools.

I do think it's important to put on the record that they do not get this grant, regardless of the level that it is, without meeting conditions and those conditions are reasonably significant conditions. They should be put on the record. They must meet the Manitoba curriculum and program requirements; they must employ qualified teachers and they must be inspected by the Department of Education. So those are not minor conditions in terms of saying that before you can even get this grant at this level, you must meet those conditions, so that we are ensuring in Manitoba that our curriculum, that our regulations, that our requirements, are being met by any teachers who are teaching children in Manitoba and who are receiving any grant whether they're being funded through the public system or the private system.

I think that probably that's the beginning for the discussion. It's probably going to go on until 5:30.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't planning to discuss private schools at this time, but seeing that the subject is certainly wide open, maybe this would be the best time to direct our comments and hopefully complete it at this time.

I've enjoyed the discussion to this point. I suppose in reading Hansard from last year I'm not terribly surprised that this happens. It seems like every year this forum is provided to members to express their views one way or the other on this issue that is supposed to be around this province, some people say for 100 years or more.

Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to some of the history, as related by both the Member for Elmwood and from St. Boniface. As a newer member to this House, of course, I hear only the history on a second-hand basis at times, although not being able to sit in judgment to determine who is right and who is wrong, that's certainly not my role. It was at least interesting to hear the different perspectives as presented today.

I think our party at this time wants to know specifically what the government has in mind and we'd like to know, particularly the Minister's basic philosophy. Throughout it all, throughout this whole discussion, for however long it may ensue, I suppose I'll be trying to draw out of the Minister, basically, an answer as to whether she accepts the concept that parents, for whatever reason, have the right to decide where their children are to be educated, and furthermore, whether or not she accepts that fact that within a civilized society

that The Charter of Rights and Freedoms plus basic equality demands that government divide support between public and private schooling relatively fairly.

We can spend days talking around the subject, but I listened to the remarks of the Member for Elmwood and I think that if we accomplish anything at this time, I would ask the Minister as a representative of her government to speak directly to those questions.

The member also indicates that we as a party have to be prepared to address those questions and I suppose he is correct, but the difference is timing. We don't have to do that today for our own reasons. We're not being questioned today. That's what we hope to draw out of the Minister through the discussions as we go ahead and at this time she may want to comment specifically on those two areas of concern, or otherwise I'll move into some of the very detailed areas that I have in mind.

The Minister shows by way of this particular statement that there is to be directed towards the support of private schools, the sum of \$4,189,296.00. She indicated in her answer in Question Period today that that represented a per student grant of some \$600.00. What number did she use to divide into that total to come up with \$600.00? I've talked to Mr. Stangle this morning, who indicated that the number 7,700 students would be the legitimate number to divide into that total. If one does that, Mr. Chairman, one comes up with the answer of \$544 per pupil, so I would like to know specifically what number is being divided into that large number so as to determine the per student grant.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, the way we got that dollar figure was not to divide into the enrolment of the private school system, but the public school system. We took the dollar increase that we had given to the public schools which was, and I don't have the total, \$16 million, and took the enrolment of the public schools to get the per pupil increase for the public schools, and then took that dollar plus the \$10.00 that came for the non-print. The two of them total \$90, which is the equivalent, I believe, of the dollar increase going into the public school system

MR. C. MANNES: To review then, what the Minister said, last year print plus operating came to \$510.00. To that figure was added \$10 for print of this year plus an additional \$80, which had come over as a factor from the public side. The grand total of those numbers came to \$600.00.

Mr. Chairman, I would then ask whether or not the government at this time is working towards a funding formula that will - as Dr. Nicholls said in his report and I have it here somewhere, I think I quoted it again in the Question Period today - that funding to private schools be primarily on the basis of a percentage of the block grant paid to public school districts and divisions.

Obviously, there is no formula associated with the increase in grant offered this year. Is the government, at all, accepting the argument of the independent schools? There has to be in place, either a formula or some agreement by way of contract between the government and the independent schools that will give them some fixed percentage of the block funding directed towards public schools.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, there are two things there that the Member for Morris is relating to. One is the request of the Independent Schools Group and the other is the recommendation in the Nicholls Report. What I have indicated and will indicate in this discussion and have in the previous questions that he asked of the same nature, is that we are making our funding decisions this year on this year alone, that all of those either recommendations or requests that relate to consumer price index, inflation factor, formulas for funding, wherever they come from, for whatever grants, will all be considered when we're dealing with the Nicholls Report.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister agree that comments she made today in Question Period regarding 16 percent, and I think she used the term and she can correct me if I'm wrong, that the increase to private schools represented a 16 percent increase on a per-student basis; whereas I believe the increase to the public school system was roughly 5 and maybe she may want to correct that figure also. Would she not agree that because the bases from which the percentage figure is calculated are so vastly different that she has left with the public, or anybody that would pick up that figure, a very misleading number as to the commitment she's made to the private school system?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, I don't think it's misleading at all, Mr. Chairman. It's a real figure; it's a real percentage, based on real dollars. When the decision was made, it wasn't based on percentage because I think that wasn't the rationale. I did give the rationale and that was to suggest that it seemed reasonable that we give the same per pupil dollar figure this year as we gave the public school system and that was the rationale.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I suppose I'm glad to hear that there is some rationale. At times many of the grants that have come out from the Department of Education have lacked a sound criteria and rationale and so I'm glad to hear that there was at least some rationale behind this increase in grant.

