



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, December 11, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lisa Fournier, Michael Dyck, Tom Fagan and others urging the government of Manitoba to pass the necessary legislation/regulations which will restrict stubble burning in the province of Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the principles of health care, namely the universality and comprehensiveness, should apply to the Pharmacare program; and

WHEREAS the Pharmacare program's effectiveness is being eroded; and

WHEREAS in the most recent round of delisting of pharmaceuticals, approximately 200 have been delisted by the government of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the strict submission deadline for Pharmacare receipts does not take into consideration extenuating circumstances which may have affected some people; and

WHEREAS pharmaceutical refunds often take six weeks to reach people; and

WHEREAS a health "smart card" would provide information to reduce the risk of ordering drugs which interact or are ineffective, could eliminate "double prescribing," and could also be used to purchase pharmaceuticals on the Pharmacare program, thereby easing the cash burden on purchasers.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Manitoba to consider taking the necessary steps to reform the Pharmacare system to maintain its comprehensive and universal nature, and to implement the use of a health "smart card."

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable Leader of the second opposition party (Mrs. Carstairs). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

To the Legislature of the province of Manitoba

WHEREAS each year smoke from stubble burning descends upon the province of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Parents Support Group of Children with Asthma has long criticized the harmful effects of stubble burning; and

WHEREAS the smoke caused from stubble burning is not healthy for the general public and tends to aggravate the problems of asthma sufferers and people with chronic lung problems; and

WHEREAS alternative practices to stubble burning are necessitated by the fact that the smoke can place some people in life-threatening situations; and

WHEREAS the 1987 Clean Environment Commission Report on Public Hearings, "Investigation of Smoke Problems from Agriculture Crop Residue and Peatland Burning," contained the recommendation that a review of the crop residue burning situation be conducted in five years' time, including a re-examination of the necessity for legislated regulatory control.

THEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly will urge the government of Manitoba to pass the necessary legislation/regulations which will restrict stubble burning in the province of Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the 41st Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the year ended March 31, 1992. I believe members probably already have copies of this.

Mr. Speaker, I am, as well, pleased to table A Benchmark Report for Northern Manitoba. It is being released this afternoon by the chairman of the commission in Thompson.

* (1005)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1991-92 Annual Report of the Farm Lands Ownership Board.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling the Second and Third Quarterly Reports of the Manitoba Telephone System.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House today.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to inform the House of a very important announcement which I will be making this afternoon.

Manitoba celebrates the festive season every year with a number of traditions from decorating our homes with colourful Christmas lights to enjoying the Santa Claus parade to sharing precious times with family and friends.

Over the past few years, we have added another very important tradition, our antidrinking-and-driving campaign. This afternoon I will be joined by members of Citizens Against Impaired Driving, Teens Against Drinking and Driving, the RCMP and the Winnipeg Police Department in the launch of our yellow ribbon campaign.

These yellow ribbons serve as a visible reminder of our commitment not to drink and drive. My office will be distributing ribbons to each of the caucus offices this afternoon. I ask honourable members of the Legislature and all Manitobans to join us in tying these ribbons on their car door handles, antennas, anywhere they might be seen.

The message is clear: If you drink, do not drive. That message is getting through to Manitobans.

From the statistics gathered over the past few years, we are seeing a gradual decrease in the number of drinking and driving incidents. Our tough drinking-and-driving legislation, the toughest in the country, and the efforts of such groups as CAID and TADD to educate Manitoba drivers are paying off. By changing attitudes we can and are making a difference.

Drunk drivers kill and hurt innocent people. We must continue to work hard to deliver the message that drinking and driving is wrong and very dangerous.

Thank you.

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the minister, and I am sure all members of the House in commenting on this issue, particularly as we move into the festive season, when there has in the past and unfortunately there will continue to be a tendency on the part of some people to perhaps overindulge and engage in driving.

I am very pleased that the minister is moving towards association and co-ordination between all agencies and all groups to attack this very, very serious problem.

None of us in this Chamber will rest until—we will continue to do our duty and continue to look for new and innovative ways of approaching this problem. There are changes that can be made. I am sure the minister has had representation made to him, as well as representation has been made to myself by some of the organizations for some additional improvements in legislation in the area to prevent the continuation of any undue tragedies from occurring.

We support all initiatives in order to prevent drinking and driving. If this effort and any efforts that we engage in can prevent one tragedy this season and over the next year, we are in full support of it.

* (1010)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of my caucus to also thank the government for this announcement today.

I am delighted that the ribbons are going to be yellow this year, because I think that it is significant that they not be perceived to be a decoration, but that they are perceived to be giving a very clear message about the effects of drinking and driving.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased also that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) has begun a policy within the sale of alcohol and the liquor stores to warn people of the dangers of alcohol for pregnant women. Those signs, which have recently been distributed, are also giving a clear message that not only does alcohol kill, when it can be a factor in an accident, but it also can damage fetuses in ways that we still do not know the full magnitude of.

I have to say that I am very disappointed that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) did not pick up on the same positive venture of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and not promote the publication on all bottles of alcohol of the concerns that many of us have about drinking while pregnant that could have easily been brought to everybody's attention by printing that, quite frankly, on liquor bottles throughout the country.

The national Minister of Health has indicated that they have not done it, because they did not have the support of provincial Health ministers in this nation, and that indeed is a tragedy.

I am glad to see that two out of three of the ministers of this Crown are working in positive ways about alcohol and its effect on our society, and I hope that the Minister of Health will learn from them.

* * *

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement.

On July 16, 1991, I outlined to the House six conditions that this government indicated must be satisfied before we would support the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Since October 7 of this year, when NAFTA was officially initialled by the federal government, we have continued our analysis of NAFTA and resumed our consultations across the province to access how, in the view of Manitobans, the final agreement will impact on businesses and workers in Manitoba and how well it meets our conditions.

Our consultations with representatives of various economic sectors in the province revealed that many groups favour Canada's participation in NAFTA. We saw clear support for the agreement from primary industry such as the agrifood, mining, and pulp and paper sectors, as well as from agricultural equipment manufacturers, bus

manufacturers and the professional services industry.

Other sectors such as the clothing manufacturers told us that specific, complementary action was needed for them to remain competitive in the face of new competition from Mexico.

Some industries, notably energy and electronics, did not expect NAFTA to affect them in a major way but predicted negative impacts if Canada were to remain outside of the free trade area.

Representatives of labour and environmental groups told us of their concerns that NAFTA may serve to lower labour and environmental standards in Manitoba and Canada.

I would like now to review Manitoba's six conditions which, incidentally, arose from the views of Manitobans and how they have been addressed so far.

* (1015)

The first condition was Manitoba's insistence that these trilateral talks not result in any renegotiation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. Generally, we feel that there has been little backsliding from the FTA. Canada's cultural industries remain exempt from NAFTA, as do our rights under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, to maintain quotas for our agricultural supply management systems.

The Auto Pact is intact and Canada will still screen foreign investments. Perhaps most important, the FTA dispute settlement system of binational panels has been retained and extended to include Mexico.

Regarding textiles and clothing, NAFTA has tightened the FTA rules of origin to ensure substantial clothing manufacturing is done within North America. However, while the new rules of origin certainly alter the position of Manitoba's clothing industry, we feel these changes are compensated by NAFTA's higher tariff rate quotas and list of fabrics in short supply which are exempt from the rules of origin.

In addition, Manitoba strongly supported our local clothing manufacturers in calling for immediate action on the 1990 report of the Canadian International Trade Tribunal on Canada's textile tariff regime.

Federal Finance Minister Don Mazankowski announced last week that Canada's textile tariffs will be reduced starting January 1, 1993. This action is

vital if Manitoba's clothing manufacturers are to adjust to and prosper under NAFTA.

NAFTA will also reflect changes to Canada's system of compulsory licensing for pharmaceuticals introduced by federal legislation Bill C-91.

As Manitoba's Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has already indicated to the House, we consider these provisions unfair, as they call for retroactive changes to this country's patent rules with no allowance for a transition period.

Manitoba believes the current drug bill proposed by the federal government should be amended to permit the granting of compulsory licences for which bona fide applications were received. Appropriate arrangements should also be made within NAFTA to permit such a change.

With new rules established in NAFTA for trade in textiles and clothing, it is clear that Manitoba's first condition has not been met in the strictest sense. However, our analysis of NAFTA suggests that the key gains achieved in the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement have basically been protected.

Manitoba's second condition was that Canada seek assurances under any agreement that Mexican labour standards improve in line with that country's prosperity and be adequately enforced. The problem here is not the level of labour standards and workers rights that exist under Mexican law, but concern that Mexico does not enforce these laws adequately.

We called upon the federal government to join in any parallel talks on labour or other issues. It has done so and, after bilateral discussions with Mexico, signed a memorandum of understanding on co-operative labour activities last May. However, our government feels the current work plan under this memorandum does not place enough emphasis on enforcing standards and basic worker rights.

We will continue to urge the federal government to press for an additional agreement in this area with the new United States administration and the Mexican government.

Third, Manitoba said that negotiations among Canada, the United States and Mexico must address the issue of environmental standards. We believe NAFTA gives environmental standards very serious treatment. The agreement includes a provision that would discourage any country from lowering its environmental standards to attract investment. It also would permit any country to set

its own standards at levels higher than internationally agreed levels and to work towards common standards without any erosion towards a lowest common denominator.

The agreement provides that the terms of certain international environmental treaties would override NAFTA obligations. As well, it allows dispute settlement panels to set up scientific review boards to consider certain environmental issues and make public these boards' findings along with the panel's report.

But, despite the significant advances that these provisions represent, our government believes that these provisions are meaningless without proper enforcement of environmental standards. We need an additional agreement with Mexico and the United States to ensure procedural safeguards and remedies in enforcing such standards. The incoming administration in the United States appears to share this view, and we urge the federal government to pursue a separate trilateral agreement on this important issue.

As our fourth condition, Manitoba called upon the federal government to ensure that comprehensive and adequately funded adjustment measures are provided to ensure that Manitoba and Canada are equipped to capitalize on opportunities provided by trade liberalization. So far we have been very disappointed at federal adjustment measures for businesses and workers in response to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

In the key area of training, federal financial commitments to Manitoba actually declined during the introduction of the Free Trade Agreement, a period when we would expect to see increased support for training. In 1985-86, total federal funding for training in Manitoba was over \$92 million; by 1990-91, that funding had dropped to \$60 million, a decrease of 34 percent. Clearly this was a poor response to our adjustment needs. In the past two years, funding for training has recovered somewhat. There are now more unemployment insurance funds available for training due to dramatic increases in UI premiums paid by employers and employees, and the fact that stricter rules have reduced the benefits being paid out.

