



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
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
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
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flin	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>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 21, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in the orderly marketing of Canadian wheat, barley and other grain products since its inception in 1935; and

WHEREAS the federal Minister of Agriculture is considering removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board; and

WHEREAS this is another step towards dismantling the board; and

WHEREAS, as in the case with the removal of oats from the Wheat Board in 1989, there has been no consultation with the board of directors of the Wheat Board, with the 11-member advisory committee to the board or the producers themselves; and

WHEREAS the federal minister has said that there will be no plebiscite of farmers before the announcement is made.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers on this issue as soon as possible.

* * *

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

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Manitoba government, in an unprecedented move has cut the public education funding for children of Manitoba by \$16 million (2 percent) in 1993-94; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has cut much needed support services to special needs students by laying off clinicians; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has removed the local autonomy of school boards by capping special requirement increases at 2 percent; and

WHEREAS the quality of education for our children has been drastically impacted and reduced by these measures; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has not demonstrated a commitment to providing an adequate and useful education for each child in this province.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Manitoba government consider increasing its funding to education so that the children of this province receive the quality education they deserve and need.

* * *

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

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* (1005)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 37—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 37, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced and that the same now be received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table his message as well.

Motion agreed to.

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 R.J. Waugh School thirty-five Grade 6 students under the direction of Marg Kempthorne. This school is located in the constituency of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Mr. Rocan).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Assiniboine River Diversion Data Collection

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, users of the Assiniboine River, upstream and downstream, have been raising legitimate concerns about the lack of data being applied to the Pembina Valley project and the data that is going to be utilized by the government in its environmental hearings.

The community of Brandon has said, and I quote: We know more about the water supply for our city than the provincial government—and they do not trust the provincial government on this issue.

The City of Winnipeg has had an executive policy report stating that the data utilized by the 1990 study is insufficient for purposes of the environmental process that is going on now.

We have just reviewed a report on the Assiniboine River flow enhancement conducted by the Water Resources branch of the Department of Natural Resources, which also states in its conclusions that although Manitoba Water Resources does monitor new licensed water usage, there is limited factual data of overall water usage from the Assiniboine River. It is therefore difficult for water managers to make informed operating decisions or to develop rational water management plans.

I would like to ask the Premier, if there is not sufficient data on the Assiniboine River basin, how can the government be proceeding on the fast track with their environmental hearings?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, very straightforwardly, if there is not sufficient data, then the Clean Environment Commission will make that judgment as to whether or not they have sufficient data upon which to make a decision.

That is the way the process is. That is the way it was put forward in the legislation that was passed by the New Democratic government, and we are following the process.

Assiniboine River Diversion Consultations—Saskatchewan

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe it is adequate for the

government to have a narrow-scoping proposal in the Department of Environment which is, of course, the necessary area which the environmental review panel must look at. If the scoping is narrow and data is wrong, the conclusions, therefore, I think, will be inadequate for the people of Manitoba. I am very concerned about the government with this fast-track approach, given their own department's data.

Mr. Speaker, the Assiniboine River and the Shellmouth Dam has an agreement of 50 per cent— [interjection] I know the minister is concerned about my questions. There are other members of the Conservative caucus who may agree with us with their public comments and have had to stand up with their constituents on this project.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Has he discussed the issue of the Assiniboine River flow and the Assiniboine River diversion with the Province of Saskatchewan, given the fact that we have a 50 percent share agreement with the Province of Saskatchewan dealing with the upper Assiniboine runoff?

* (1010)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member makes some very sweeping comments about the guidelines that have been put in place for this review. As a matter of fact, an awful lot of people who are looking at this project really made the point that these guidelines went beyond what they expected in terms of the outline that the Department of Environment had put forward.

Frankly, these are issues that will be very widely discussed and aired at the commission. As to the conditions of the guidelines, the commission may well choose to ask questions beyond that if they believe there is insufficient information.

I really challenge the member of the opposition to look at the process that was put in place, drafted and brought to culmination by the administration prior to this one. Now he stands there and says it is no good.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that the process requires accurate data, competent, reliable and credible data, and it requires broad scoping arrangements for the panel to look at. We have called all along for a basin-wide review and a federal-provincial review of this project.

The minister did not answer the question. The question was: Given the agreement with the Province of Saskatchewan dealing with the upper

Assiniboine River and the 50 percent flow agreement that we have with the Province of Saskatchewan, has this government discussed this project with the Province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, we have been in discussion with the Province of Saskatchewan virtually since the day we came into office about water flows all the way along the border—Reindeer Lake, the Shellmouth reservoir, the Rafferty-Alameda, the Souris River.

Frankly, he is choosing to characterize the volumes that are being discussed in such a way that would indicate that this will somehow be a critical factor. That will be clearly answered by the proponents or they will not get a licence.

Francophone Schools Governance Cost Analysis

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, this is a question to the Minister of Finance or the Acting Minister of Education.

The government is in the process of implementing the Supreme Court decision on Francophone governance of schools as it must, but in order to have an informed public debate on this issue, on the Francophone governance issue, it is important, even essential, that the public and the school divisions understand the financial impact of that decision and the funding for existing school divisions.

Can the Minister of Finance or the Acting Minister of Education tell this House if he has computed the potential cost, based on eligible students, that would be transferred from existing school divisions by way of grants? Can he provide us with the specific amounts and table that information in the Legislature here?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a definitive response to that question. Certainly, the government, in setting up the model, set as a major principle that there would not be additional total costs, obviously other than start-up resources that would be required in some respects.

I would encourage the member to direct those questions specifically to the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) in committee. We are hoping that this House will give quick and speedy passage to second reading on this bill, so those types of

questions and/or concerns around that point can be brought forward in committee.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister of Finance should be aware of what costs we are dealing with here.

In light of the fact that we have estimated the transfer at some \$29 million, based on the Gallant report, of provincial grants and up to \$7 million of property tax revenue, in light of the fact that the minister's policy is that there would be a transfer at the local level of property tax revenue, could the Minister of Finance or the Acting Minister of Education tell us if he is planning to compensate existing school divisions for this transfer, and what form, what level, that compensation would be?

* (1015)

Mr. Manness: Again, Mr. Speaker, the very general principles—and, again, I will only address the general principles in my response—are that the local school division, existing, may have to transfer a portion of its revenue at no higher levy rate but equivalent to the number of students who now, by way of their parents, choose to take their schooling under the auspices of the new Francophone division.

Mr. Speaker, as far as the total amount of revenue coming forward from the assessment, the assessed base, we would anticipate that there would be no increase in the total. Obviously, there will be a split prorated on the number of students who stay in the local division as compared to now those who are governed under the new Francophone division.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about at least \$29 million plus the local revenue from local taxpayers that would be transferred. It could be as high as \$35 million to \$40 million.

In light of the tight financial situation that school divisions find themselves in as a result, to a large degree, of this government's policies, I want to ask the minister if he does not think it is fair and reasonable that there would be adequate compensation because of the massive declining enrollments that may occur in some school divisions as a result of the changeover to ease the impact of this transfer.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Speaker, the question is fair, but as I point out to the member, he would be well aware that we have an education finance formula in place which takes into account declining enrollment. Obviously, if there are fewer students to

teach, there are adjustments that are going to have to be made within existing divisions.

The education finance formula deals with it, and we think that given the edict and the directive from the Supreme Court, we have followed a reasonable course in trying to provide what is required under the Supreme Court ruling and yet within a finite pool of resources.

Social Planning Council Recommendations

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, one of the frustrating parts about sitting in this House is the Estimates process where one tries to get the government to accept new ideas and to listen to what the critics have to say, but to no avail. It does not really matter whether it is this government or that government. Neither one of them pays any attention, but one hopes that they do listen to groups which make representations on behalf of the children of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) met this week with the Social Planning Council which raised with him specific concerns about the cuts to children in the province of Manitoba as a result of the budget.

Can the minister say, since he was obviously not convinced by the critics of either party about the disproportionate, so-called fairness being borne by children in this budget, if he listened to the Social Planning Council?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I have met frequently with the Social Planning Council to discuss issues they bring forward from time to time, and research they do. They had contacted me in March of this year to set up a meeting, and because of some of their internal difficulties and changes, they were not able to come forward until just this week.

We did have a good discussion on a wide range of subjects. They brought along with them some other groups that had issues to put forward, and I can say that we listened intently and look forward to further meetings with them and will look seriously at any of the research they bring forward.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us today if he listened clearly to the presentations that were made on behalf of children and the very high poverty rate—in fact the highest poverty rate in

this country for children in poverty is in the province of Manitoba—and if he is going to adjust policies of his department to better represent those same children?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you and the House that we did listen very carefully.

The issues presented were on a wide range of subjects, including the advocates they brought with them. We have always valued the information brought forward by the Social Planning Council, and we did have a lively discussion on some of the factors that they feel our department and this government should take into consideration.

As I indicated, we have made commitments to meet with them in the future.

* (1020)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, but if it is correct, as the minister has just said, that he values the information which the Social Planning Council brings forward, is he going to change the direction of the Department of Family Services so they will now better represent the needs of children, which are frankly not being represented at the present time by this government?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can recall in the Estimates process going over a number of the reforms we have brought in to the Social Allowances Program, to the child welfare program, the tremendous positive changes we have made in the daycare program.