I had indicated earlier, I was hoping the Minister would say specifically where she and the government stand on this very, very topical issue. Last year the Minister said, and I quote, when we were talking about the whole subject, "I myself was very concerned over any possibility in moving toward the proposals," - I think she's talking about the proposals of the independent schools - "when they were saying they wanted a stage thing that went from \$600 to \$1,000 and eventually to cover the entire cost, or to meet the same costs as were provided by the public school system."

Has the Minister had any change in heart or is the strong inference that was left within that quote, namely that she and her government are totally opposed to the private schools achieving anything other than the 20 percent funding of public support that they've received today?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I don't have the quote. I don't have the advantage of having my own

quotes in front of me; perhaps I should and I'm not sure, in the total context that the comment was made. My guess is, from what I feel and what I believe I would have been thinking, that I was dealing with the question of a very large increase at a given point in time, a very significant increase and the effect of that, of a large dollar increase, a total dollar increase and its effect on our ability to maintain, provide significant or adequate funds to the public education system.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'm happy that the Minister responded in that way. Maybe she can tell me what impact then the closing of these independent schools, in a financial sense, would have on the public school system and the treasury of this province if they did not survive in the years to come. What impact would it have if they did not exist?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: It's hard to answer a very general statement like that. There's a lot of assumption there, that all 89 schools are going to go belly-up and of course we know that's not realistic. The information that we've been given at different points in time is that there may be a few schools that they have some concerns about, although each time they've indicated those concerns and said they may close, it has never come to pass.

The fact is that children in Manitoba are entitled, and by law, must be allowed and are entitled to be educated in the public school system; and if, for any reason, they as individuals, or in groups, choose to go into the public education system, we would, I must say, be glad and have to find the money because we are required and we must meet our obligations and our responsibilities to children who are being educated in the public school system; so I don't know what the dollar amount would be if they all went belly-up, I think that's not realistic. There might be a few of them that indicate they might have some problems if there isn't increased funding, but if they did and they were incorporated into the public school system, we would accommodate them.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, the Minister of course again makes a comment that indicates that, in her mind at least, she would probably love to see the private schools maybe not exist. She said we'd be glad to see them come into the public schools. She may not have meant that, but if she didn't she'll tell me, but certainly those were her words, that she'd be glad to see that occur.

I then would ask or suggest that if the private schools were not in place, that it would represent an extra charge on the treasury of the province at roughly 8,000 students, and let's say at some \$1,500 per student, a figure of \$12 million or more. I then would ask whether she acknowledges the fact at all that because of the existence of independent schools within the province that there is represented, a large saving to the public school system and therefore the so-called equality of education that is offered within the public school system is better now than it might be, given that all the students were educated within it.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I'm glad that although the Member for Morris started out to suggest

what I meant, that he then sort of backed off and said I might not have meant it in that way, so let me clarify. I didn't mean to say I would be glad to see them come in, in terms of as I would be glad to see the private schools close. We would be glad to have them if they chose to come into the public school system and we would be quite willing to meet our obligations and responsibilities to educate them and to provide funds for that education.

It isn't the purpose of the private schools and they weren't set up to save money for the public school system. They were set up and they are there because people choose to educate their children that way and they have that freedom of choice. When they do so though in Manitoba, they do so knowing what exists today. They know what the system is; they know it is not a dual system where money is selected to go into either system; they know it is one where there is a small portion of grant that is given to the private schools and they make that as a free choice, knowing the conditions under which the private school system functions in Manitoba.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'm wondering if the Minister could tell us, as a result of a meeting held in late April between officials of the Federation of Independent Schools, whether they have given the government a period of basically one year to come up with a commitment to a formula that allows them to know where they will be within the next four or five years or face the very strong possibility that the Federation of Schools will begin to proceed legally under Section 15 of the Charter of Rights?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I don't remember a time line or a deadline of, if you don't do something in one year. I do remember information that suggested that was their position on why there should be an increase and they did indicate that they would have to give and would be giving consideration to looking at the Charter of Rights, if the grant, in their view, was not sufficient or if there was not an indication of what the intentions were over the next few years. So you know I don't think they said if you don't do this within a year we're going to go to court; they said we're looking at whether we should be going to court, looking at the Charter of Rights.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I'd ask then the Minister whether her department has been in communication with the Attorney-General so as to determine whether the province is acting illegally in the manner in which they're treating, in a funding sense, students who attend private schools. Have they asked for a legal opinion from the Attorney-General?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, Mr. Chairman.