* (1020)

Manitoba has also urged the federal government to take proactive measures that will encourage and assist industries poised to gain new markets

through the agreement to make appropriate investments and adjustments in their operations. A wide range of business groups have told us that there is an urgent need to educate business people in this province about exporting in general and exporting to Mexico in particular. Unless and until there are significant improvements to federal adjustment measures, this condition will not have been adequately addressed.

Our fifth condition stressed the need for consistent federal policies to reinforce the efforts and needs of Manitoba business in adjusting to freer trade. We were particularly concerned with effects on exporters of the federal government's monetary policy. In January 1991, before the NAFTA negotiations began, the Canadian dollar stood at 87 cents U.S. We agreed with many economists at the time that this level was overvalued and had the effect of nullifying the value of tariff reductions gained under the Free Trade Agreement. Today our dollar stands at around 78 cents U.S. It appears to be stabilizing at this level, and interest rates should come down, as international investors recognize the underlying strengths of the Canadian economy.

We believe these monetary conditions, combined with the changes that Manitoba businesses are making to become more competitive, bode well for our future export performance. Inflation is now at its lowest level in decades, and we hope Manitoba will be able to reap the benefits of this achievement. The current federal policy framework reinforces the need to maintain and improve upon the competitiveness of Canadian industry. Manitoba believes that this must be continued over the longer term if our industries are to adjust to and benefit from trade liberalization.

Our sixth and final condition was that the federal government involve the provinces in setting objectives for these negotiations and in the actual negotiations themselves. To date, we feel the federal government has done a good job in this area. Federal Trade Minister Michael Wilson and his officials kept provinces fully apprised of the issues under discussion and provided for our input to Canada's negotiating positions. Minister Wilson briefed his provincial counterparts on a regular basis and also listened to our views. Provincial officials monitored and contributed to the discussion of matters of particular provincial interest. We were

generally provided with draft negotiating texts as they became available.

In short, the federal government has met this condition. However, Manitoba believes that it remains important for the federal government and the provinces to negotiate a formal federal-provincial agreement on the role of the provinces in the negotiation and implementation of trade agreements including their participation in dispute settlement proceedings.

Next Thursday, December 17, Prime Minister Mulroney intends to sign the North American Free Trade Agreement in Ottawa on behalf of the federal government. There will be parallel signing ceremonies in Mexico City and Washington. As I have just indicated, three of the six conditions necessary for us to support NAFTA have not been met to our satisfaction. Solutions to these three problems lie outside the NAFTA agreement itself in the parallel accords and in the measures that accompany the NAFTA.

* (1025)

So we will continue to work with the federal government to address the areas that concern us. We will press for further negotiations leading to separate trilateral agreements to ensure adequate enforcement of labour and environmental standards. In addition, we will continue to urge the federal government to commit greater resources towards the training of Manitobans so we can acquire and develop the skills needed to prosper under trade liberalization.

Moreover, we will insist that these issues be addressed before Canada passes legislation to implement NAFTA. Until these issues are addressed adequately, Manitoba will not be in a position to support NAFTA or its enabling legislation. While Manitoba recognizes the need for Canada to be a part of an integrated North American Free Trade market, we believe this must be on terms that will allow us to prosper.

At this time, I would like to table a more detailed analysis of these issues in a Manitoba position paper on the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to the ministerial statement on the proposed NAFTA agreement.

I believe it was August of 1992 when the minister promised that after three weeks of consultation he would make the position known of the provincial Conservative government on the Conservative trade agreement with George Bush and President Salinas.

Of course, we now have this belated position. I know Manitoba is the last province out of all provinces in Canada to take a position on NAFTA.

There are Premiers right across this country, Premiers who have been taking positions on NAFTA about whether it is good or bad for their work force, for their children, for their industries over the last three months. Of course, this Premier has refused to answer any questions in the House on this issue. I guess this is part of the public relations strategy of the government. It was the Premier who gave us the initial promise that he was opposed to NAFTA and, of course, the Premier has not answered questions on this issue week after week. He has left it to his minister.

Mr. Speaker, the government some time ago stated that their six conditions were "a bottom line," and we have watched them try to change that so-called bottom line through their deliberations and their ideological relationship with the federal Conservative government over the last three or four months.

I would have expected a much stronger statement from the minister here today because, if he looked at his own so-called bottom line, almost all six conditions have been breached with the proposed NAFTA agreement.

In fact, the only one that I will have to take the minister's word for is the great relationship he had with Michael Wilson in the input of these negotiations. I assume that that is correct, that he and Michael Wilson had a good relationship in discussing this issue and we accept that as one of the six conditions, but if one looks at all the other conditions that are the so-called bottom lines, where is the beef? Where is the substance?

The word "jobs" is not even used, Mr. Speaker, in the statement from the government in terms of what it means for Manitoba. The first condition, that no changes would be made to the U.S.-Canada trade agreement, in two very major industries of this province the changes have been made in a detrimental and a very negative way for Manitoba.

The apparel industry—and we raised this question in the House to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and then later to the minister responsible on the triple transformation clause in the NAFTA agreement.

It was clear to us from workers, from owners of business, from people in the industry that some 35 percent of the jobs in the apparel industry of Manitoba were at risk with the triple transformation clause that is now entrenched in NAFTA.

So why this province is the last one out commenting on that issue is beyond me. I mean, the parliamentary committee was here last week. It has come and gone. The minister did not present Manitoba's position. It is quite embarrassing, quite frankly, to not have a position. The second issue was the whole issue of the drug patent law. The minister knows and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) knows and the Premier knows that the trade agreement dealing with generic drugs supersedes federal legislation under the enabling legislation that was passed by the federal Conservative government dealing with the Free Trade Agreement with the United States.

The overriding legislation in Parliament passed in 1989 says that all international trade agreements, when they are in conflict with laws of Parliament, the international trade agreement will take precedence.

So, to watch the Minister of Health feign indignation last week about generic drugs when it was initiated off in San Antonio at the Alamo by Brian Mulroney, George Bush and Salinas was to us an absolute contradiction. How can you speak one way in the morning and act another way on the trade agreement in the afternoon? Clearly, The New York Times has indicated that drug costs will go up in Canada some 35 percent, so we will lose jobs and we will have higher health care costs. That too should have been a bottom line for this government.

Dealing with labour standards, Mr. Speaker, again no reference to jobs in terms of the manufacturing sector. Manitoba has gone from 63,000 manufacturing jobs to 49,000 manufacturing jobs, a decline of 23 percent since the Free Trade Agreement was signed. I know it is not all because of the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement. I know the dollar has had something to do with it. I know some other factors have had something to do with it. I know the recession has had something to do with it, but why did the United States lose 6 percent

of its manufacturing jobs in that period of time and why did we lose 23 percent of our manufacturing jobs in Manitoba?

* (1030)

Dealing with the environment, here again wishy-washy comments from the wishy-washy government opposite in terms of this issue.

Mr. Speaker, U.S. environmental groups, starting with the Sierra Club and Mr. Pope in charge of the Sierra Club in the United States, have clearly stated that the environmental standards in the NAFTA agreement are like the constitution of the U.S.S.R. dealing with human rights, because there is no enforcement mechanism whatsoever dealing with the environment and the environmental protection. Talk to environmental lawyers in Manitoba who have done environmental impact studies and they will tell you clearly that this has no environmental standards whatsoever.

In terms of the adjustment strategies, we have some wishy-washy statements from the provincial government again. The federal Conservative government has decimated the labour training and labour adjustment provisions in Canada, decimated those provisions, and this Tory government opposite has done the same thing with its \$10-million cut to the community colleges. These people do not believe in labour market adjustment. They do not believe in labour market training. They do not believe in retraining workers across this province. They are just like their federal cousins. They cut and they cut and they cut when they have an opportunity to deal with training and retraining opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this agreement clearly should not be signed on behalf of Manitoba. We believe the Premier, who made the election promise in August of 1990 that he was opposed to the proposed free trade agreement with Mexico, should have taken a leadership position on NAFTA and clearly stated as other Premiers have done, that we are opposed to NAFTA. It is not good for Manitoba. It is not good for Manitoba business. It is not good for Manitoba workers. It is not good for our environment. We believe in fair trade, not this trade agreement, and he should have said so clearly in this Chamber weeks ago. Thank you very much.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I note that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) just called across the floor, this is a recorded announcement. It seems

that there are recorded announcements on both sides.

I would like to ask the Premier and the government some very simple questions. The first one is: How many times do you have to get kicked in the head before you realize you are being hurt? Mr. Speaker, the first condition this government laid out was that the FTA not be altered, and they offer some solace—at least to their own feelings—that this has been achieved in the NAFTA.

Let us just stop and look at what has happened to date, Mr. Speaker. Prior to 1985, the OECD set up an industrial production index for the G-7 countries. They standardized it in 1985, and in 1985, 1986, 1987 and in 1988, Canada was at the top or right in the top half of that pack. Today Canada is the lowest. It is seven out of seven. It has fallen further than any other of the G-7 countries, taking into account the recession, taking into account all the changes that have occurred in the world in those five years.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the FTA has failed Canada. Now, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) has pointed out the loss of industrial production capacity in both countries, but there are all sorts of other indicators. Robert Reich, who today is going to be proposed as the Secretary of Labor in the U.S., has been on TV here in Canada and has written saying he does not understand why Canada is not standing up screaming about the damage that has been inflicted on this country. Now that is the person who is going to be, in part, responsible for this agreement. He is also, in part, responsible for the discussions that have taken place with President-elect Clinton around the problems with the NAFTA.

What I do not understand is why this government is rushing to support Brian Mulroney in signing this agreement when, in another six weeks or so, we are going to have a president in the U.S. who may be ready to sit down and negotiate some strength into this agreement. I do not understand how this government can stand up and table something that says, the environmental provisions are meaningless and that three of their six conditions have not been met.

In the area of training—remember training. Remember that the federal government with the FTA said: Do not worry about the labour force adjustment; we will take care of that. They

delivered nothing, so that all of the objective experience of the government of Manitoba is failure. All of the objective experience is that the FTA has not helped this province and that the federal government has not followed through on their promises.

So my question is: Why are they not standing up and screaming and insisting that our federal government not sign this agreement, that we wait until we get a new administration in the U.S. and then we go back and negotiate some proper enforcement into these agreements before we even think about signing them?