I can assure you that the Social Planning Council and their input in the past have had an effect on some of the policy changes this government has made, and we look forward to future discussions with them.

Property Taxes Impact on Seniors

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, we are receiving calls from seniors right across the city who are upset about the increases in their property taxes as a result of the actions of this government.

Could the Minister of Finance explain how many seniors are affected by this change and what the average tax increase is for the seniors?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not have my budget material with me. I answered that same question several times right after the Budget Debate. I am well aware that there is no impact on seniors earning collectively within

the household \$20,000 and less. I am talking about the pensioners' school tax credit.

I am led to believe that the total impact of all our tax credit decisions is somewhere in the area of around \$45 million to \$50 million.

Mr. Hickes: Does the Minister of Finance think it is fair that some of the poorest citizens of our province, our seniors, who built this country for us, are being asked to pay 20 to 80 percent increases in their property taxes?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I think that after \$20,000 of income, the ability-to-pay principle comes forward very quickly, and I take some pride in the fact that, to the extent that we could in our budget, without dismantling the whole tax credit system which governments in the past, including the NDP government, worked so hard to try and build—without totally dismantling it, I think that we did our best to adopt the ability-to-pay principle with respect to the removal of some of the property tax measures.

I dare say, Mr. Speaker, as I look across all the budgets that have come out since ours, I can see, for instance, in Quebec, as details come forward, a significant reduction with respect to property tax credit.

Seniors do not mind paying their share as long as they see where the government in place is trying to do its best to keep the whole expenditure level down so that taxes do not have to rise.

There is only one government in Canada that has not increased taxes this past year, and it is this government.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that is going to be a comfort to many, many seniors.

Will the Minister of Finance commit that he will provide to this House as soon as possible a full impact report on his disastrous tax credit changes for Manitoba seniors? Will he commit to reverse any changes that are shown to disproportionately and unfairly affect Manitoba seniors who have been calling us daily?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, at the next Question Period, I will bring some of that detail with me, and I will certainly show the breakouts by income groups, by either single or married senior status, and I will certainly share some greater detail about that.

* (1025)

Student Social Allowances Program Premier's Position

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Yesterday, in Question Period, the Premier said that students affected by the elimination of the Student Social Allowances Program could: "... seek the resources of others in their community, their families, the other support networks in their community"

Either the Premier is not aware or has deliberately chosen to hide from the taxpaying public the fact that recipients of student social allowances are means tested and cannot get into the program if they have any other resources, any other means to get an education other than the Student Social Allowances Program.

Since the recipients of the program cannot get an education without student social allowances and cannot get a job without an education, could the Premier tell this House and Manitobans how he can justify taking a public policy position that it is better to collect welfare than it is to go to school and get a job?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am not taking that position at all. I am taking the position that no other government in Canada provides this kind of program.

In all those other provinces, people are able to find other resources in order to go and take their education. As people have done in the past, prior to this program being available, people find ways of working part time to put themselves through or adjusting their schedules so they can, in fact, do this with their own resources.

Funding Reinstatement

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the Premier is aware that recipients of the Student Social Allowances Program cannot stay in the program unless they have almost perfect attendance and unless they have excellent grades.

Given that, would the Premier now reconsider reinstating this most cost-effective, sensible program?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I repeat, this program is not available in any other province in the country.

Cost-Effectiveness

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, since the Premier is now aware that recipients of the program are means tested and also that they must have excellent grades, would the Premier tell this House and all Manitobans whether he believes the Student Social Allowances Program to be cost-effective?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member talks about cost-effectiveness. She presents no information to suggest she has evidence that it is.

No other province in Canada has the program, can justify the program, is willing to finance the program. I would think that says something about its cost-effectiveness, Mr. Speaker.

Hay Report Recommendations Implementation

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): I asked the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission yesterday for some definitive answers on the status of the Hay audit, a report which outlined great inequities for women in the civil service, as well as minorities. He responded that the work of the committee continues, quote, unquote.

Can the minister be more specific today? When can we expect a plan of action from this government?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for The Civil Service Act): Yes, Mr. Speaker, as we got into this issue yesterday at the end of Question Period, I can tell the honourable member for Crescentwood that the Hay audit implementation committee, despite the loss of its chair, Gerrie Hammond, last year, has continued its work.

The implementation team has had consultations with civil servants across Manitoba, with Manitoba Women in Government, the Civil Service Commission staff, the Civil Service Commission Board, the Manitoba Government Employees' Union, the Human Services committee. Rural meetings have been held in The Pas, Thompson and Brandon, and I understand they will have a report for myself some time over the next number of weeks.

Ms. Gray: With a supplementary question to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson): In March of 1990, the minister outlined that one of her objectives was to promote equality

for women, and the initiative undertaken was the Hay audit within the Civil Service Commission.

Can the Minister responsible for the Status of Women table in this House any correspondence she has had with the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission to try and determine when we will actually get an action plan, not simply a report, but an action plan to implement changes needed in the Civil Service Commission?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can tell the member for Crescentwood that the Minister responsible for the Status of Women has been working very closely with myself and with the Hay audit committee. I believe there are some staff from her department who serve on that committee, who have kept both of us informed as to its progress.

As I have indicated in the answer to the first question, we expect to have a formal plan very shortly, but I must tell the honourable member that many of the recommendations of the Hay audit report have already been implemented by the Civil Service Commission and were done so over the last couple of years since the report was released.

* (1030)

Ms. Gray: With a final supplementary to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission: If he will recall, that is exactly what his staff, the civil service staff have been telling him. Women in Government have been telling him that, in fact, those recommendations have not been implemented, so we have a problem here.

Can the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission tell us how soon, once he gets that report, he is prepared to implement some plan of action as well as meet with Women in Government to ensure that there are real changes made? Perhaps he should not just—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would offer some of that same advice to the member for Crescentwood in some of the people she may be getting her advice from within or attached to or around the Manitoba Women in Government organization.

I can tell the member for Crescentwood that members who are involved in that organization serve on the committee. Work has gone on, and I would want to point out to her, as well, that I as

minister have made offers to that organization to develop some particular programming to assist in developing skills. They have yet to take me up on that offer.

There are two sides to this story. I think some of her information may not be entirely correct.

APM Management Consultants Office Renovation Costs

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the minister has committed \$3.9 million this year to its U.S. consultant plus up to \$800,000 in expenses, probably tax-free, to the U.S. consultants to review our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister outline, in this time of huge cutbacks to hospital budgets and the huge scaling down of staff at the hospitals, how much it cost for the renovations of the offices at the Health Sciences Centre to house this U.S. consultant and her cohorts?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend has slightly erred again in his preamble.

My honourable friend full well knows—and if my honourable friend were to care to pick up the phone and phone either the St. Boniface General Hospital or the Health Sciences Centre, my honourable friend will know that both of those hospitals, their boards and senior management, urged the government to retain the services of this consulting firm.

Mr. Speaker, in co-operation with having government at the table with Lotteries-funded resources to pay for the contract, they have agreed to cover expenses.

Mr. Speaker, part of the agreement was that office space be provided within Health Sciences Centre and within St. Boniface. I believe they were using existing office space which was vacant. There is very minimal, if any, additional cost.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why offices had to be renovated at Health Sciences Centre for the U.S. consultant and why they also need another set of offices over at the St. Boniface Hospital?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, is my honourable friend suggesting that these individuals, who are working within those hospitals to contact staff, to work with

staff, to work with staff of all levels, ought not to be in those hospitals?

The only advice I can give my honourable friend, instead of—how do I put this nicely, and more particularly, Sir, parliamentary? Instead of my honourable friend running his campaign of disinformation and false information, maybe my honourable friend should sit down with the management of both hospitals and have those questions answered to his satisfaction.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the same minister.

Patients are in the hallways, and she has offices in the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface.

Can the minister outline to this House how many social workers, instructors and other employees have been displaced at Health Sciences Centre and told they cannot move into offices as a result of his American consultant—\$3.9 million plus \$800,000 in expenses—moving into the Health Sciences Centre?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I suspect my honourable friend might want to have discussions with the Health Sciences Centre: a) to ascertain whether his allegations are accurate; and b) to be further informed in terms of the parameters of the contract.

Mr. Speaker, I want to contrast this contract which was publicly tabled at the announcement with any other contract that, for instance, the NDP got in. When we got into government we found that, horror to horror, they had engaged American consultants secretly, without any of us knowing they were engaging American consultants.

Mr. Speaker, I want my honourable friend to get beyond his narrow anti-Americanism and ask himself if he believes that we ought to seek a better way to protect patient care, to provide more hands-on care by nurses to patients and at the same time to contain and reduce the budgets in our hospitals so that we can provide continued preservation and protection of medicare in this province, because that is the end result of this contract.

My honourable friends want the demise of medicare, not its preservation.

Provincial Parks Wrist Band Identification

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the acting Minister of Natural Resources.

Yesterday, along with the minister, I was surprised to learn that this government intends to tag visitors to our provincial parks.

Under this government, there have been fewer American tourists than in any other time since 1958.

My question to the minister is: How many American tourists does he expect to entice with his new arm-tag tourism initiative program?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, it is, I think, known by most honourable members that May 24, the May long weekend, is a difficult weekend for our Parks law enforcement people to try to keep some handle on some of the rowdiness that, regrettably, occurs.