MR. C. MANNES: Is it their intention to do so?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, if during the course of our discussions we have any information that makes us feel we need to seek legal opinion, we will. I'm not sure on what basis the Member for Morris is suggesting that the province could be operating or acting illegally

when they make decisions that are within their authority and rights to make in terms of the level of funding that they are giving.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister took seriously the survey done by the Federation of Independent Schools. This particular survey was performed by Opinion Place Marketing Insights Limited. It was conducted, I believe, in the fall of 1983.

Just to give you some idea of the methodology, it says, as a matter of fact, the survey was conducted between August 8th and the 22nd of 1983, more than 1,000 people were interviewed, 1,026 to be exact, 620 in their homes, and 406 by means of long distance phone calls.

These questions were asked and I would like to read them into the records, and also offer the survey results that accompany those questions.

The questions presented at that time were, firstly, your reaction to statement about intent of the United Nations Charter in regard to freedom of choice of education. Not surprisingly 90 percent of the people surveyed agreed either strongly or somewhat with that statement.

The next question asked was the reaction to the statement about parents' justification in operating an independent school. 70 percent of the people surveyed, both a combination of the 26 percent that strongly agreed, and 44 that somewhat agreed, a total of 70 percent agreed with that statement.

The next question being the reaction to a statement about the idea of a reasonable per pupil educational grant for operating independent schools with equivalent curricula, and 59 percent of the people surveyed agreed with that statement.

My question to the Minister, Mr. Chairman, do those survey results, do they impress her to any degree? Does she have a position one way or the other that says that the people of this province generally support not only the concept of private schools, but of general funding of private schools to a, I would say, higher degree?

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, it doesn't surprise me at all that on two very basic questions, such as the first two that were presented, and that is do you believe in freedom of choice, and you know do you believe in parents' rights to determine their child's education, that the percentages would be as high as they are. The 90 percent I would expect, and I might have even expected personally a higher percentage on the parents' rights to determine.

I think it's much more questionable with the wording of the third one where it says reasonable grant with 59 percent, because the question is what is, you know, what is a reasonable grant. What do they think a reasonable grant is, and is it their understanding when they're answering the question that they are being asked, or it will be interpreted to suggest that they're willing to have more money go into the private school system. The wording of that question I don't think is clear at all, nor do I think it can be used to demonstrate 59 percent of the public is willing to have increased, or additional dollars go into the private school system.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I think this is probably the best time to take some very strong exception to answers offered by the Minister, in Question Period, to specific questions directed by the Member for Roblin-Russell, when he asked initially when the announcement would be made regarding grants, and then having the Minister turn on him and saying that the Conservative Government from '77-81 had done nothing in this area.

Mr. Chairman, I have before me a schedule of the aid to private schools from 1967-1984, although I don't have the figures for '83-84, and if the Minister in her next answer could give them to me I'd appreciate them, but for the record, Mr. Chairman, I want it shown, and I'll start at 1970 the aid to private schools was 105,000, and I'll round this off \$106,000; in '71, it was \$149,000; in '72, 167,000; in '73, 187,000; in '74, 192,000; in 1975, 266,000; 1976, 318,000; 1977, 488,000. Now let's move to 1978 and yes, there was inflation in those years, Mr. Chairman, but nothing using just a trend line of inflation to explain why all of a sudden in 1978 the total jumped to \$1,281,000.00. Nothing to explain why in 1979 the figure jumped to \$2,475,000, or to explain in 1980 that it jumped to 2,610,000, or in '81 that it totalled 2,924,000.00. I'm not aware of what the figures were for '83 or '84, but I would ask the Minister if she would either correct her remarks, apologize to my colleague for making them, or otherwise explain specifically how we did nothing previous to this administration and nothing following the NDP Schreyer Administration.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: I'd love to, Mr. Chairman.

What I would like to do is explain. When I said that they had done nothing, I did not suggest that there had not been increases in funding. Well, let me finish explaining. The increase in funding had nothing to do with any increases in grant that you gave, because you did not give any. It was increases based on two things.

New schools, an increase in the school population, and increase in enrolment, and small increases in shared service, so agreements. So what happened is that the dollar increases that the member referred to are simply related to the fact that everybody that came in and started up a private school, and had students where they conformed to the condition were entitled to the grant that existed.