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning from the General Wolfe School, fifty Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Al Lomas. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

On behalf of all members, I would like to welcome you here this morning.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

North American Free Trade Agreement Employment Creation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

The Premier in 1990 took a definitive position, an unequivocal position on the proposed NAFTA agreement. The Premier has also taken positions in this House before on the benefits of free trade with the United States. In fact, in 1988, in September, in this Chamber he said: Our empirical studies show that between 12,000 and 15,000 new jobs will be created under free trade with the United States.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier indicate today: How many jobs does their empirical study indicate will be created or lost with the proposed NAFTA agreement?

We see some general analysis in this agreement, but we do not see a sector-by-sector tally, and we do not see the "empirical" study that the Premier allegedly had when he agreed to the Mulroney-Bush trade agreement of 1989.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the impact

on Manitoba's economy in job creation opportunities or jobs concerns in the Manitoba economy, I would encourage the honourable Leader of the Opposition to look at Appendix A that has been attached to the discussion paper that was circulated here today and see the extensive consultation that took place with all sectors throughout Manitoba—our labour groups, our environmental groups, our academic institutions—to discuss with Manitobans what they saw as the impact that NAFTA might have in terms of their individual businesses or their sectors. We have gone through a detailed discussion process with Manitobans.

In terms of empirical data, there is not, to the best of my knowledge, a province that has any defined empirical data on job creation or job losses. Even the federal government's analysis is on a broad, sectoral basis.

So without empirical data available from any available sources, Mr. Speaker, we did the best thing possible. We went right to Manitobans and talked to individual businesses, individual workers and people who have to live with any NAFTA to find out from them what the impact is.

I have already outlined some of the areas of Sector C opportunities that I outlined in my ministerial statement, some of the areas that do have some concerns. That is why we came out with a position.

I should clarify for the member from Osborne (Mr. Alcock) that we oppose NAFTA, that at least a minimum of three of our six conditions have not been met. One of the most fundamental of those is a proper adjustment assistance system to meet the needs of any workers that might be negatively affected.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, one would have assumed with the empirical work one did to go in and support the Canada-U.S. Trade Agreement with the 12,000 to 15,000 jobs that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) highlighted in his ideological support of the Mulroney government that their trade agreement would have been a product that we would have seen in this House today. Given you were the last province out, we would have expected some specific numbers in terms of jobs and opportunities in Manitoba.

North American Free Trade Agreement Government Position

* * *

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I have a second question to the Premier.

Last week, the Premier met with the Prime Minister on a number of "federal-provincial" issues. Given the fact that the province today has said, and I am sure they had this analysis long ago, that they are opposed to the NAFTA agreement as it presently stands, what did the Premier say to the Prime Minister about this? It was missing from his list of items that he released to the media on federal-provincial discussions. What did he say to the Prime Minister?

How is he going to oppose the existing proposal of NAFTA so that all the alleged six conditions can be met?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I was very public about the issues that were raised. We were in the process of putting together the official response of the government of Manitoba. That response has been released today and has been sent simultaneously by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) to the Minister responsible for ISTC, Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I assume from that answer that the Premier did not raise it with the Prime Minister, so this so-called opposition to some of the conditions that were not met were just really again public relations statements by this government.

Point of Order

Mr. Filmon: The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) obviously did not understand what I said. I said that our official position is put forward in a letter—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Is the honourable the First Minister up on a point of order? Okay.

Mr. Doer: The Premier is not the dictator of this Chamber yet. If he is going to rise on a point of order he should point out to the Speaker it is a point of order. He should not just assume he is the only one in this House who does not have to follow the rules of all democratically elected members of this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, I was trying to ascertain whether indeed he was up on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Now, the honourable Leader of the Opposition, with his question.

* (1040)

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry the Premier is so touchy about his relationship with the Prime Minister.

North American Free Trade Agreement Textile Industry

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): When we meet with the textile workers and indeed when we talk to owners of companies in the apparel industry of Manitoba, they are all scared stiff about the implications of triple transformation, something we have raised in this House before.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): You are just trying to cheer them up, right?

Mr. Doer: You guys certainly are not. What are you doing? You know there are 7,000 people working in the textile industry and we get cheap shots from the Minister of Justice across the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Premier (Mr. Filmon), if I might, on behalf of the 7,000 textile workers.

There are 7,000 people working in the textile industry in Manitoba. People working as owners of companies, workers and workers' representatives feel that the triple transformation will lose thousands of jobs in Manitoba. They are opposed to it and they do not see the changes in the quotas that were announced last week in Mazankowski's statement dealing with the fundamental problems of the triple transformation.

I would like to ask the Premier directly: Are the workers in the apparel industry in Manitoba and the clothing industry in Manitoba at risk with this NAFTA agreement?

Is this industry safe with this proposed NAFTA agreement? What are you going to do about getting the changes that you say are the absolute bottom line or opposing fully this NAFTA agreement, because it can put thousands of clothing workers out of work in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I would encourage the honourable Leader of the Opposition to read his question on

Monday. He seems not to be able to understand the difference between the textile industry and the apparel industry. He interchanges the word. He refers to job losses in the textile industry. He shows his lack of understanding of the issue that is before Manitoba.

We are talking about the importance to the apparel industry in Manitoba, whom we have met with on many occasions over the course of the last year. The position that we have continually taken has been very supportive of our apparel industry. The largest concern that they said time and time again was that the federal government has to act on the CITT report. Don Mazankowski finally announced that they will be acting on that report. That was the single most important issue.

They also talked about issues such as research and development and employee assistance and adjustment, which we are working on with the conditions that we have put forth here today.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly encourage the honourable Leader to clearly get a grasp of that issue, because he obviously confuses it and does not understand the difference between the sectors, and the ultimate hypocrisy, he sits across the way and he talks about ideology—a group of people who are not prepared to look at any trade agreement on balance in terms of what is good for Manitoba, what we should be addressing, what we should not be—pure, blind ideology across the way on this particular issue. We look at it in the total context.

North American Free Trade Agreement Labour Standards

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): The only ones who are blind are this government who waited so long, Mr. Speaker, till it is too late on NAFTA to be able to fight for the people of Manitoba.

I want to specifically focus in, in terms of labour adjustment, Mr. Speaker, because while the federal government has been very clear in its intentions of pushing through the NAFTA deal, it has been very obvious to anyone that one of the major flaws with NAFTA is indeed in terms of labour standards and labour adjustment.

I want to ask the Premier directly, since we have this recent new innovation of the Premier's, this weekly sort of World Wrestling Federation, the Premier against the Prime Minister—I want to ask him when he first raised the question of labour

standards with the Prime Minister and specifically what he asked the Prime Minister in terms of labour standards in the context of NAFTA.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows full well, we put forward the issue of labour standards as one of our six conditions that must be met as part of the evaluation of NAFTA, and that goes back now more than a year.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I asked the Premier, in terms of his contacts with the Prime Minister, and I would like to ask him again, not only when he raised this matter but specifically what the Premier has done in terms of this condition.

We almost have the NAFTA deal as a fait accompli. It is simply not good enough now. Only a few months to go in terms of the NAFTA being put in place by these governments, for the Premier now saying—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, if the member for Thompson cannot ask his question correctly and when he asks the question cannot remember what he asked, that should not be a problem that I have to deal with. He should get his act together before he asks the question.

Mr. Speaker, I answered very specifically. That issue was raised a year ago—more than a year ago when we put forward the six conditions. Those six conditions were discussed at First Ministers' meetings on the economy during the past year in which we had discussions about NAFTA among other issues, and those issues were indeed raised and put before the federal government and the Prime Minister.

Labour Adjustment Strategy

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question, Mr. Speaker, once again to the Premier is: How can anyone believe this government on labour adjustment, and how does the Premier expect anyone to believe that anybody can trust this government, when in this document it says that the government of Manitoba's own adjustment mechanisms are adequate, when we know this government has been cutting back in terms of labour force training adjustments in this province? How can anyone believe—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that this government has demonstrated by its actions, not by empty, foolish rhetoric, as the opposition party puts forward, that it keeps its commitments.

Manitobans look to us for keeping our commitments. That is why when we indicated that we would not raise personal income taxes that we have kept that commitment. In fact, we have gone beyond that. We lowered the personal income tax rate by 2 percent in this province.

As the New Democrats did, we did not raise corporate taxes, we did not raise the sales tax, and we have not raised personal.

Those are the kinds of commitments that we make. Those are the kinds of commitments we keep.

Social Assistance Recipients Child-Tax Benefit

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, earlier in the week, when I asked the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) about the impact that would be imposed by this government on the federal proposed child tax benefit, which comes into effect on January 1, the minister replied that he was getting additional information from the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, not only has the National Welfare Council done a report which indicates that there will not be one single penny more received by social assistance recipients as a result of this agreement, but so too has the Caledon Institute of Social Policy indicated that social assistance recipients will receive not one single penny more.

Can the minister tell the House today what information he has from the federal government which would lead him to believe that social assistance recipients are going to receive more money as a result of this change in the federal system?

* (1050)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, when the member raised this issue before, I indicated that we were still in discussion with the federal government on a new program and that we were still at the stage where we were analyzing some of the information that was coming forward.

The answer is the same today. Before we make a decision, we want to be able to make an informed decision and have all of the factors before us, and we will be making that decision in due course.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, since it is clear that there is no additional money for social assistance recipients as a result of this program, what is the minister considering, other than a cut to social assistance recipients?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the child tax benefit is a new way of the federal government doing business with individual families.

Across this country and in every province, every provincial government is faced with the task of analyzing this new program to see how it impacts on the citizens of that province and, at this time, we are still at the stage where we are analyzing these data.

I am sure that the member would want us to make an informed decision and to take a thorough look at this new program.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the analysis has been done, and the analysis shows very clearly that there is no additional money to be received by social assistance recipients.

Is it this government's decision that they are going to take the leadership of Alberta and Saskatchewan and decrease social assistance benefits of the Province of Manitoba because of this policy of the federal government?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, certainly groups outside of government are doing their own analysis of this new child tax benefit. I have met with a number of groups within Manitoba who have posed questions, who are trying to get a better understanding of a new program.

The government of Manitoba, as all provincial governments, has to make a decision in the near future. We are at the stage where we are analyzing that information and, in due course, we will have to make a decision.

Labour Force Development Government Strategy

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has assured us in recent speeches that this government is preparing for and coping with change, but the only evidence

of labour force planning from this government is to be found in their employment projections for the decade 1990 to 2000, which predicts an 8.3 percent growth in employment.