We have in a few parks many thousands of youngsters, many thousands of people, and most of them are very welcome. Most of them are extremely well behaved, but at ten o'clock registered campers only are permitted back into the campgrounds, and the department thought this was a ready, easy and cost-effective way of providing that identification.

I might remind honourable members, we all experienced that when we visited the Brandon Winter Fair. Some of us will even remember that when you attended old-time country dances, you got a little imprint on your hand if you were going to leave the facility and come back.

So that is what the answer is, and I will make a special effort to ensure that this is not meant in any way to deter our American tourists.

I repeat, Mr. Speaker, this is not a practice to be carried on. It is for the long weekend in May alone.

Mr. Maloway: I am glad to see that the minister is now aware of the program.

Staffing

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My supplementary question to the same minister is: Why did the government cut back Parks staff positions if it is so concerned with public safety at the parks?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): If we can accomplish through different ways and smarter ways of using those resources I

have to effect the same kind of degree of supervision within our parks, then I compliment my Parks people, quite frankly, for finding them.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that the honourable member still is wearing his armband.

Mr. Maloway: I cannot get it off.

Mr. Enns: I am reasonably adept at duck calls. I will try my moose call and ask the honourable member to come forward and I will relieve him of that armband.

* (1040)

Provincial Parks Wrist Band Identification

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the Minister of Tourism, since I am not getting any answers from this minister.

I would like to ask the Minister of Tourism whether he thinks this will encourage Americans to start coming back to this province.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, after the last reply of my colleague, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), I do not blame the honourable member for shifting gears in terms of whom he asks, and it is also interesting, in terms of the anti-American questions posed to our Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), that they are finally showing an interest in our American friends.

I do not see this as having a negative impact on American visitors. It applies to anybody going to any of the provincial park facilities, whether they are from the United States or Canada or anywhere. It is a pilot project as outlined by our Minister of Natural Resources, and if it leads to some cost-effectiveness and some protection for people who are enjoying those parks, then it will be received positively.

Workplace Safety Course Fee

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, training workers and employers in safe workplace practices, regulations and the development of committees is essential to reducing workplace illnesses and accidents.

My question is for the Minister of Labour. If they are trying to encourage safer workplaces, why is the department now charging for the courses that used

to be free that train people in safe workplace practices?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, because they have a cost, and that cost should be borne by the users. It is part of doing business.

Ms. Cerlill: Mr. Speaker, does the minister not understand and acknowledge that this will be a barrier to developing safer workplaces and to having people access these courses?

Mr. Praznik: No, Mr. Speaker, our department had a variety of consultations before we did this. I know it is always difficult to accept a new charge when there is a charge for a service that was not there before.

I would point out two things to the honourable member. One is that the entire operation of the Workplace Safety and Health division of this branch is now funded by the employers of Manitoba through their levy on the workers compensation system. That is one.

Secondly, the charges for these courses are a minimal charge, I believe, for the service that people are getting and ultimately should be borne within the system.

Ms. Cerlill: Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to reporting to the House any changes in the enrollment and the representation in these courses from various employers and employees due to the levying of this user fee?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, within the department, courses change from time to time. Different organizations, depending on their need, change their use of courses, so that information in itself would not necessarily reflect the point I think the honourable member is waiting to see.

I would be prepared to discuss this further with her when we get into the Estimates debate.

Osborne House Management Review

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, current and former staff at Osborne House have said that clients there have been treated unethically. Staff have also said that the way management has treated them is analogous to the way male abusers treat women.

These are very serious concerns. They need to be investigated by an independent investigator in

order to improve the service to abused women and to clear the reputation of Osborne House. Further, Osborne House is publicly funded, and there needs to be accountability for the public dollars that are spent there.

Will the Minister of Family Services appoint an independent investigator?—which he did when concerns were raised about Knowles Centre and Colleen Suche was appointed and wrote a report that was publicly available with recommendations. Will the minister do the same thing regarding Osborne House?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, in my mind the YM-YWCA is acting responsibly. It has hired an external agency, the Manitoba Institute of Management, to interview staff, to undertake an issue identification process and to develop a plan for the resolution of these issues.

I believe the board of the Y are taking the allegations that have come forward from staff and management seriously. They have put a process in place to deal with it, and I am prepared to let that process take its course.

Mr. Martindale: Will the Minister of Family Services appoint an independent reviewer, since the current internal review is the fourth internal review after three failed internal reviews failed to clear up the problems?

The first phase consists only of interviewing staff. Phases 2 and 3 are very vague, and there will be no recommendations to the minister which will be made public, which must be done.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, the member essentially is asking the same question for the fifth or sixth time.

I believe the board of the Y is acting very responsibly. These are members of the public who give of their time and energy to provide a variety of services through the Y.

We are pleased with the work that they have done over the years at Osborne House. They have put in place a process, and we will let that process take its course.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, if I had any faith in—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate. The honourable member for Burrows, with your question, please.

Mr. Martindale: Will this Minister of Family Services not appoint an independent review in order to improve services to abused women and clear up the staffing problems once and for all, since the Suche report was set up to investigate and make recommendations regarding child abuse recommendations?

Does this minister not believe that abused women deserve the same kind of investigation and reporting and recommendation—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, a process is in place. We also have staff from the department, a program specialist, who has been attending the shelter this week to address the issues that staff have with services.

We believe that through the efforts of our staff in the Family Dispute area and the process put in place by the YM-YWCA, they will address these issues.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statement

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Kildonan have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members of the House will join me in commemorating this Sunday as the international gathering to commemorate the lives of people who have died as a result of AIDS and show solidarity with people living with this disease. I attended the vigil last year and found it a very moving experience.

It is the 10th anniversary, Mr. Speaker, of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization. The memorial has been a good way for the community to show their commitment to persons living with AIDS. One thing we must remember is that persons living with AIDS are not victims of the disease.

It is a time for us to come together to reaffirm our commitment to education and preventative programs to deal with the issues dealing surrounding HIV AIDS. As we enter the second decade of the AIDS epidemic, one thing is clear. AIDS does not discriminate. It can affect anyone. This is not simply a disease of the gay community. Men and women, rich and poor, all colours, races,

creeds and sexual orientations are living with this disease in over 150 countries.

Although Canada's estimate of AIDS is comparatively low, this is not a situation which is going away, despite all of our hopes. HIV infects nine million to 11 million people worldwide, including three million to four million women. By the year 2,000, it is estimated that 30 million to 40 million people will be infected with HIV.

By joining forces and working together, we can maintain a vigorous and co-ordinated effort to reduce the spread of AIDS in Canada and in our province. Through participation in events like the candlelight vigil, we can bring the spirit of partnership to the creation of a supportive environment for people living with HIV AIDS worldwide.

It is our job today and on Sunday to rededicate ourselves to the fight against AIDS, to support individual and community spirit that is determined to eradicate our world of this devastating and deadly disease.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call second readings, Bills 33, 35, and then adjourned debate, Bill 19.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 33—The Provincial Railways and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), that Bill 33, The Provincial Railways and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les chemins de fer provinciaux et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I have two information packages for the respective critics here. In giving second reading to this bill, normally I have had spreadsheets. In this particular case, it is a new bill so I have the background information for both the critics so that they can follow up on them.

As I have discussed in the past, the railways are planning to abandon approximately half of the nation's rail network. This follows the lead established by their U.S. counterparts. They claim this is necessary to achieve viability and competitiveness. Deregulation, the recession and increasing competition from U.S. railways and other modes have contributed to the problem.

We, for our part, have been assisting the railways competitiveness bid through successive fuel tax reductions in our last two budgets. This assistance was necessary in view of the significance of the railways to our economy.

* (1050)

Accordingly, we continue to fight for maintenance and upgrading of the central rail network. We continue to oppose indiscriminate rail-line abandonment. We also continue to press for the introduction of a responsible rail rationalization process, a process which will consider all of the costs associated with abandonment and one which will provide compensation to those adversely affected by the abandonment of rail lines. This will include funding to defray the additional cost to the road system when traffic is diverted to trucks from the rail network.

However, Mr. Speaker, if Manitoba is to continue to be served by rail, the downsizing of the rail network is inevitable. The railways cannot operate uneconomic lines and remain competitive in the transport market. As has been the case in the U.S., the railways are concentrating their resources on a core network of high-density trackage. Communities will increasingly be confronted with a loss of rail service, while the provinces and municipalities will experience additional road costs. Although much of the prairie rail network is protected to the year 2000 through Orders-in-Council, this protection is being threatened.

The 1987 National Transportation Act enables parties to purchase and operate branchlines, including those scheduled for abandonment. These independent railways providing local services are called short lines. The U.S. experience has disclosed that some branchlines can be commercially viable when operated as short lines. A number of parties have expressed an interest in acquiring and operating branchlines. However, this requires that the appropriate provincial legislation be put in place to accommodate short lines.

Mr. Speaker, as an alternative to total abandonment, in the interests of providing continuity of rail service in Manitoba as well as preserving rail jobs, I am pleased to introduce enabling—and I repeat, enabling—rail legislation to meet the needs of short-line rail operators and shippers.

Manitoba is one of the first provinces to introduce short-line legislation. Others are in the process of developing legislation. We have been working with these jurisdictions with a view to harmonizing legislation to ensure consistency in application and maximum access to the rail network.