The grant was brought in in 1977. Until then it was shared service agreements, sort of under the table I think. The basic grant was brought in in 1977, it was \$435; in 1978, the grant was \$435, a zero increase; in 1979 the grant was \$435, a zero increase; in 1980 the grant was \$435, a zero increase, it did not change; and in 1981 it was \$435, a zero increase.

So that for the entire four years of Conservative office they did not increase that grant one penny. There will have been some increase in shared service agreements, because wherever school boards and a private school agreed to shared services, they were entitled to have a contract for that shared service although it was deducted from their regular grant.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, when they brought in the Educational Support Program, they built in - they had an excellent opportunity - they designed an entire education finance program system. They built in an inflation factor protection for public school grants. They

built it in so it was required by law and it was automatic. What was it in the first year? - it was about 9 percent; in the second year, it was about 10 percent. It was the CPI, okay, so it was automatic inflation factor increases. Did they protect or guarantee increases for the private schools through the Education Support Program? No, Mr. Chairman. Do you know what they did? They put private schools under "Other." The grant category, "Other," is outside of the Education Support Program and is not protected or covered by the inflation factor.

So they did two things. For four years they didn't give one additional penny to the grant and they designed an entire education finance program that kept the private school grant out of the protection that was built in and the increased funding that was built in for the public schools. Now I ask you, Mr. Chairman, how on earth can they stand there and try to suggest that increases in dollars that went to private schools that were solely based on increases in enrolment and new schools - the increase in the number of schools - had anything to do with their concern for commitment for, or increased level of funding or increase in the grants for private schools because it did not?

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, I welcome the debate because the Minister is having thrown back at her an argument using specific dollars, like she has used with us for the last two-and-a-half years on every grant area going. The fact that in so many cases the education support levy, and this is an example, has been increased significantly over the last two years and yet the proceeds of that money has been offered by way of grants. The Minister has made great copy with the fact that she's increased grants 50 percent even though we never knew for sure who was ultimately the benefactor and the criteria used to establish them, but the Minister could seem to get up on a public forum and saying because she was increasing it by \$1 million, she was doing something very very special.

Now, I am making the claim that from 1977 to 1981 aid to private schools increased from \$488,000 to roughly \$3 million. Now the Minister is saying that if the per capita grant was kept the same, then obviously the enrolment in the private schools went up roughly seven times. I've been looking for my figures for independent schools, the enrolment over that period. I cannot find them, but I do not believe for one second that the enrolment in the private schools went from 1,000 to 7,000 in the period of four years.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I just have the enrolment figures from 1979 to '83, so I will attempt to get them for the previous years that the member is suggesting. I know the questions perhaps aren't supposed to be raised from my side, but we do know that there has been no increase in the grant since 1977, that everything I said was absolutely true, that the Conservative Government sat as the government for four years and did not change that first grant that was brought in from \$435 until we came in and changed it in 1983. They did not protect it with the inflation factor in the Education Support Program, so when they had choices to make, their choice was to give no increase in the grant and no additional money, other than what came through increased enrolment. I haven't

heard him deal with that issue. Why didn't you if you were so concerned, increase the grant in each of those years, and why didn't you build the protection and the increase into the Education Support Program?

MR. C. MANNES: Well, Mr. Chairman, I welcome the opportunity to answer these questions.

I think we should possibly put the proper time frame in. As I can recollect, and I obviously don't have a total understanding, but in 1981 the \$435 came about as a division factor of 23 into 10,000. That brought about, and I've got to see what the 10,000 is; 10,000 per 23 students brought about the factor \$435, that was the base. I believe that came forward in 1981, the first year of the new government Education Support Program.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: No, the \$435 grant came about in the spring of 1977 and wasn't touched again until we changed it in 1983.

MR. C. MANNES: Mr. Chairman, the Minister who has the support of large numbers of staff around her,

and obviously has access to all the records is going to have to tell me what is wrong with my figures when I make the claim that spending has jumped from \$488,000 to \$3 million, and there's no way that the figures of enrolment within the private schools on a straight \$435 per capita basis can substantiate that increase. Obviously, she accepts the \$3 million figure because over '83 and '84 that has been the base leading us to the point of \$4,189,000 today.

HON. M. HEMPHILL: Mr. Chairman, I can see that it's very close to the hour of 5:30 and I have said that we would get the additional information. I was just slipped a piece of general information that reminds me that commencing the fall term of '78, agreements were permitted and that additional schools claimed grants and that was a significant increase in the number of schools claiming grants. So, we'll provide that information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The hour is 5:30. I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8:00 p.m. tonight.