In the two years since the last election, Manitobans have seen a 4.5 percent decline in employment and a labour force decline of 2.2 percent, which translates as 12,000 fewer Manitobans looking for work.

I want to ask the minister: Given this trend as we enter 1993, will the minister table her revised labour force predictions and explain how she is preparing for and coping with this change?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I think the member should be well aware of the fact that there have been difficulties across Canada in terms of employment, but Manitoba has been working very hard in terms of its labour force strategy to assist Manitobans, and I can tell the member that one of the very important parts of our strategy is for Education and Training to work very closely with my colleague the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) in terms of labour and apprenticeship, with colleagues in government in terms of developing a labour force strategy most appropriate and collaboratively in government for Manitobans.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Education then tell the House what plans she has in place to retrain the thousands of workers from the 11 specific industries which Statistics Canada predicts will face substantial decline in Manitoba in this decade: agriculture, pulp and paper, metal products, clothing, wood products, rail transport and telecommunications carriers? Where are the plans?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again our plans in the Department of Education and Training and as a government are collaborative plans, and we are working through a number of methods available to us.

One of those methods is through our community colleges. Our community colleges as they move to governance are being much more able to be responsive to the regional needs. In fact, there are currently programs in place that are dealing very specifically with agriculture and with telecommunications, and I point to Assiniboine Community College and their programs for the member to perhaps inform herself.

Ms. Friesen: Will the minister explain why, in the absence of her inability to present any plans for labour force training in Manitoba, she specifically omitted the education and equity groups from her so-called made-in-Manitoba, so-called co-operative approach to labour force development boards? How does she expect to develop a training plan in Manitoba without education and equity groups?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, by way of example, I wanted the member to know that there is co-operation within government. We also tell her there is most certainly co-operation within the community and with discussion with Manitobans. Personally, I have had discussion with many of the equity groups in Manitoba. We are making every effort to take into consideration the needs of Manitobans.

I will point specifically to programs: the programs of New Careers, sponsored through Education and Training, which very specifically look at some of the Manitobans who have found it difficult to engage in training programs in the past; college programs in Education and Training; and the co-operation of our business and industry and labour through Workforce 2000.

Sunday Shopping Impact Small Business

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, this government is continually asking Manitobans to read between the lines when it makes public announcements, whether it is on NAFTA or rural economic development. A number of groups in Manitoba have already stated publicly their opposition to the Sunday shopping legislation that is before us, including the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, among others.

My question is to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. Today he acknowledged that there was no objective study of the impacts of NAFTA, no empirical evidence.

My question is: Will the minister now commit the government of Manitoba to doing an empirical study on the impact of Sunday shopping on small businesses and rural communities in Manitoba so that we know how many jobs we are going to lose, how many communities are going to be closing or

reducing, losing population as a result of this initiative?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I indicated in the House the other day when we introduced this particular piece of legislation and obviously during this trial period—and I want to make it perfectly clear for the honourable member for Flin Flon that this is a trial period, and it will provide us with the opportunity to assess all aspects of Sunday shopping in terms of Manitoba's economy, the economic impact in terms of the reaction of consumers and individual Manitobans, not dissimilar from what other provinces have done. The Province of New Brunswick, the Province of Ontario, governed by a party of the same affiliation as the members across the way, ran a trial period.

Clearly, it is a reasonable way to assess, because the polling that we have done indicates that the concern that he expresses about rural Manitobans, the polling that has been done is that 97 percent of rural Manitobans suggest that they will do the same or more shopping in their own community as they currently do.

A trial period will determine a lot of that but, clearly, I have the confidence that rural Manitobans will continue to support their communities as they have in the past and will do so in the future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, I am not asking for polling information. If the government wants to run the province by polling, they are entitled to do that. I am asking for empirical evidence, as is the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and many others.

Sunday Shopping Rural Development Institute Study

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my subsequent question is to the Minister of Rural Development.

On Wednesday, I met with the Rural Development Institute, which is attached to Brandon University. They have expertise and a history of doing rural economic studies and research in the area of rural economy.

My question is: Will the Minister of Rural Development provide the Rural Development Institute with the necessary funds to carry out the objective studies that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) now said are going to

happen? Will he give this independent body the resources to do the study that we need to have to know how many jobs are going to be lost in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, which was established under this government, is one that has carried out some very valuable studies throughout rural Manitoba. Last year, we were able to sign another three-year agreement which will certainly commit the funds that were signed for in the agreement.

Let me say that the projects that the Rural Development Institute carries out are ones which come to them from communities and ones which they feel are important for them to work on in the benefit of rural Manitoba in the future.

It is not an institution whereby we dictate exactly what kinds of research need to be done by the Rural Development Institute, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Storle: That is the lamest answer I have ever heard in this House.

Mr. Speaker, my further question is to the Minister of Rural Development.

Will the minister undertake to contract with the Rural Development Institute to do the necessary studies? Will the minister use some of the millions of dollars additional revenue that is flowing out of rural Manitoba because of the video lottery terminals to invest that money in contracting the Rural Development Institute to study in an independent way the impact of this senseless and foolish initiative called Sunday shopping?

* (1100)

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, now the member for Flin Flon suggests that, without tender, we should be contracting with somebody and just dictating that they do a particular study. That is not the approach this government takes.

We have embarked on an initiative which is going to be a trial one. During that trial period, indeed, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism will be keeping a careful eye, as will our government—indeed, as Rural Development minister, I will be keeping a careful eye on what this trial period is going to result in.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that to date, if you walk into the stores, there are many people who are

shopping on Sunday, and they are finding it a very positive experience.

Medicare Eye Examinations

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, the government has departed from its own reform action plan when it decided to cut medical coverage for eye examinations from one per year to one exam every two years. That is as of January 1 of 1993.

Mr. Speaker, eye—[interjection] They have not heard the full question yet.

Eye examinations are good preventative care. They are especially important for those under the age 19 and over the age of 64. Mr. Speaker, these groups are most likely to have problems, and they can be corrected with a regular examination. We do not want an extreme solution as the NDP in Saskatchewan have done, where they are not covering anyone below the age of 18. We have a balanced approach.

We will ask the minister to consider the Alberta solution where the examinations are covered under 19 years for one examination per year and over the age of 64, Mr. Speaker, the most rational answer in this country.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I consider that to be a positive suggestion from my honourable friend, particularly the caution not to emulate the government confreres of the official opposition in a province next to us in the direction westerly.

I also, Sir, will not bring in measures that are currently in place in some of the Maritime provinces, which are not governed by Progressive Conservatives.

Sir, what we are intending to do—and I have gotten my jesting with the opposition parties out of the way now. We are following some recommendations that we accepted in terms of eye examinations that are not different significantly from a number of other provinces that have recently made changes.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the changes proposed in Manitoba will probably meet all of the concerns my honourable friend has and better the changes that have been put in place in Alberta, because we are attempting to provide a routine eye examination every two years with the exception that if medical

need dictates a more frequent eye examination that will be available regardless of age. It will not be restricted to under 19 or above 64, but for all Manitobans who are guided by medical need for an eye examination.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, between the period of January '90 and December 31st of '91, only 42 percent of Manitobans had access to eye examinations. Out of that, between the ages of 0 and 19, there were 1.3 exams per year. This is not going to save any money. It will cause more hardships.

My question is to the minister. He should simply have a look at this and that will solve some of the questions he is raising to us today.

Mr. Orchard: We did undertake some national review of availability of eye examination, and it does vary significantly from some provinces not offering any insured service provision under eye examinations because, particularly with optometry, one must remember that there is no requirement under the Canada Health Act that the services of optometry and optometrists be provided with any assistance from the taxpayers.

We have chosen in Manitoba over a number of years to provide that service outside of the Canada Health Act, entirely at the cost of Manitoba taxpayers, and we attempted to create an environment of providing adequate service which left us with the general rule of an eye examination at taxpayers' support every two years with exceptions for medical condition to apply across all ages of Manitobans.

Mr. Cheema: Can the minister tell us when we will have the list of medical conditions that will allow the patient to have an eye examination at any time?

Mr. Orchard: I just want to caution my honourable friend, it will not be eye examinations at any time. It will be eye examinations according to medical need.

We intend to have the regulation in place for January 1. Within the next couple of weeks we hope to have those regulations available and distributed.

Immigration Manitoba Statistics

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the province of Manitoba is missing the boat on immigration, to take a pun from yesterday's Free Press.

While Manitoba has had some of the best settlement services from 1986 to 1991, the number of new Manitobans due to immigration has shrunk from 142,220 to 138,595. This has occurred when the rest of the country has enjoyed an increase in immigration of 4 percent.

My question is for the Minister responsible for Citizenship, and I emphasize the word "responsible." What is her explanation for Manitoba not getting, to use her phrase, its fair share of people moving to Canada?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I am glad that my honourable friend across the way did quote me in her question, because I have been saying for the last two years that Manitoba has not been getting its fair share of immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, since I have had the responsibility, we have reorganized the Citizenship Division in fact so that we could very quickly move towards an immigration agreement with the federal government.

We are getting very close to the point now where we believe that we have everything in place to encourage the federal government to give us in Manitoba more responsibility over immigration with the new agreement so that we can have some input and some influence into the numbers of immigrants and the kinds of immigrants that Manitoba receives.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister was for an explanation of why this is happening in Manitoba. Why are we not having the number of people coming to Manitoba that we are having in other provinces?

I would ask the minister for an explanation. Maybe she could tell us what her government is going to do in the area of recruitment, since she said on Wednesday they are moving aggressively on this area for an agreement.

* (1110)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I wish my honourable friend would listen to the answers from the first questions and not repeat the same question the second time.

I will repeat for all members of the House that we are moving towards an immigration agreement. Presently, Manitoba has no control over immigration, over the numbers of immigrants that come to Manitoba or the types of immigrants.

Mr. Speaker, we need an agreement with the federal government to have that control. It is unfortunate that she does not understand that or know the system or know how immigration happens in Canada, but we need that agreement with the federal government so that we can have control over the numbers and the types of immigrants that come to Manitoba.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, I recently read that 80 percent of the refugees in the world are women and children.

I would ask the minister: Can the minister ensure the House that not only will Manitoba's new immigration policy ensure that our proportion of refugees represents the needs in the world but, also, that the numbers will be reflected in gender and in age?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that we are having trouble getting the facts and the information through to the critic from the New Democratic opposition.