Consistent with the objective of co-ordination of regulation between modes and availing the essential regulatory expertise, the transport board has been assigned the task of regulating short-line railways. My department will have the responsibility of overseeing administrative matters related to safety and new short-line rail construction.

The act will have application to those lines acquired on or after May 10 and then only to those lines holding themselves open for hire or reward. The act will not apply to existing railways or private sidings, nor will it apply to amusement rides. CN and CP will continue to be the subject of federal jurisdiction.

In developing the legislation, careful consideration was given to striking a reasonable balance between the shipper and carrier interests. We wish to accomplish this objective with a minimum level of regulation and interference. Accordingly, entry requirements consist of meeting fitness and economic viability criteria which will include a focus on financial strength, insurability, experience in rail operations and maintenance of a safe railway.

Short-line operators will be subject to provincial regulations as they relate to such matters as labour and the environment. The board will have the authority to suspend or revoke a licence if a short-line operator is in contravention of the act. Penalties will be applied for noncompliance of an order. Normal avenues of appeal through the courts will apply with respect to board decisions. No service would be discontinued without approval of the board, and this will be contingent upon proof of the uneconomic operations for access to alternate, alternative, effective and competitive means of transportation.

Carriers will be expected to provide suitable accommodation for receiving and carrying the traffic they are required to handle under the terms of their licence, including interchange facilities. They will have the ability to enter into confidential contracts with their customers. The board will have the authority to set maximum rates that a railway may charge should such action be necessary.

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

Shippers who are dissatisfied with the rates charged or the conditions of carriage and have no competitive alternative may apply to the board to have the matter referred to arbitration. An arbitrator will be chosen by the shipper and the railway and both would share in the costs of proceedings. The arbitrator's decision would be final and binding upon both parties.

The board will be authorized to work with other jurisdictions in settling disputes involving joint rates covering their movement of traffic over the lines of two or more carriers. The board would also have the authority on application by a railway to make an order directing the connecting of a line with another railway to enable through continuous movement of traffic. The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council would have the authority to make regulations with respect to any matter covering short-line rail operations as may be required.

The procedure to follow for acquiring and operating a branch line necessitates that negotiations take place with CN or CP for the acquisition of the track. CN or CP then file a notification of conveyance with the National Transportation Agency. Concurrently the short-line operator must apply to the Transport Board for a licence to operate. Approval of conveyance by the National Transportation Agency is contingent upon obtaining a licence from the provincial Transport Board.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we believe that this enabling legislation will assist to maintain rail service in a number of areas, essential services that would otherwise be terminated. Accordingly, I solicit the support of the Assembly in enacting this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 35—The Fisheries Amendment Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), that Bill 35, The Fisheries Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Enns: Madam Deputy Speaker and honourable colleagues, this amendment to The Fisheries Act is fairly straightforward. What it does is it provides for some greater protection to the commercial fishermen with respect to the quota that he currently has. We have two fisheries on Lake Winnipeg, which is, of course, our principal fisheries where most of the fisheries are conducted, as well on the Winnipegosis fisheries where we have devised a quota system, that is individual quotas allocated to the individual fishermen.

What has been a concern to fishermen for some time is that although these quotas and the quota allocation system has worked reasonably well, particularly on Lake Winnipeg, there has never been any entitlement or empowerment, if you like, in legislation with respect to these quotas. It is simply departmental or ministerial policy, if you like, or a policy of the Fisheries director of the Department of Natural Resources that regulates and that sets up the individual quotas.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these quotas are, of course, important to the commercial fishermen. They can be more helpful to them in terms of providing them with collateral when fishermen apply to various commercial lending institutions.

As it stands, organizations, such as the former Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, which used to house the portfolio of commercial fishermen's loans, now that has been transferred over to the Community Economic Development Services. They have requested that the quota entitlement be formalized in legislation. This is, in essence, what this amendment does.

I have the indication from commercial fishermen and their organizations that this will be well received. What this will perhaps in the future hold out that on other fisheries where we do not have individual quotas, simply overall lake quotas, and certainly that covers a number of our northern and lesser lakes, where we simply place an overall quota that is

determined by the fishery biologists as being a sustainable yield from that lake. When that overall lake quota is harvested, is caught, then the fisheries season comes to an end.

* (1100)

The individual quota entitlement has shown us, particularly on Lake Winnipeg, to be more effective in terms from a management point of view, that is, to provide the kind of supervision to the fisheries by the resource people within the Department of Natural Resources and in specific the Fisheries department. Also it of course is viewed by the individual fishermen as something of value, in that he has the quota that he has, in some cases, as has been the case now for a number of years, particularly on Lake Winnipeg, paid money for, purchased or bought.

Commercial fishing is not a growth industry, regrettably. The overall state of the fisheries is in difficulty. Our once very prime whitefish that was internationally known, particularly in the southern and the American markets, have fallen on some difficult times, both pricewise and there are some biological problems. The quality, the size of the whitefish currently being harvested, is meeting with stiff competition from a revived fisheries on the Great Lakes, which in one hand, as Canadians, we are encouraged to see because there was a decade where we thought the Great Lakes were virtually dying on us because of environmental difficulties.

Certainly I can report to members of the House that the commercial fishermen who face the ever-increasing competition from fish now being caught in lakes that 20 years ago were hardly being fished commercially, it is self-evident to them that the water quality in our Great Lakes has improved substantially to the point that they are causing our fishermen in Manitoba some difficulty in terms of price competition for a similar product.

Madam Deputy Speaker, honourable members will have an opportunity to discuss the amendment directly with people of the Department of Natural Resources, in specific, the Director of Fisheries, Mr. Joe O'Connor.

I commend this bill for their consideration to the committee. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would like to draw attention to the public gallery, where we have with us this morning Youth Parliament delegates to the Western Canadian Youth Parliament being held in Winnipeg this weekend under the direction of Keith Berkowski [phonetic].

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this morning.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 19—The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 19 (The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call Bill 23, please.

Bill 23—The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 23 (The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jours fériés dans le commerce de détail, la Loi sur les normes d'emploi et la Loi sur le paiement des salaires), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am glad to have a chance to speak on Bill 23 which is the bill to allow full open Sunday shopping in Manitoba. I think that this bill represents this government's desperation in dealing with the economy. This bill is an act of desperation. It shows how badly the economy is failing and how sadly this government is in having any ideas that are actually going to deal with problems in the economy.

They are adopting legislation that has a number of problems with it and that they are bringing in legislation which is opposed by all of the key groups that are affected and have dealings with the economy. The way that they are bringing it in shows desperation. The way that they brought the bill in, in violation to our parliamentary democracy, brought the bill in in what you could call a retroactive fashion where they allowed for what they would call a trial, disregarding the fact that the legislation that exists is therefore being violated, and the way that they are doing this without any regard for having public input and public debate on this kind of a major change which is affecting not only our society, but the social fabric and I would say, indeed, our culture. So I have a number of concerns about that as well, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Let us deal first of all with the way that this bill is handing over even more our economy and our very culture to economic forces, to the market economic forces, and how this kind of legislation and the policy for more shopping on Sunday is contributing to a race to the bottom that we are participating in, a race to the bottom to destroy the quality of life in our province and in our country in trying to compete. This bill is the government's response, they have stated, their response to the problem with cross-border shopping.

There is no information that this is going to help deal with cross-border shopping, but it shows what Conservative governments are willing to do to try and deal with these kind of economic problems. It shows that there really is not any concern or understanding or well-thought-out analysis of what is happening with the economy, and that there has been a difference in Canada and in Manitoba where we have had Sunday as a day where people cannot have consumer business done, where they can spend time with their friends and family, devote the day to home life rather than business and consumer dealings.

The effect that this is going to have on the economy is actually going to be negative. There is not going to be a benefit to the economy. The chambers of commerce have said this. The Union of Manitoba Municipalities has said this. The Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers has said this, and virtually all the rural municipalities have said that this is going to hurt rather than help their economy.

There will not be more jobs created. There are not going to be more jobs created. People are not going to have more disposable income to spend on Sunday. In fact, it could more encourage people to spend money that they do not have. Actually, it is going to have a negative effect too, because it could create more part-time work, which will actually then decrease the take-home pay and the total wages of workers in the retail and service sectors.

All of these things are a particular problem for workers in those areas but, even more, it is a problem for women, who tend to make up the majority of the sales clerks in the kind of businesses that are going to be forced to be open. This has a double negative effect because, not only is it going to force those people to work when they perhaps would prefer to stay home with their family, but it is going to take them away from the day when most people reserved time with their family.

I would hazard a guess that the majority of women who are in those sectors, a number of them will also be single parents. So it is creating a variety of problems for those families in having to provide alternative care for children who are now faced with another day of not having their parents there for them. That is another problem that I would say that this government probably did not give too much consideration to.

The bill itself claims that there is going to be some protection for these individuals to not work, to refuse going to work, but that is going to be very difficult to enforce. We have heard over and over again where workers are threatened or they feel threatened that they will lose their job if they in fact do complain and refuse the scheduling of when they are slated to work on Sundays.

*(1110)

Now, this presents a number of problems where it again gives employers another club, if you would, to wield in the race to the bottom that we are involved in which has had an effect on making workers more

and more vulnerable in the face of having a chance to maintain a job and maintain some kind of security in the workforce.

With the economy, it is a lot easier for employers to not have any problem with having workers leave their job when there are so many people unemployed. It is much easier for them to use that threat or freedom that they have to have so many more people waiting in line for those jobs.

One of the big concerns that I have about this kind of legislation as well, as I said at the beginning, is the way that it is handing over more and more control to market forces. It is making our society and economy more consumeristic or more consumer driven. I think I have referred at times before in the House to a study that was done on Canadian leisure that showed that the most often participated-in leisure activities in our society are shopping, television and gambling, and I think that this legislation is only going to encourage that. I think that is a problem.

I think that the kind of economy that we have created that encourages overconsumption is only going to be exacerbated by this kind of legislation, and we know that consumerism and overconsumption have devastating effects on the environment. It is a combination of how people are watching more television, the way that advertising on television encourages them to purchase and buy, and that this is not only taking away from the more positive and active parts of our culture in the form of arts and other sport and recreation activities, I think it is also contributing to the way that people are giving over their sense of what kind of society we want to have, to market forces. This has a lot of implications for our society.

Now, the other problem that this has created is it has created a lot of chaos in some of the retail outlets where I have had concerns expressed to me from some of the stores and malls in my constituency where there have been disputes between the various outlets, some wanting to close down and others not wanting to close down, or if the stores want to close and the mall is feeling pressure to remain open. So this is another problem where it has created this kind of conflict within the retail sector. This is a concern where we want to have some kind of co-operation and good business relations, but there have been these kinds of disputes created.

I think that it is also not helping the whole issue of cross-border shopping, but it is making the problem worse for rural areas where the border to cross for cross-border shopping has become the Perimeter Highway, and on Sunday we will have more people leaving their home rural communities to come and shop in Winnipeg. This is going to draw away even more from rural life.

We already see the huge effect that advertising, mass media and television have had on rural areas. This is the kind of legislation that is going to encourage that rather than discourage it. It is going to draw away from developing the rural communities and the rural economies that are suffering greatly under this government and in the economy.

I talked about how this is going to not create any kind of economic benefit. I think the government should be getting that message. I want to speculate a little bit about why they are continuing to do this.

I think it is part of the attitude that they have when they will talk about how they do not want to tax anymore. If you look at how the economy is failing and we look at how the tax burden has shifted and how now more and more individuals are paying for costs of government and that there is less and less of government revenue being paid by industry and business taxation, the logical conclusion of this that we are reaching more and more quickly is, very soon industry will not be paying any costs of government and individuals will be paying the full burden and costs through taxation. This is helping them fulfill their agenda of slowly being able to cut services and slowly reducing government and the role of government in the economy. It is like they are going at this from both ends, slowly being able to erode government services and slowly eroding government's role in regulating the economy.

This is an example where government has had a role. Government has had a role in trying to shape the effect that consumerism and the marketplace has on our lives. By reducing further that role of government and by allowing for Sunday shopping, it is another way that they are taking away the role of government and allowing for market forces to have a greater and greater effect on dictating our time, dictating how we spend our lives and how our society is shaped.

We received a number of calls and letters from a variety of groups opposing this. It is not often that you see the kind of consensus across the board

between labour, between chambers of commerce, between church organizations and other community organizations opposing something, but that is the kind of opposition that this legislation has. It has such widespread opposition, I think the government should be concerned that again they are offending and going against the wishes of what often have been their supporters.

* (1120)

I go back to the point of how they must be very desperate if they are willing to do that, and it is a sad state for the province if this is the best they can do for economic policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is a sorry excuse for economic policy. Not only is this legislation not doing what they think it is going to do but, as I have said, it is affecting our social fabric and our culture in a way that is a concern to many people.

I look forward to when we will have this bill go to committee. It is going to be interesting to see how the government is going to deal with facing that huge opposition from all across Manitoba, from all regions of the province, from all sectors. We are going to hear a variety of perspectives of how this legislation is going to harm the economy and not help it.

The small business sector, I think it will be important to hear from them, because we know the small business sector is creating the most jobs in Manitoba and this is the kind of legislation that is going to be most hurtful to the small-business sector. They will just not be able to compete. It is going to actually cost them more in wages and cost them more in heating and lighting and other utilities and having to open for that extra day perhaps than they will be able to generate in business.

That is the kind of consultation I wonder if this government did. I do not know where they would have gotten the sense that this is going to help small business. The kinds of letters and calls that we have been getting to our offices do not indicate they feel that this is going to be a benefit.

I do not know if they have had any kind of analysis—we have had this practice going on now for a number of months—if there has been any kind of polling or research or consultation that has been done to see if there has been any benefit so far and if at the end of October there will be some chance they will change their mind, that they will admit this has not had a benefit to the economy and they will choose to not continue with this practice.

It is going to be I think difficult to measure the side that is of concern to me, the social side that I have been talking about. I do not know if those kinds of things are very easy to study. They are not. It is not easy to study the effect of not having parents around for one other day on the weekend, what kind of an effect that is going to have on families. It is only in the long term that we will see those effects. We hear often how more and more time is spent by young people sitting in front of the television and how that is exacerbated by the increase in the kinds of television that they are watching and how, as I said earlier, the kinds of programs that they are watching are supported more and more by advertising that is tied in with children's programming and how that might make young people put even more pressure on their parents to go out and buy products that really are not necessary and contribute to this kind of overconsumption and consumerism that is affecting our province and our society.

I think I could not emphasize enough though the way that the government has turned to bringing in legislation that is retroactive. This is just one of a series of bills that the government has introduced this session which is not respecting our parliamentary system here, which is not respecting Manitoba's unique approach to having public hearings before legislation and changes are made.

We are seeing this also with the social allowance changes. We are seeing it with the Manitoba Intercultural Council bill, and we are seeing it with Sunday shopping where they are ignoring the existing legislation and they are withdrawing funds or changing funding without having it debated in this House before those changes are made and without having the public given the opportunity to make representation about their thoughts and their opinions about the government's actions that will show the government the effect. That is not a good trend. That is not the kind of direction we want to see a democratically elected government go. We would want to see more accountability, not less accountability. We would want to see them respect the responsibility that they have to be accountable to the people in Manitoba.

So with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that there are a number of very good reasons for opposing this legislation. There are a number of very valid concerns about the legislation, the way that it has been handled, the effect that it is going to have on our economy and our communities. I hope that

the government is still open to considering the serious consequences of the legislation. I hope that the trial period ending in October will indeed be just a trial period and that they have some mechanism in place to evaluate the effects of open Sunday shopping and that they will be accountable with that study and evaluation and that we will, indeed, have some fair consideration of the comments that are going to be made at the hearings and the comments that a variety of members have made in the House. I know that I am sure that the number of rural members across the way are hearing strong opposition from their elected municipal officials and residents in their communities. I would just hope that they would listen to those recommendations and those appeals because I think we do have to look at economic policy not just in a bottom-line fashion. It is not just about balancing the books. We have to look at how our economic policy is affecting our larger community and society and how it is affecting our culture.

With that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you, and I will end my remarks.

* (1130)

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased today to rise on Bill 23, because I think it is appropriate timing because this is a long weekend, and this is usually the weekend that families gather together and either go camping or take a day and go on a nice family picnic. If you look at this bill that is being brought before us here, that is exactly what it is addressing is what is happening to families. What happens to families that have teenage sons or daughters who will have to work this Sunday, that if they do not, their hours will be cut back, and the family will likely go camping or on their picnic without one or two family members.

That is one of the problems with this is that it has taken away from the whole value system of a structured family. We all know that with our schedules almost every family unit in Manitoba, with the hectic schedules that we all lead in this day and age, you work all day, you come home, you have supper and either you are visiting with friends or relaxing and reading and then your teenage children are away with their friends and doing their own sporting activities or drama or whatever have you. When you have a long weekend, and if you have the opportunity to go camping with your family, you are all together, you share ideas, you share concerns and you get a chance to talk to your children and

they get a chance to talk to you in a more relaxed and fun atmosphere.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, if a child has a part-time job at SuperValu, Canadian Tire, Safeway, what have you, and if they are asked to work on Sunday, you know that they pretty well have to say yes, because the more times you say no the less hours you will have. That is what will happen. When we talk about this legislation stimulating the economy, bringing more businesses into Manitoba, we tend to forget that part of Manitoba is also rural and northern communities.

When I was looking at the bill and I saw in the bill where it said that this also will fall under communities that are part of the Northern Affairs jurisdictions, I almost laughed when I saw this, because in my experience in northern Manitoba in those Northern Affairs communities there is no Safeway. There is no SuperValu; there is no Canadian Tire. Most of the stores that you have in Northern Affairs communities, if they want to be open on Sunday, they can adequately do it with four people in that store, very, very adequately.

When they brought this forward I do not know what the government was thinking about, because the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has been in a lot of those communities. He will tell you that there are no big stores there. The biggest store you have in a community is a Hudson's Bay Store. To keep it open with four employees would be no problem at all. The current legislation that is in place where it allows four employees at a time, if they wish to be open on Sundays, is very adequate.

If you take a look at your other rural communities that choose to be open on Sundays, if they choose to, with this current legislation they are not in competition with Winnipeg Eaton's store, Hudson's Bay, the SuperValu stores, the Safeways.