Canada, the country of Canada, presently has control over the numbers and types of immigrants that come to Canada and indeed to Manitoba. It is not the country of Manitoba that has control.

We are working towards obtaining some of that control from the federal government with our immigration agreement. When we get that in place, Mr. Speaker, then she can ask the questions about what Manitoba is doing. She should be asking the federal government.

Susan Fingold Birth Parent Search

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Family Services, who will be familiar with the situation—[interjection] Do not worry. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will have his share of questions all next week.

The Minister of Family Services will be familiar with the situation facing Susan Fingold, a constituent of mine, who has been devastated by the knowledge about mistaken identity when she was adopted and that somewhere in the system a mistake was made, files were switched and she and the adopting parents were wrongfully told that her birth mother was Jewish.

The redress that Susan Fingold seeks is reasonable, and I would like to put her request to the minister. Will the Minister of Family Services correct this error, rectify the situation, however it was made, and ensure that her search for her identity and her real birth mother is put at the top of the list, at the top of the adoption registry?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of adoption and the search for birth parents and the circumstances surrounding adoption is handled by the Post Adoption Registry. There is a process in place whereby citizens can make representation to the Post Adoption Registry and work with that unit within our department to find those details.

The whole issue of adoption is one which is very sensitive. It involves three stakeholders in the ability to search and find details, and all of those people must be taken into consideration.

The Post Adoption Registry has been set up to work with individuals, whether they be the birth parents or the adopting parents or the adoptee, to assist them in finding that information.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, my question has to do with the particular situation of Susan Fingold, where a mistake was made. I am not trying to suggest the minister made the mistake or his department. Somebody made a mistake in the system, and I am asking the minister if he would intervene in the situation and work with the Post Adoption Registry in his department to ensure that Susan's name is put at the top of the list to rectify the wrong that was done to her and ensure that she can get on with correcting the mistake and finding her true identity.

Mr. Gillieshammer: Mr. Speaker, there probably have been close to 90,000 adoptions over the last couple of decades, three decades, and at this time we have some 6,000 cases before the Post Adoption Registry. All of them bring forward individual circumstances which to them are the most significant and would like to have that service come forward as quickly as possible. We ask individuals to work with the staff at the Post Adoption Registry and try and bring forward the circumstances and the details as quickly as possible.

The member is advocating for a particular individual who I think has already approached the Post Adoption Registry. I will review this with staff

and see that fair treatment is given to the specific case that the member references.

CN Rail Employment Decline

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, we see in the press reports coming out today where the chief executive officer of CN Rail has indicated that CN is going to be losing 11,000 jobs in the country.

My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Can the minister indicate to the House and to those who are employed in the railway industry what discussions he has had with the president of CN Rail and what impact we can expect on the rail employment in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I believe the member is probably as well aware as I am of the discussions that are taking place between the executive of CN and the unions in terms of rationalizing some of the operations. In my conversations with CN, they have indicated that their credit rating is in dire jeopardy at the present time, that unless they take some tough measures that they are in financial difficulty.

I just want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that in all the dealings that basically CN has had with their employees and their unions over the years, it has always been a pretty reasonable arrangement that has been worked out for the employees. My understanding is that these negotiations are taking place. Once we have the details, I think it will become public information.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call second reading, adjourned debate, Bill 4.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 4—The Retail Businesses Sunday Shopping (Temporary Amendments) Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 4, The Retail Businesses Sunday Shopping (Temporary Amendments) Act; Loi sur l'ouverture des commerces de détail les jours fériés—modifications temporaires.

* (1120)

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I rise with the opportunity of discussing this government's initiative, this government's venture, into the area of Sunday shopping and the government's expansion of the legislation to include effectively wide-open Sunday shopping in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to divide my remarks into several areas and deal with each of them specifically as they relate to Sunday shopping based on some of the arguments that I have heard forwarded to our attention from members opposite, as well as some of the discussion surrounding the logic and the principle of the issue of Sunday shopping.

Mr. Speaker, at the onset I can indicate that I am not in support of the government's initiative for expansion of Sunday shopping. Through the course of my remarks I hope to demonstrate my reasons why I am adopting this particular position, as well as an attempt to deal with some of the issues that have been forwarded by the government for the advancement of wide-open Sunday shopping in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, several years ago, in this Chamber, a compromise was reached with the concurrence of the members opposite dealing with Sunday shopping, which, I think, was a reasonable compromise under the circumstances dealing with an issue that has been a long-standing issue in this province. I dare say and I suggest that if in fact the tables were reversed and if we were the government of the day and if we proposed a measure of this kind, the members opposite now would be self-righteously standing up and attacking our position for that particular position. I go back to the fact that the present legislation is an effective compromise, compromising all sides of the debate and dealing with the concerns raised by all Manitobans concerning Sunday shopping.

I listened with amusement, Mr. Speaker, to the arguments of the minister who used the greater proportion of time during debate to talk about all of the studies that have been brought forward, all of the public opinion polls that he had access to, that indicated that Manitobans were in favour of Sunday shopping.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I have always been one of the—well, I do not want to single myself out as the only individual. We all attempt to gauge the opinions of our constituents. We all attempt to try to represent the viewpoints of our constituents in legislation and try to reflect, in the way we vote in this Chamber, Madam Deputy Speaker, those opinions or those viewpoints and try to best reconcile those opinions, those viewpoints, together with the positions that are brought forward in this Chamber.

For the minister to rely solely on polls, solely on public relations efforts of the government as the reason for bringing in legislation seems to me to be setting a very, very dangerous precedent. In fact, if you took the logic to its fullest extreme, if the government—and I know they do weekly polls—were to actually reflect the results of its weekly polling, a vast majority of Manitobans would want to get rid of this government. The majority of Manitobans would not want this government to be in power. To take that logic to its full extent, this government should resign, because easily 60 percent or more of the province of Manitoba, and far more, do not want this government in power, so why do they not resign if the total justification for Sunday shopping is based on their polling results? It is clear. If 97 percent of the public or whatever statistics the minister voices forward wants Sunday shopping, then take it to the logical extent.

Take their weekly polling, which says the vast majority of Manitobans do not agree with the principles of this government, and call an election, because that is the logical extension of the minister's argument. In fact, that formed the total basis of the minister's argument. He went through poll after poll after poll, saying this is what Manitobans want and, therefore, we are delivering this. Consequently, Manitobans, the vast majority, do not want you as government. Resign.

Now members opposite, Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, are crying out in indignation at the suggestion that they should resign. That argument is illogical. I concur, but the government is relying on that illogical argument to put forward the basis of its Sunday shopping legislation. I propose that members opposite cry out in indignation, and I agree. That is correct.

So do not give me a bunch of polls and statistics as the justification and as the underpinnings for bringing in your legislation, Madam Deputy Speaker. In fact, I asked during the course of the

minister's remarks and he refused—I would ask that, if the minister is going to cite all of these polls and these statistics, perhaps the minister should table those so that we can have a rational viewpoint of what those opinion polls are saying in the first instance.

I would also like to comment on the economic arguments that are voiced by the government as justification, which is one of the other supporting arguments cited by the government for the introduction of this particular legislation, Madam Deputy Speaker. The minister said—and I am roughly quoting him correctly. I am going from memory—that approximately \$110 million was spent by Manitobans on Sundays in North Dakota or Minnesota or some such environs or some such areas, and that, therefore, is a justification for this Sunday shopping.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt that there is a terrible problem in this country concerning cross-border shopping. We all recognize that there is a terrible drain on the economy. What the government fails to do in their approach to try to stem this flow of cross-border shopping is actually deal with the root problem. If the government actually listened to its polling, it would find out that the root cause are things like Conservative government fiscal policy and, most importantly, the twin peaks of their policy, the GST and the Free Trade Agreement, something members opposite support.

They support the GST as they line up together with their Prime Minister, and they support the Free Trade Agreement. They line up and they support those two key financial policies, which, in effect, are the major reasons as to why we are having this terrible drain on our economy. If the government would spend more energy trying to redirect the initiatives of the federal government, Madam Deputy Speaker, we would get a lot further in stemming the drain and in dealing with the flow of money out of this country, but they will not do that.

They will do that in word, and they will do it when the Prime Minister comes to town, but a number of them will dine with the Prime Minister and will attend the function and will pump money into his re-election campaign. But the Premier (Mr. Filmon) will stand up and say, I am not going to go to dinner with that individual. One does get the impression that there is a bit of a public relations gesture in that, but that is a topic of another speech.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if they would spend their energies, if members opposite would spend their energies trying to convince the federal government of the damaging effects that its fiscal policies have had on the province of Manitoba and all the provinces, far more can be accomplished in stemming cross-border shopping than by the introduction of their present legislation.

The other component that would stem cross-border shopping is if this government had any kind of plans for the economy of Manitoba. One is very hard pressed to find out anything about what the government's program and plan is for the economy of Manitoba. I am not an economist, and I do not purport to understand all the intricacies of the economy, but I am very hard pressed, from the time that I entered this Chamber, to have any kind of comprehension of what this government is doing in the economy. In fact, it is quite clear from the government's lack of action that they are doing precisely what our Leader has said. They are standing aside. They are letting the economy drift.

As a consequence, when problems arise in the economy—and, heaven knows, there are enough of them—there is a reaction on the part of the government. The reaction is usually far too late, after the fact, and it is generally just a band-aid solution to the economic problems that we are confronting. Hence, there is a drain on the economy, monies flowing out of the province.

There is difficulty, and the government says, okay, we are going to open Sunday shopping as if somehow Sunday shopping will magically revive the economy. They have done the same things in a number of areas. Somehow the expansion of rules concerning video lotteries, or considering lotteries in general, is somehow going to revive the economy, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is somehow going to miraculously pump new money into the economy. That is not just going to happen because this government has no plan.

* (1130)

This government has had no involvement in the economy. They have let it drift. They have let thousands and thousands of people fall off the economic train, only to be picked up by welfare or by other social programs, and, at the same time, that economic train is shrinking. They do not realize, as they stay out of the economy, as the economy continues in its spiral, what happens is that tax base

upon which we rely on for so many of our programs, our initiatives, is becoming lesser and lesser.

Consequently, they have to do things like offload taxes onto municipalities and school boards through the GFT, \$79 million in the last year offloaded onto municipalities, and yesterday the Premier (Mr. Filmon) had the gall to say, well, you know, if they had only had the economic restraint that we had. I say, that is the height of hypocrisy to state that when they forced and offloaded many, many programs and many, many costs onto municipalities and school boards and then forced them to raise their taxes and have made the claim that somehow they have kept taxes down.