What you have in the rural communities and in northern communities is mostly family-operated businesses. Now what this government is saying is that we want you now to work seven days a week, because most of those businesses are operated by a family member with very little outside help. How can you expect people to continually work seven days every week and to have an adequate family lifestyle? I think it is ludicrous. I think it is doing more harm to our rural communities and to our northern communities than this government ever thought of.

If the rural members were able to check in their own communities and ask their mom-and-pop operators and their businesses in their communities, they would not get all the support that they figure they have, because that is going to have a direct impact. It is going to take away from some of the businesses the dollars that they bring in to barely make it from year to year to year.

What will happen? We will have more little businesses that are adequately feeding the family, looking after the family's needs forced to close. That is very scary, because a lot of those small communities, if those businesses that are run by the individual family members are forced to close, there is very little opportunity for employment elsewhere.

We talk about, this will stimulate the economy. How can you stimulate the economy if you are implementing taxes. They say, no taxes, but it is taxes. When they talk about, they have more disposable dollars, we have a senior, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is now forced to pay a minimum \$75 on their property taxes. That \$75 would have probably gone to purchase something from one of those stores. Well, that is being taken away. How are you stimulating the economy by all these cuts?

An Honourable Member: George, what does this have to do with Sunday shopping?

Mr. Hickes: The reason you want Sunday shopping is that it will create more businesses for the businesses to stay open on Sunday. You can stay open all you want. If the customers do not have disposable dollars, how can they go to the stores to purchase their goods? That is the point. It is a very serious point, because when you have taxes on baby foods that will drastically affect single mothers, that the family of that single mother will now have to pay for disposable diapers and baby food and even school supplies. So when you take that amount of dollars away from most single women who do work in retail businesses, when you are taking those expendable dollars away, how can you be bringing more businesses to the big companies that this bill is trying to assist? It does not work. If you do not have the dollars, you cannot spend it. It is as simple as that.

Also, when you look at businesses opening on Sundays full scale, the majority of the people working in those businesses are women and the majority of them are single parents. You are telling

these single parents to work on Sundays, but is there adequate daycare available for these single mothers? Has that been addressed? Has that been looked at? I do not think so. I think this was an idea that was ill thought out and was not really implemented properly, because we had a very adequate bill. You were allowed four employees.

So if you were going to go to SuperValu, Safeway, Canadian Tire, Eaton's, The Bay downtown, most of your consumers thought twice, because they knew that if you go there, you are going to have the hassle of a long lineup with very little help. So what did the people do? They would go to your corner grocery stores or your corner stores if they were open. Some are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but those are small operations, where if you look at your multinational corporations, your multinational stores and stuff, the volume of goods that they trade through, they are bringing in businesses about \$500 per hour per employee. Your mom and pop operations and your corner grocery stores and your small family businesses, they would be very fortunate and happy to do \$50 per hour per employee. So who is this really helping? Is this helping the independent small grocery stores, independent family businesses? It is taking away from those types of businesses that relied mostly on their ability to generate revenues on the weekends and evenings.

* (1140)

Also, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) should be very aware of this. It says in this bill that you have the right to refuse to work on Sunday. That is good to see that printed here, but how effective is that going to be if you know that the businesses are the ones that control the number of hours that each employee works. So if you are a business person and if you ask an individual to work on Sundays over and over and they keep refusing, normally what will happen is that there will be some reason found so either that individual will be dismissed or that individual's hours will be cut back. We have seen that with various students who have had the opportunity to work in small restaurants or in fast-food places. Any time that they refused hours too many times, their hours were cut right back. That is what is going to happen.

You cannot fault a single mother that wants to have a Sunday with her family. You cannot fault that, because as long as I can remember most Sundays have always been for family times. Even in my own

life, I attend functions on Sundays when I am invited, but most of the time my family comes with me. That is our time together. This weekend we are hoping to get away for the weekend. Our family is all going. We are all going to have a chance to be together. My son, because of the nature of our work and of the hours that we all put in, the late hours and the weekends—I would like to spend more time with my son, but it is very, very difficult. So Sundays are usually our family time. So if I was employed at a retail outlet, and if I was forced to work on a Sunday, that would be taken away.

Like, we have the opportunity here where we can take our family with us to functions and gatherings and meeting people, but it is impossible for a person working in a retail outlet or a restaurant or fast-food place to take their children to work with them. That would not go over too well, I would not imagine. So those are the kinds of things that we are removing from families, we are taking away from families, and I would really, really like to hear the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) when he speaks on this bill. Because, like I mentioned earlier, Madam Deputy Speaker, I cannot see how this has any impact on any northern community, on any Northern Affairs community. I do not know, you go to Cross Lake, you go to Sherridon, you go up to Grand Rapids, you go anywhere in the North, those are small businesses that are operated mostly by local people. The only competition most of those northern communities have is, I guess now it is called Northern Stores. So I cannot see how this bill helps those northern communities.

When the minister has the opportunity to speak, I will be listening carefully, because I cannot see it. In the community where I grew up, in the community furthest north in Manitoba, in Churchill, we have two grocery stores. The one used to be the Bay store. It is called Northern Store now. The other one is the S & M super market, which is a family business that started years ago, and when they were able to open on Sundays they had four employees. It was very adequate. The people that did not want to stand in line, there is a little corner store that used to do a lot of their business in the evening and Saturdays and Sundays. That is where they made their profits. If we had massive openings that are available to these communities and if they were fully staffed, what are we doing? We are taking businesses away from the small independent stores that had been passed from one generation to another.

I wonder where the members from the rural communities are on this issue, because I cannot see how they could stand up and support this bill when it is going to affect their own constituents. It will have a drastic impact on their own constituents.

If you open the multinational stores in Winnipeg to wide-open Sunday shopping, what you are going to be doing is attracting people from the rural surrounding communities that will come to Winnipeg to do their shopping, where normally they would spend those dollars in their own communities to help their local economy. That will be removed.

What kind of an impact is it going to have on those communities? It cannot be positive, because a lot of those communities that I am referring to are, what, an hour's drive from here? So families will come to Winnipeg to do their shopping.

Sure it might benefit some of the big multinational stores here in Winnipeg. It might benefit them, but they are already bringing in revenues of \$500 per hour per employee versus \$50 per hour per employee by your small independent stores. How is that fairness? It cannot be very fair.

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

Is that the whole idea of this bill, to see how many small retail outlets in rural Manitoba this government can force to close? I think that is silly, because that is exactly what is going to happen. [interjection]

You talk to your chamber of commerce in Portage la Prairie and they will tell you, do not support this. They do not support this. We have met with the municipalities of Manitoba, the representatives, and they say, we do not support this. The chambers of commerce do not support this.

When they say that it is going to have a negative impact, how is it going to be positive for the community of Portage la Prairie if the citizens are driving in to Winnipeg to do their shopping?

The meeting of the municipalities was a resolution brought forward not to support this bill. That is from the rural communities. That is from the mayors and the councils of those communities. That is not me saying that. That is the mayors and the communities. The mayors and the communities have stated very clearly, we do not support this because it is going to have a negative impact on our community businesses.

If you do have those hard-earned and in a lot of cases few expendable dollars in those communities that need those dollars to stay in their communities to survive, being brought out to the big city of Winnipeg, it cannot be positive. I cannot see that. [interjection] You argue with the mayors and councils. Do not argue with me. They are the ones that made that statement.

* (1150)

Well, you are talking about tax bills, you know, like hundreds. The reason I raised that question today was exactly to do with tax bills, because I have got hundreds and hundreds of calls from seniors. They are saying that our taxes have gone up on their property and those dollars that I am spending now to pay the increases on my property taxes could have been spent probably at Metro Meats or one of the small corner stores, where a lot of seniors will go and buy their milk and bread. A lot of seniors really do not want to take a lot of long trips. They might come uptown on a very few occasions, but most of their shopping for their milk and bread and stuff is usually done at corner grocery stores.

So when you look at the impact this bill has on small businesses, I do not care what anybody says, it is not positive. It is regressive for those communities, those small businesses, and even the impact it has on workers. A lot of your retail outlets that employ part-time workers are usually from universities or colleges or high-school students. A lot of our teenage family members get the opportunity to work at these stores and stuff, which is great. I have nothing against it; I think it is a good idea. But if we start increasing the number of hours that are open, we are increasing the number of hours that those children are being away from their families.

An Honourable Member: They need the money.

Mr. Hickes: Well, sure, they need the money. We all know that. We also need family lives, and we talk about this bill saying that we will not force people to work on Sundays. When you force people to work on Sundays, that is exactly what you are doing.

They say, well, more people will spend more money shopping on a Sunday. I think what you might find in a lot of cases is that same dollar is stretched over a longer period of time. A lot of times that same amount of dollars a family spends shopping, whether Sunday is included or not, will be very, very similar because a lot of families only have

so many dollars available to purchase goods and that is it.

Once you take away the rent and utilities and car payments and your mortgage, you only have so many expendable dollars. So I do not believe there is going to be a big rush to purchase appliances and furniture and everything and it is going to only be done on a Sunday. I do not think so. I think if a family needs appliances and have the money to purchase it, it could be purchased either on a Monday evening, Tuesday or a Friday or even a Saturday. So I do not think that is going to increase businesses that much.

I know from the meetings my colleague from Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) had pertaining to this, and the letters we all received from communities, mayors and councils in opposition to this bill, that the rural communities are not being listened to. The rural communities will not have a chance to be heard, and that is what they want. So that way, when a member states that my community, I have not heard anything negative and you are wrong in your statement, well, let the mayors and councils of those communities have the opportunity to be heard. They are the ones who are making these statements that this is going to be regressive and it is going to be very disruptive for families and also it will not benefit the rural small business people. That is the letters that we have received from mayors and councils throughout Manitoba.

So let them have the opportunity to be heard. I think it is only fair. We are having a standing committee here in Winnipeg. How many people will be able to present their cases, their issues, their concerns from those rural communities that are sending us hundreds of letters? How will they be heard? So that way, when a member says in the House that you are wrong, my community supports this, then they can pass the information on from their mayors and councils, because the mayors and councils are elected by the people to represent the communities that they are elected from.

Even if you are an MLA for that community, the mayor and councils are the ultimate individuals who have the responsibility for progress in those communities. When you have a lot of small communities, it is the mayors and councils that decide what by-laws will be implemented, what by-laws will be brought in, what by-laws will be changed. It is not the MLAs that do that. So I think that it is only fair that those mayors and councils

from those rural communities are able to have the chance to be heard. I think they would welcome that. They would welcome it.

The only way they will be heard is if they come to Winnipeg. A lot of them cannot come to Winnipeg. If we have any faith in any legislation, we should have the faith to take it out to the communities for the communities to be heard. If the support is there from those communities, you will hear that, but try to make it as accessible, try to make those hearings as accessible to the people whose lives will be impacted by this bill.

Why is this government afraid to go out into the communities? Why?

An Honourable Member: George, did you ever hunt whale on a Sunday?

Mr. Hlckes: Oh, any day will do, as long as you are around. [interjection] Paul McCartney would be very proud me.

Anyway, when you have community leaders that are writing letters to us, and my colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) can verify that he has received hundreds of letters, hundreds of letters from those communities, why not give them the opportunity to state their case. Maybe they will all come out and support this. I do not know. Maybe they will. Let them have the opportunity to be heard. Even the impact in northern Manitoba, there will not even be a hearing in northern Manitoba. There will not even be a hearing in any of the rural communities. They say, yes, those community leaders will have the opportunity to be heard. What happens if an individual from Thompson or The Pas or Cross Lake want to be heard? Do you know how much it will cost that individual to try and come to Winnipeg?

An Honourable Member: 50-some cents.

Mr. Hlckes: 50-some cents—on a stamp. Write a letter.

I am glad that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) stated this, because it shows the knowledge that he has of a lot of these northern remote communities. A lot of the individuals cannot read or write English, so what are you going to do? Are they going to write a letter in their own syllabics? Who is going to read it? That is a very ill-thought-out comment.

A lot of the meetings that are conducted in northern Manitoba, a lot of those remote communities, you even have to provide a translator

to make sure that the communities understand and the ministers understand.

* (1200)

An Honourable Member: George, if it is so hard for them to get to Winnipeg, what makes you think they will come and shop here then? A little contradictory, are you not?

Mr. Hickes: Well, some people will come here. The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) raises an excellent point. He says if they cannot afford to come here for the hearings, how could they come here to shop.

The ones who can afford to come to Winnipeg to shop will come to Winnipeg to shop. Normally, the people who can afford it, who have the extra dollars, would stay back home and shop in their own home communities. We are talking about expendable dollars, not dollars that you need for your basic fridge and stove, your basic food for your families.

When a lot of the people come to the city from the rural communities, they will be buying suits, they will be buying clothes, they will be buying appliances because they might save a few dollars. They have the expendable dollars for these goods. That is taken away from the opportunity of that hardware store in Gimli or Beausejour to make a few dollars from that individual that has the expendable dollars to buy even a new colour TV. They could have purchased it in Beausejour or Gimli or whatever. Yes, they might come to Winnipeg because they have extra dollars. So that takes the opportunity of a business person from that community to make a few dollars.

I am glad he raised that point. It was an excellent point. That is exactly the kind of thing that will happen. That is who will be coming to Winnipeg. Those are the individuals who will be spending their dollars out of the community and spending them here in Winnipeg.

When you have basic needs, a lot of those goods are needed by the families and they will purchase them Monday to Saturday. Sure, they might purchase them on a Sunday, but most of the time that is not the shoppers that—I have not been to a store on Sunday, but if you go to the stores, you go to Brick's, hardware or furniture places, the appliance places, the car dealerships, you know, and that is the time those people who have the expendable dollars come to the city for big purchases.

No wonder Eaton's or The Bay make about \$500 per hour per employee, no wonder, because those are expendable dollars. The small corner grocery store, if you make \$50 per hour per employee they are very happy, and that is about what they average.

So, do we really want to take that opportunity away? I do not believe we should.

The other thing is, when you talk about this whole bill, you know, we talk about leadership here. If the government has so much confidence and so much faith in this bill, why are they now saying, well, no, we will not impose it on people? We will let the communities, by community, make up their own minds. If they want to have Sunday shopping they can, if they do not they do not have to. If there is so much confidence in this and so much support from the rural communities and the northern communities, why a big turnaround? What happened? I do not know.

When the bill was first introduced I thought that the government had the support of the rural communities and northern communities and citizens and the small business operators and the chambers of commerce, the mayors and the councils of those communities and the chief and councils of those northern communities. That is why they brought that bill in. I thought they had checked it out and maybe had some discussions over the phone or the rural members had meetings in their own constituencies, in their own communities and that the community had supported it. Then a few months later we see a whole switch. It says, no, no, we are not going to impose this. Let the municipalities make up their own mind. So is that leadership? You know, if you are going to be a leader, take some onuses and lead if you really believe that strongly about it.

We talk about creating more jobs, but the government misses the whole point. The highest number of jobs that are created right across Canada are created by small businesses. So if you take that opportunity away from the small businesses that do create the majority of employment opportunities, what are you doing? You might gain two jobs and lose four. Is that progress? I do not think so. So where is the thinking on this?

I will give you a good example. I just heard a member say, what about the Jobs Fund? I will give you an example about the—

An Honourable Member: This is an antijobs fund.

Mr. Hickes: I will give you an example—this is an antijobs fund. But they said, what about the Jobs Fund? I will tell you something about my experiences with the Jobs Fund under our government which we introduced. It was called the Northern Youth Corps, Northern Jobs Fund. People say, well, it created opportunities for cleaning up streets. What this government fails to recognize is that those Jobs Fund jobs were the only, only opportunity for a lot of aboriginal youth in Manitoba to try and make a few dollars throughout their summer breaks. If you go to any of those northern reserves and northern communities this summer when the children are out and see how many are actually working, cleaning up your ball diamonds, cleaning up your communities, working as assigned by the mayor, the chief and councils, and the Metis communities by the mayor and councils, you will see very, very few of those youth working now.

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

Under the Jobs Fund, you can go to almost any northern community under the Progressive Conservatives at that time and under the NDP, you found a lot of youth that were working. Under the Jobs Fund, they even had recreation opportunities. They had northern swim programs, and it employed a lot of the northern youth that do not have the opportunity now. So when they talk about the Jobs Fund, I am very happy to talk about the Jobs Fund because I saw it first hand where the northern aboriginal youth had opportunities.

If you go to those communities, there are not hundreds of restaurants, hundreds of stores that these youth can have the opportunity to make a few dollars over the summer either for their spending money or to buy a few nice clothes and stuff like that. That is a fact, and if you know anything about northern Manitoba, you will know what I am talking about because in those remote communities the opportunities are not there. If you look at what has been taken away from a lot of our youth in northern Manitoba because of the cancellation of the Jobs Fund, you will see that the recreation opportunities for the children of those communities are next to nil right now. So what is happening?

If you look at the escalation of those community problems, you will see, yes, there is more vandalism; yes, there are more sniffing problems; yes, there are more children creating problems in those communities. Before, their time used to be occupied in a very, very healthy way. That has been

taken away because of the cancellation of the Jobs Fund. If you asked any northern leader, they will state exactly what I am telling you now. So that Jobs Fund, you can knock it all you want, but I have seen the positive benefits it has impacted on northern Manitoba and our northern communities.

* (1210)

Anyway, getting back to this bill here. I think it is only right to have the rural communities heard, and it is only right to have at least one hearing in northern Manitoba so that the northern people have the opportunity to be heard. I see I am out of time so I thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am very pleased today to speak to Bill 23, the government's second version of this bill, the second attempt at dealing with this issue and that seems to be indicative of this government. It sort of reminds me of someone on the road without a road map. I do not think this government or anybody in it has a clue of where they plan to be in the next couple of years.

I think that what we have over there is essentially a caucus in crisis. They have members defecting on them to the federal area. We have another member who may be going to the Senate very soon, and I have always suspected, we have always known that Brian Mulroney was not a fan of this Premier (Mr. Filmon), and I think he may be showing it now. He may be having the last laugh here as he sinks the Manitoba government on his way out. It may be his lasting contribution as Prime Minister of this country that he brings down the Tory government.

Mind you, one never knows where and when and how history will unfold. We certainly have some experience in that area ourselves, Mr. Acting Speaker, so it is certainly reasonable to expect that a similar type of fate could befall the caucus opposite. We look with some degree of interest on what is happening over there in the caucus.