This government has no plan for the economy. It is a reactionary plan, and every move is reactionary. You saw it this morning in terms of finally coming around to some kind of convoluted position on the NAFTA deal. It is a total reactive government to problems that occur.

I do not fault any government in the present environment, in the present changing global economy, for having some difficulty coming to grips with adjustment. There is no question that all governments of all political stripes and all ideologies are having the same kind of difficulty. But there is a difference between trying and failing and perhaps trying and accomplishing something in the economy and doing nothing, and then reacting to put band-aids on when the problem is far worse and cannot be simply accommodated by the band-aid solutions that are adopted over and over again by this government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just reiterate the fact that if the intention is to deal with cross-border shopping and the drain on the Manitoba economy, far more could be accomplished by having a proper economic plan for reviving this dismal state of the Manitoba economy, probably the worst in my memory, the worst certainly since the Walter Weir regime, and by dealing with that and by dealing with a federal government whose fiscal policies have done nothing more than to plunge us into the worst economic straits probably since the 1930s, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So, if they dealt with the problem head on—and even if they failed, Madam Deputy Speaker, it would be hard to criticize. But to put your head in the sand, metaphorically speaking, and just to pop it up every

so often when a major calamity occurs, to put a band-aid solution on it, is not the way to go.

If they do not know, Madam Deputy Speaker, what the public is saying out there, if they are spending all this time polling on Sunday shopping, they ought to spend some time polling about what Manitobans think of the economic performance of this government and the desire on the part of Manitobans for this government to do something to help get us out of this economic morass. Those are my suggestions with respect to the economic arguments that have been put forward by government members.

The other argument trotted out by the government—

An Honourable Member: Choices.

Mr. Chomiak: —trotted out as choices, and I thank the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer). I had it down here, but I thank the member for Niakwa for prompting me on that. That is right; it is the choices argument, Madam Deputy Speaker. The argument about choices is often made by members opposite when they are in trouble on an issue, and they generally trot out the sort of PR line of choices.

I am prompted to repeat the oft-quoted phrase of the great French whomever—who I cannot recall at this moment—who said that the rich of France have the same opportunity to sleep under the bridges of France as do the poor.

An Honourable Member: I thought you were going to say, let them eat cake.

Mr. Chomiak: The member for Niakwa indicated some other great French quotes. I reserve those for specific ministers and some of the initiatives.

The choices argument is an interesting one, Madam Deputy Speaker. On the surface the choices argument is appealing, and I know again in the polling I am sure that it is. Why not provide Manitobans with that choice? The member for Lakeside is nodding his affirmative why not.

On the surface the choices argument makes sense, and I dare say that people have said to me the whole question of choice—if that were only the case, Madam Deputy Speaker, then perhaps logic would dictate that would be the prevailing argument, but there are some serious flaws in that. Not everyone has the choice, and it is always the case of who gets a chance to make the choice and who does not have a chance to make the choice.

A lot of people are going to be forced to work on Sundays and have no choice. Now, I know members opposite will say they have put protection into the legislation that employees do not have to work and that they are not forced to work; it is only volunteers. I will get to that argument later, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I think there are serious flaws in that argument.

The question is, who makes the choice? Where are the forces that are going to be put on individuals and families and people in society as a result of wide-open Sunday shopping? There is no doubt that people will be forced to work. There is no doubt that people will be forced to change their lifestyle. There is no doubt that people will be forced to do things that they were not in the past, by virtue of the competition—I will agree—and by the pressures on them to stay open on Sunday and to do things on Sunday that they otherwise would not have the opportunity of doing.

It will become a very major problem, particularly in rural Manitoba where the choice will be removed. They will have no choice. Their choices will be limited to having to open or having perhaps to go out of business, having to work or perhaps not having a job.

I always thought that one of our roles in this Legislature was to protect those, Madam Deputy Speaker, who may not have a choice. It is an interesting argument to see, when you reverse the tables, who will actually have a choice in this situation. There will be many individuals, many businesses and many people who will no longer have a choice who will be forced to be open, who will be forced to do what goes against their principles and goes against their better judgment by opening and by participating on Sunday. I have real difficulty with that choice argument, because fundamentally it is a question of who gets to make that choice. A lot of individuals will not have that opportunity to make that choice as a result of this legislation that has been put in.

I want to deal with the whole question of the trial period. It is an interesting issue that the government should choose to launch its trial period over the Christmas season, over into the holiday season when retailers generally do the bulk of their trade, Madam Deputy Speaker. I dare say that it has been my experience, and I think members opposite will agree, that generally when something is put on a trial period it has very rarely, if ever, been eliminated.

I just look back to the trial period of the lotteries that were brought in, I believe, to fund Manitoba Centennial only, and I remind members of this House that income tax has also been put in as a trial period on a temporary basis. I recall Bill Vander Zalm, the then-Premier of British Columbia, bringing in liquor openings on Sunday on a trial basis only during the course of the Expo period. We all know that trial periods generally become fixed in stone, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Why is that, David? Why is it that they become fixed in stone?

Mr. Chomiak: The member for St. Norbert has suggested to me, why is that, and there is no question that once the wheels move forward and once the legislation is in place and once the lifestyles have adapted, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very hard to change and to go back on. There is no question that will happen in this case. I really think the trial period argument is strictly a public relations gesture to try to assuage the rural opinion, the opinion of others who were concerned about Sunday shopping. It is a middle-ground position taken by the government who either do not have the courage of their convictions to come forward with it or they simply do not have it, so they are bringing in trial period as a public relations gesture. So I do not think the trial period argument amounts to much in terms of argument.

* (1140)

My strongest reason, Madam Deputy Speaker, amongst many, but one of the arguments that I feel very strongly about concerning Sunday shopping has to do with business and has to do with competition. It seems to me that one of the things that we are doing in our society is taking away the opportunities and the rights of a small business, in particular, in favour of the rights of large business and large enterprises that can do quite well in our society.

I cite the example of the small corner store versus the large international chains that have come in or the small gift shop versus the large department stores, Madam Deputy Speaker. The large department stores and the large international chains can do very, very well on their own; they do not need the benefit and protections afforded to many of the smaller operations in our society.

I fear for a lot of the small family-run operations who in the compromise—and I indicated at the beginning of my comments that the present legislation that is now being amended was a compromise—derive some benefit from the compromise position, and that is they were allowed to gain some income and to gain some business on Sunday when the large conglomerates were closed and previously sucked away that particular business. They are going to lose that particular competitive advantage now, and by virtue of losing that competitive advantage, we are going to see them, many of them, probably go out of business. That will seriously hurt an economy that members opposite supposedly say they—I should say the members opposite always talk about being the protectors of small business. That is hopelessly wrong, and I disagree with it, but that again is another discussion.

They do not do that. They do do that in their gestures and in their economic policies, but that aside, Madam Deputy Speaker, this initiative will hurt these small businesses and these family-run operations that had a competitive advantage and had an opportunity on Sunday to make up for a lot of the business that has been lost increasingly to the large companies, to the large malls and related enterprises, all of whom do quite well and do not need that competitive advantage.

That has been a long-held concern of members on this side of the House and me, in particular, when I have looked at the change in the way businesses are operating and the nature of business and enterprise in our society.

These small-run businesses and operations who had the opportunity with the compromised legislation to make up for what was lost in the past are no longer going to have that opportunity. We will see the demise of many more of them, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the loss again of many more jobs and many more advantages in our economy. That is a strongly held belief of ours. I think it is something that the government has not considered. I have never heard those comments considered. I mean it goes back to the question of competition.

I noted the comments of the Minister of Labour, the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), when he talked about market-driven economy and how we have to compete. We do accept, in our society, limits on the market-driven economy. We do accept that members of this Chamber and that

governments have a right, that the people have a right to set limits on the market-driven economy, that there are reasonable strictures that we put in place on market-driven economies so that they do not run rampant and roughshod over people.

One of the compromises of the previous legislation was that it allowed these smaller businesses to have a bit of an advantage versus the large multinationals, and the large corporations who have been able to run roughshod over a lot of the small business and the small operations, Madam Deputy Speaker. It was a reasonable limit to put on. I mean if we take the Minister of Labour, the member for Lac du Bonnet's (Mr. Praznik) comments to a natural extreme, why do we have any laws on opening and closing at all, why do we not just go 24 hours a day? Why do we not just allow unlimited sale of liquor, et cetera, and other items in the grocery stores like they do in other jurisdictions? Of course, we do not do that. That argument is absurd.

We do not allow that because we, as a society, have said that we are going to put reasonable limitations and reasonable restrictions on the free-driven market economy for the benefit of our society. Why is that?

Madam Deputy Speaker, we had the interesting announcement this morning, which we support, of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and one of the members for Brandon, that the government is taking a strong initiative against drunk driving. We agree with that.

Well, if we take the market-driven economy, as brought forward by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), to a national extreme, why do we not allow liquor sales 24 hours a day? We do not allow liquor sales 24 hours a day because we do not want people who are intoxicated or otherwise going into a liquor store at 2 a.m., purchasing liquor and perhaps driving and causing havoc and destruction on the highway. That is a reasonable limitation that is put on our citizens. I think most members of the public would agree, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So the argument that somehow this market-driven economy should run it all and that is why we should allow Sunday shopping just does not hold water with me, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I think logically does not make any sense. There are reasonable limits that should be put on. We had a reasonable compromise in our previous legislation, and that reasonable compromise is being lost by

virtue of the government's move towards wide-open Sunday shopping.

I generally, Madam Deputy Speaker, try to keep personal anecdotes out of speeches, but I just want to relate an experience of mine in Los Angeles several years ago when I was visiting and had occasion on a Sunday afternoon to be wandering through a mall. I was just struck at how an American society and societies outside of Manitoba seem to have lost any comprehension of some of the ethics and some of the mores that we previously adopt in our society. I can remember remarking to my wife at the time how again this was an example to me of how things were a little bit different in Manitoba and how we operated differently in Manitoba.

To add to that anecdote, I recall being in rural Manitoba many times on Sunday mornings and thinking how different we are than in many American places with the hustle and bustle of the downtown, even in smaller communities and the lack of any kind of cohesion in society. Now I venture to say—and this is strictly a personal opinion—that this initiative will go a long way towards further undermining that little distinctiveness and that little bit of difference that we have as Manitobans and as Canadians from our American counterparts. It inextricably binds us more and more towards a sort of North American global economy and a North American global society view of things which, in its ultimate conclusion, will be nothing more than an integrated society, an integrated economy and indeed perhaps an integrated culture.

There are these little things, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we should really pay attention to in terms of where we are going as a society and where we are going as a people. I think this is just one of those flagpoles and one of those flags that raises and says, we should step back and say, is this what we want, is this the direction we want to move in, because again the logical extension of that would be, well, now that we have Sunday shopping and we are stemming the flow of money from Canada, let us—gee, liquor is a problem, you can get booze anywhere in the United States, or many places on a Sunday, maybe we should allow booze sales on Sundays in all of these places, maybe we should allow it on a 24-hour basis. You see where that argument takes us.

* (1150)

Members opposite may not agree, but I sincerely believe that it really is the thin edge of the wedge, and that we should take a very close look at where we are going as a society and what this particular legislation will do to the fabric of our society and where we are heading as a society in this regard.

Earlier in my comments, I alluded to the fact of choice and the government's insistence that volunteerism will rule the day with respect to working on Sunday. I think that is hopelessly naive, and it is a hopelessly naive argument on the part of the government to assume that somehow Sunday shopping and the volunteers who will work on Sunday, that system will somehow not result in undue pressure being placed on employees to have to work on Sunday because we all know that in human relations—and heaven knows, in labour relations, subtle pressures and influences are placed on individuals and on employees every single day.

Even if the argument can be made that there will be no overt pressure and no overt insistence on the part of employees to work on Sunday—and I do not even know if that will be the case, but if that is the case—there will be all kinds of subtle pressure and all kinds of subtle influence on the part of individuals and on the part of employees to work on Sundays.

Its effect will be obvious, and those individuals will have no choice. Those individuals will be forced to work on Sunday with all of the ramifications and all of the effects that working on Sunday and that those factors will have on life and lifestyle.

I would also like to deal with the issue of Sunday shopping from a perspective of many concerns that have been raised to me by constituents, and that is, traditionally in this country we have set aside one day. Many individuals whom I represent set aside another day, Saturday, as a religious day of observance and as a religious day of rest. Many others observe Sunday as a religious day of rest and as a day for religious experience, and other faiths and other religions reserve different days.

I think that we can redress wrongs in our society, and perhaps the unfairness that has been attributed to some of those religions by not perhaps recognizing as strongly as we should their opportunities for their religious observances, although I think we have gone some way towards recognizing religious observances and experiences or other members of other religions.

Nonetheless, Sunday has been traditionally a day for a large number of Canadians of religious experience and of rest. While this has been the case, this legislation, no doubt, will be disruptive to that recognition.

I do not want to get into religious arguments one way or the other because I am very wary of venturing into that field. I have my fundamental spiritual and religious beliefs, and I know members of this Chamber have theirs and hold them as sincerely as I do. So I have no right to impose my views on them or vice versa. Nonetheless, I think that the effect on our society and on those individuals who perhaps wish to practise their religion on Sunday, there will be an effect on them. I think that is something that has to be considered in this legislation and has to be considered overall in terms of how we approach this issue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I could probably talk for a good deal of time on this particular issue on a whole series of grounds and a whole series of arguments, but I also know that time is short on this day and that members on this side of the House want to put some comments in the record as well with respect to this. So I will wrap up my comments.

For the reasons cited, I will not be supporting this legislation. I have discussed it with many constituents on a continuing basis at the door. I will continue to do that. I think, in principle, the compromise that was reached previously made good sense for the province of Manitoba. I believe that most of the arguments that have been trotted out by the government are not logical and do not stand up under scrutiny. I think that, in the final analysis, this is in fact a political reaction on the part of the government to try to appear to be doing something in the economy.

The interesting thing about this is that it does not create any more money. There will be no one spending any more money on Sundays. There will be no more money created, no more wealth created. All that will happen is that what was previously spent in the province of Manitoba on six days will now be spent on seven days. So the economic argument holds no water.

Clearly, there is an argument with respect to stemming some of the money that flows out of the province on cross-border shopping. As I indicated earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, that problem can be addressed in a far superior way by a concerted

economic plan on the part of this government and by some initiatives and, in particular, pressure on the federal government to deal with the matter of the GST and to deal with the entire fiscal mess that the federal government has put us in. So the economic argument in terms of creation of wealth and somehow that this is going to give a boost to the economy does not make a lot of sense to me and can certainly be addressed in other ways and in other fashions.

For that reason and the reasons that I cited earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, I certainly will not be supporting this legislation. I hope that those members opposite who have been kept in check and kept in tow by the government with respect to this legislation will think through clearly what their position is and will look at the illogic of many of the government's, in fact, of all of the government's arguments, and will look to the advantages that have been cited by many of us on this side of the House to the present compromise situation that is in place and will take a stand. I am urging members opposite to take a stand on this issue and to not give in under pressure from their colleagues and to do what their consciences tell them to do, to do the right thing, and to not support this legislation. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Deputy Speaker, I feel that it is important to speak on this topic.

I must admit, though, I have given this a considerable amount of thought. When I hear the members across the way—although I may have some hesitation in Sunday shopping and adapting to change, which I think is something that everybody is having difficulty in dealing with, when I hear the members across the way, it even convinces me more to support this legislation that probably is long overdue.

We are in the '90s now. I think we have to consider the fact that this is a time when we are all subject to change, and especially in the '90s the winds of change are upon us, as we make reference to in the throne speech, and I think that is ever so prevalent. We always have to be examining our positions in life. If we do not do that, we are not going to be able to deal with the responsibilities that are put on us as government and members representing our constituents.

I think the legislation that is proposed is visionary. It is something that we as politicians have to examine from time to time, and through consultation with our constituents we have to do the thing that is best for them. One thing that is really prevalent through this whole aspect of legislation is I think that we have to consider the fact that the people are the government and we have to listen to what the people are saying. The decision to allow Sunday shopping on a trial basis responds to the public's demand. It expands the choices that people are looking for.

* (1200)

People are looking for choices, and the freedoms in government seem today—if we follow the legislation and the direction that the opposition speak of we would have more government, more legislation that would actually curtail the efforts and the freedoms that people are looking for today.

This flexibility of choice has been available to Canadians in other provinces for some time. You know, when we consider the opposition in terms of how they speak out against this, it seems that they want to build walls around Manitoba. They do not want to let people come into Manitoba. They do not want to entice tourism. They do not want people leaving the province.

We know what happened with the Great Wall of China. We know what happened with the Soviet Union, with the heavy legislation that is there. That just does not work, and we have to address that. People have to have the freedoms. We are living in the best country in this world, and we do not want to take away the freedoms that have been offered and we have gained over those years.

The current legislation that we have now restricts the retail operation to four employees. This restriction creates unnecessary inconvenience. For anybody who has gone into a shopping mall or to Safeway or any other place for that matter on a Sunday, the inconvenience is unbelievable. People are frustrated with that, and they are looking to government to open up the options that are available to them. When we consider the freedom that we have in this country, when we have restricted Sunday shopping, I just really do not understand the mentality of some people when they take that attitude. With more and more two-income families that we have out there today, single-parent families, the weekend is the only time for these people to shop.

I think we also have to consider the fact that this shopping can also be a family time. This is a time when families can share the time with their children and go out and window shop.

We talk about disposable incomes. We do not need to have more incomes as far as we are concerned within Manitoba. What we want to do is to attract people and give them the opportunities to come into this province and to spend their free time and to spend their money and their dollars here in Manitoba.

All aspects of our economy, particularly the retail sector, such operational barriers that we have in existence today with four employees just does nothing to encourage or improve the retail sales business activity in the province.

The results of several economic studies and opinion research weigh heavily in the favour of Sunday shopping, but some people would choose to ignore that. This government chooses to listen to these people because this is where the research is being done. It is talking to the people of Manitoba where these researchers have gained their information.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Studies conducted in North Dakota show that Sunday shopping has clearly had a positive impact on that state's economy, and I do not understand how anybody could think that if it works in North Dakota why it would not have an effect, and a positive effect, on our economy here in Manitoba. Unfortunately, North Dakota's gain has been our loss.

How long are we going to continue to do this? I mean, we have to get with the '90s. We have to get with the times to be able to provide the tax dollars and the services that we as Manitobans are looking for and people are demanding more and more all the time.

Manitobans' spending in North Dakota is estimated to be approximately \$92 million as a result of opening on Sunday. Sunday shopping has become an economic boost to the people of North Dakota—\$92 million. Can you not imagine what that would do for the economy of Manitoba, for the retail business of Manitoba, the hotel association?

Several members on this side have made mention of tourism dollars coming into Manitoba—North Dakotans, Minnesotans. They

come in on a Friday night for a hockey game. They come in to support the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. They come in for the Folk Arts Council, the Folklorama. Sunday shopping is not available to them, and they laugh at us. I mean, it is a real joke. I am embarrassed in many cases when I look at—I get to hear the responses of these people coming into Manitoba and saying, what are you doing here? Why are you not looking ahead? It is all over the States, in 50 states in the United States and all of the provinces all around us.

The combined spending by Manitobans in Minnesota in total cross-border shopping attributable to Manitobans spending in the U.S. on Sundays is approximately \$110 million. That is an annual estimate. Our estimates show that shopping in Manitoba could have a positive economic impact on our provincial economy and retaining any portion of that \$110 million would be of benefit to Manitobans. It would be a benefit to the retail sector of our province.

All you have to do is to drive down Portage Avenue in the Sturgeon Creek area to see the number of businesses where the doors are closed, or the number of places where the lease signs are up. How can you not support it? When these businesses are going out of business, what is that doing? Who is showing concern?

Sunday shopping is not going to solve the ills of all the economic conditions of this province, but anything that we can do to enhance it is going to be of benefit to Manitobans. It is going to enhance the opportunities for people to work more freely with the hours that are available to them in Sunday shopping. It is going to add a lot of opportunities to Manitobans and to the tourists that are coming in and spending their money, and that, I think, is really first and foremost.

There have been attempts to identify the volume of goods and services that would be purchased here rather than in the U.S. with the introduction of Sunday shopping here in Manitoba. These estimates show increased annual retail expenditures ranging from about \$100 million to a maximum of about \$315 million.

In addition to these findings, all of which suggest potential economic gain for the Manitoba economy, opinion research shows that in terms of personal preference, a majority of Manitobans support the introduction of Sunday shopping. Fifty-four percent

of respondents surveyed favour Sunday shopping unconditionally, and self-described cross-border shoppers were among those most in favour of Sunday shopping. More than three-quarters of the respondents favoured Sunday shopping under at least one of these conditions, and even among those opposed to the Sunday shopping or unsure of their position, 37 percent of these opposed favoured an initial trial period which we have proposed with this legislation.

* (1210)

There is some concern that Sunday shopping will shift consumer spending in smaller towns to larger centres, and I do not really believe that, because Manitobans, for the most part, are loyal to their communities. I think they have to examine, and I think they are also loyal to Manitoba, but for anybody to say that the rural communities are not going to examine their economic futures and to support the businesses that are in their communities, I think that is absolutely wrong.

I think they will identify with the importance of maintaining those businesses, and they will understand that they have to support those businesses, that only Sunday shopping is not going to make the difference in keeping them in business. They are going to have to support them five and six and seven days out of the week.

To say that people are going to not support their rural communities is absurd. You are not even examining the issues that are before us today. I think that for the most part the only thing that I can do in listening to the members across the way is that they are looking only at the political opportunities that are available, and all they want to do is to oppose the government. They want to ignore the fact the people—this government is listening to the people, but they want to ignore that.

The research supports Sunday shopping. Ninety-seven percent of the rural Manitobans surveyed say Sunday shopping would not change their shopping habits, and they say that they will continue to do the same volume of shopping in their own communities. Only 3 percent indicated they might shop less in their own community, so when the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) says that that is not the case, the research does not support that. I have to ask her, and other members on the other side, what research have they done? To me, you are putting your head in the sand. Most

other Canadian people and provinces currently allow Sunday shopping, and the research conducted in these jurisdictions has shown strong support for expanded shopping on Sundays.

The key findings of the research: the studies conclude that over three-quarters of all respondents surveyed favoured Sunday shopping; and over three-quarters of those who work on Sundays favour Sunday shopping. Further, the support is highest among single parents, working women and those who work irregular hours.

Can you imagine how difficult it would be for a single parent with a child, or a person who works irregular hours to go out and be able to shop, do their Christmas shopping? It does not make sense. Why should we restrict those people? Are you trying to suggest that there is a law for the rich and a law for the poor, because that is what you are suggesting?

A large majority indicated Sunday shopping does not interfere with their family activities. I go to church on Sunday morning. I get out at 12 or 12:30 p.m. There is still lots of time for me to spend time with my family. There is time for me to go and shop if I have to. There is nothing wrong with that.

Would you want to restrict the freedoms of Manitobans in having the choice of whether or not they shop, or whether they do not, or whether they go to a movie? What is the difference? They go to movies on Sunday. I think if we were to take a survey of this Chamber, we would find that most members in this Chamber do something, either in their jobs or something other than go to church or spend time with their families. I am sure that every one of us do that. Why should we not have those freedoms? If I wish to spend time with my family, it does not necessarily have to be on a Sunday.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

God said that if we want to save Sunday for the Sabbath—God never said that Sunday was the only day that we should have rest. What about the Seventh Day Adventists? Do they look at that? Are you going to restrict them of their freedoms? They do not shop on Saturday. So you are going to restrict the Seventh Day Adventists from shopping on Sunday.

Since Sunday shopping hurts these individuals more than any other in any other society, failure to introduce Sunday shopping shows a lack of sensitivity to the needs of these groups and the time

pressures under which they must function and to point out that the demographics continue to show increases in the number of Manitobans who belong to these groups. We cannot live in the past. We have to live in the future. As I said in my speech in the reply to the throne speech, you have to look at your future, because that is where you are going to spend the rest of your lives.

If you do not address that issue, we are going to be a have-not province which is what the NDP or the opposition are suggesting that they want us to be. They brought in the legislation in 1988 that restricted Sunday shopping and that was passed unanimously. Why can the opposition not come forward and say, listen, this is for the betterment of Manitobans?

An Honourable Member: Let us take the politics out of it.

Mr. McAlpine: Let us take the politics out, because that is exactly what you are doing. This is a political opportunity for you to stand in your seats and oppose the government. [interjection] It is not enough today. People are fed up with people who are opposing legislation just for the sake of opposing legislation and trying to gain some points that would enable them in some remote possibility, the pie in the sky, that they might be re-elected come the next election. I have news for those people, because this government is listening to the people of Manitoba, and we are listening to the people of Manitoba with this legislation.

I want to stress that the legislative amendments we are proposing in connection with Sunday shopping are designed to provide choices to all groups affected by the change. While the amendments respond to Manitoba consumer interest and expanded shopping options, they also protect the rights of retailers and their employees. Through an amendment to The Employment Standards Act, employees are empowered to refuse to work on Sundays. They do not have to work on Sundays if they do not want to. This right to refuse work applies only to employees of those businesses that are allowed to open now as a result of the Sunday shopping trial period. All they have to do is to give 14 days notice to their employer, and the employees may opt out of working on Sundays.

* (1220)

The amended legislation further protects employees' rights. It prohibits employers from

discharging staff based solely on their refusal to work Sunday shifts or based on any employee efforts to enforce these rights as defined under the amendment. For the opposition to suggest that an employer is going to take unfair advantage of an employee who chooses to exercise that right and give 14 days notice, that that employee is going to be discharged some way or another, that to me is sheer speculation and is unfounded. Employers are responsible people. They want responsible employees, and they are going to act accordingly when they are treating those employees.

I think we have to understand, and maybe the opposition members across the way, very few of whom have had the experience of operating a business of their own—the employer is only as good as the employees who are around him. So I feel that it is very important for the employer to support the employee in every way that they possibly can. For them to say that the employer is going to take unfair advantage of an employee because of an employee's choice not to work on Sunday is unfounded.

Retailers too have their rights protected under these proposed amendments. They may or may not elect to open their doors to the public on Sunday. The choice is theirs.

The commercial shopping centres that try to exercise authority on the businesses in that mall, as an example, have traditionally been required to open their doors because of lease requirements. This amendment protects those businesses so that the choice is theirs as to whether or not they want to open.

With these amendments we are proposing, these retailers will have the option to close on Sundays regardless of the provisions in their lease or any other agreement. This provides a more level playing field for all retail business owners and ensures that those who wish to remain closed on Sundays can do so without any penalty.

You know it is interesting, my other life in this world—

An Honourable Member: You have another life?

Mr. McAlpine: I have another life, and I have been in it for some 18 years. I really have not felt any pleasure in working on Sunday but, if I wanted to survive in this world, it was a necessity. But it was my choice. I had the choice.

If I apply my business, my profession as a real estate broker to all the members on the other side, if they would give me the responsibility of marketing their homes and those homes were on the market for months and months and months, which we have seen over the last while, the last three or four years in this province, I dare say that they would bring pressure upon me to have Sunday open houses. If I were to survey anyone across the way, I am sure that that would be the case.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): If you believe in freedom, you believe in free vote on this issue.

Mr. McAlpine: You know, the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) talks about freedoms, which I have addressed. When you talk about restricting Sunday shopping, that is taking away the freedoms of the people of Manitoba. It is taking away the freedoms of the shoppers. It is taking away the freedoms of the businesses that are out there that are trying to compete.

This is an opportunity for people to exercise the choices that they want, and it is our hope that this move will help to stimulate the economy in Manitoba because this is something that we have to address. The more business that we can create in this province, the more tax dollars that this government is going to have; and the more tax dollars that we have, the more freedoms and the less that we are going to have to impose in terms of taxes, payroll taxes, that have been imposed on businesses today. That will enable us to remove those taxes so that people can go out there and have the choices that they wish. That is creating an opportunity, a business environment that has suffered over the last 20 years because of legislation that has been imposed on by former governments.

Today we have to be looking at the '90s. We cannot be looking back 20 years ago when it was not uncommon for businesses to stay closed on Sunday.

When we talk about Sunday closures, I think it is really important to address the real issue here: what it is going to do in terms of the activity in generating interest as far as Manitoba is concerned, in addressing the issues of our economy, in addressing the interests of the people that we are here to govern. I firmly believe that the people are asking governments today to have less government, turn the governments over to the

people, and listen to the people and allow the people the choice as to what they want. In this legislation, the research that has been done supports this.

Getting back to my experience as a real estate broker, I said to my minister of my church, you know, sometimes I go out of church and I rush home, I have lunch and then what I have to do is I have to get ready for an open house. I said, I feel almost a little bit like a heathen.

An Honourable Member: Sacrilegious.

Mr. McAlpine: It is sacrilegious in the sense that if we follow what people are suggesting that the religious aspect of this is first and foremost. My minister said to me, well, I preach on Sunday. You look around and you talk about the people who have to work, people who are on shift work. I have to work, and even though I felt some discomfort in going out and doing that, I knew that I had to do it because it was my source of living. Sometimes, with real estate people, the only time that the opportunity is to work is after six o'clock at night, Saturdays and Sundays.

I think that we have to address that issue. We have to accept the fact that we are going through some changes, and if we do not—but my minister, it was interesting what his response was. He said, you know, you have to do what you have to do, and it does not matter that I chose maybe that I had to work on Sunday. I could rest on Monday. I could respect God's word to one day of rest. There is nothing wrong with that. Lots of people are faced with that situation and that decision, but, if we want governments to make the decisions for everybody, it is the wrong concept. People want to make their own choices. People have to take responsibility for themselves.

You cannot sit in your seats and say, listen, we are going to do this for the people, we are going to make the decisions for the people. We have to give them the choices. The choice that this government is giving is listening to the people and talking to our constituents and hearing what they are saying. Through this legislation, Mr. Speaker, what we are

doing is enabling the people to make their own choices, to stand up and be heard. If they want to work on Sunday or if they want to shop on Sunday, those choices are theirs.

Mr. Speaker, I see the time is quickly running out. I want to thank you for the opportunity of putting these few remarks on the record. I do have to say that I have had consultation with my constituents. There are some people who have been indifferent about this but, after having conversations with them, they do see the point and the benefits of Sunday shopping.

So I have to stand in my place here today and say that I will be supporting this amendment, and I look forward to the comments from across the way. I hope that some of the members there will see the light and be able to stand up and take a free vote, because I do not believe that everybody across the way is against Sunday shopping. I think that maybe we should talk to the people across the way and say, listen, stand up if you are in favour of Sunday shopping and say your piece and speak out on behalf of your constituents. Do not just oppose it just for the sake of opposing it.

Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek will have eight minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

Erratum

On Monday, December 7, 1992, Hansard No. 8A, the following comments attributed to Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training) should be have been attributed to Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne).

On Page 273, left-hand column, third paragraph: "Mr. Speaker, that is correct. The government has allowed the students to pick up on their debt load with its inability to fund the university."

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