The Rubik's Cube, I guess, is one way of describing the Conservative caucus. From day to day, we see it take on different forms.

This particular bill, when it was announced the second time, appeared to some to be a cute way out of a problem that the Conservatives were having. I think upon looking at the bill that what the bill purports to do is turn over the question of Sunday shopping to the municipalities to sort out. That may

have temporarily solved the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the government's problems in this regard, but I think it is only a very, very temporary solution, because what I see here is essentially a blueprint of the Balkans. What we will have will be jurisdictions within the province bordering one another, one having one policy on Sunday shopping and another having another.

I recall a few years ago, I believe it was outside the town of Steinbach, where a hotel was built. I believe the town of Steinbach was a dry town at the time and probably still is, and the entrepreneur built the hotel just outside the town limits.

What we may have here will be little development zones sort of similar to the Maquiladora in Mexico, little development zones here and there bordering a jurisdiction in the province that does not allow Sunday shopping. We may have its bordering constituencies allow Sunday shopping and all sorts of little stores and so on being built right on the border. It does not sound to me as though that will be a very well-thought-out and well-planned ending to this bill.

That in effect is what is happening. This provincial government was elected to make decisions on behalf of the people of Manitoba and, by shirking its responsibilities, by turning its responsibilities over to the municipalities, who by the way do not want that responsibility, they will essentially in the end create this patchwork quilt which nobody in the province will be happy with in the long run. So at the end of day, I think they will regret having taken this road.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are many, many arguments that have been put forward by members in this Chamber supporting both sides of this question, and our particular side has brought forward arguments which are opposing Sunday shopping.

I might say that I was one of the MLAs who did a survey of his constituents on the question of Sunday shopping, and I can tell you that by far the majority of my constituents who responded are opposed to the idea of Sunday shopping.

The Liberal Party, on the other hand—I think there are 15 sleeps until the convention and then it is a permanent sleep after that. The leadership hopefuls are not in our midst at the moment, and I was kind of hoping they would be. It took an awful long time for me to tell them that there are no delegates here. It took literally weeks and weeks and weeks. Finally

I see they have taken the advice and headed for the hills in search of delegates.

That leadership race is getting I guess a little heated up now while the delegates are out there. The point is that the Liberal Party, its little caucus of seven, could not come up with a consistent policy on the question of Sunday shopping. I believe the Leader, the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), was in favour of Sunday shopping. The member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) was not sure what he was going to do. I believe he was in favour and then he did a survey of his constituents and then he went against. The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) actually made the most sense here when he offered a reasonable sounding amendment to the process. The point is, this caucus of seven and dropping could not get its act together on a bill such as this.

I do not hold out a lot of hope for the political longevity of the Liberal Party in this province. As a matter of fact, I am not even certain that they will run into the next election with four members. There is no question of having four members out of the next election. The question is, will they have four members going into the next election.

Having dealt with the Liberal Party, I think we have to get back to the serious question here of dealing with this government and its fundamental instabilities that we see across the way. I believe that the caucus of this government, before it came to a conclusion as to how to deal with the Sunday shopping question, had some serious problems that it had to face within its own ranks.

I see members opposite here who must have had a very difficult time in caucus agreeing to and then toeing the line and going on with what is essentially a very destructive move to businesses in their own constituencies, because the small businesses in the small towns are the ones that are going to suffer by this move that the government is making. The businesses that are going to benefit by this move are the businesses in the big towns, the big cities like Winnipeg and then again the big businesses within those areas.

I will tell you, it is no accident that the Chamber of Commerce in Winnipeg is promoting and pushing this concept. The Manitoba Chamber of Commerce, on the other hand, is opposing it. I think the members have to think long and hard before they vote on this.

Another observation that I have is that the government brought in an initial bill to allow for a trial period. There were many problems that we pointed out associated with that. It seems to me that at the end of the day one could not draw a conclusion as to whether this Sunday shopping experiment had been, indeed, successful. We had companies such as Advance TV in Winnipeg, a major retailer in this city, deciding regardless of what their competitors did to shut down on Sundays. They just said it did not make sense at the end of the day. So I think there were enough examples of retailers like Advance in this city where a consensus could not be drawn. I do not think anybody on the other side could convince me that there was a consensus here that the retailers want Sunday shopping, not when we saw the somewhat negative reports that came out about the participation in the malls.

One would have thought, because of the hype and the buildup that the Sunday shopping bill got, that the malls would have been filled with people. What we saw, particularly going into January and February, was that retailers were being open, retailers were suffering through the increased overheads of keeping staff on Sunday and the sales were not there. They were sitting all day and making little or no sales, and in fact the sales they were making were sales that they would have made in other days of the week.

* (1220)

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is not possible to have a better retail sales picture in the province unless you are to increase the wealth of the people and increase the disposable income of the people who are going to spend money in the stores. If a person has a minimum wage job or has a \$10-an-hour job or earns \$25,000 or \$30,000 a year, they still have only so much disposable income, and currently they are spending their \$10,000 or their \$20,000 in the— if you look at the statistics in this country you will find that over the years people have had a very easy time spending what they earn already. [interjection]

The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) tells me he is listening, and I am very pleased that the member and I can carry on this dialogue in the House uninterrupted by the other members of the Legislature. I understand I have the rapt attention of a future senator and acting Minister of Natural Resources.

The point of the matter is that what we have seen in the economic statistics in this country, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that people have got themselves into such a tremendous debt load over the last few years that they do not have the ability to spend themselves out of the recession.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The decorum is starting to lack a little bit, gentlemen, if we could just bring it back in line. You all have an opportunity to join in this debate at a future time, but at this time I would like to hear the honourable member for Elmwood.

The honourable member for Elmwood, to continue, please.

Mr. Maloway: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. My point was that over the last few years, if I might try to make it again, people have got themselves collectively as a society into such a massive debt situation that in fact people do not have the money to go out and spend more than they have even in the five days or six days we had to spend. So adding another day or another series of hours to the amount of time that people can shop is doing nothing more than adding to the overheads of the business community. I think the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce can understand and can see that, and that is one of the arguments that they use for not going to wide-open Sunday shopping, because people are just not able to spend. If you increase people's disposable income, if you increase a person's disposable income from \$25,000 to \$35,000, then consumer spending will increase. But that is not happening and particularly not with this government. This government is driving this economy into the ground with its taxation policies— [interjection] Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) is attempting to get me riled up once again here, and I am not going to permit him to do it.

I was thinking earlier this morning that mine might be the last question that he takes as the dean of the House. I do not know that that will be the case or not. He may have another question on Monday or Tuesday. I am very pleased to have been the member having first run into the member back in 1971 when he came very close. Some would say he should have won the leadership of the Conservative Party way back in those days. He lost a very close leadership race in his day.

I do not know what kind of a Premier he would have been. I am glad we did not stay around to find out. I was supporting my leader of the day and a very good Premier, Ed Schreyer. Nevertheless, the member was elected here in 1966, and he suffered through that Conservative Party all those years and all the things that they did to him, and I am sure he did a few things to them, too. I am sure it all evened out in the end, but he has had a good time.

As much as I do not think much of the Senate and Senators and so on, I think that if anybody is to be appointed to the Senate out of that caucus, I would think that he would be a very appropriate choice. If, in fact, the rumours are true, I really do wish him well in Ottawa. I do wish he would stay on top of his department's programs for at least a little while longer than he is here.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I realize I only have another two or three minutes, and I do have certainly enough material here to finish up the full 40 minutes. I know I will be getting another 20 minutes in the next day, but I am being admonished by my temporary House leader here that I must continue. I certainly intend to do that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have dealt partially with the question of consumer spending, that the consumers do not have any more money to spend. We have dealt with the whole question of the silliness of turning this whole issue over to the municipalities who are going to set up a patchwork quilt in this province. We now have to deal with an area that I get a lot of response on and that is the area of rest for families, a day of rest.

Particularly, in my area I have a Mennonite Brethren Institute there and I have a lot of people who are religiously inclined and who are very concerned about this issue. I have had people signing petitions up at Penner Foods on Henderson Highway. I have had my surveys sent in from people in the area. We have had a considerable number of

people who have voted Conservative, who admit to voting Conservative in the past, who have said that this is where they draw the line with this Conservative government, that they feel that this government is helping in a way, and they are very surprised that this government would do something like that. But this government is trying to or helping to what they see as destroy and dismantle the fabric of society as they have grown used to it over the years.

I do not know that this particular bloc of voters are—I cannot guarantee that they will be voting for me in the next election. I would like to think so. I do not know that they are permanently deserting the Conservative Party. It is significant that this particular bloc of voters are very irritated, very irate at this government right now. This government is getting the heat from enormous amounts of people in their own constituencies, in their rural areas, from the businesses in their areas who are very concerned about what they are doing, and they seem unconcerned about what this is going to do to the fabric of society and people's quality of living.

It is not only their supporters. I dealt for a moment, Mr. Acting Speaker, with their supporters, their support base. I want to deal with people who do not identify themselves as Conservative voters and the response I am getting from them. A lot of people are telling me that they are already up to their ears in the rat race. They have a job that they go to. They have kids to take care of. They are working full time as it is. To now have to work on Sundays—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. When this matter is again before the House the honourable member will have 20 minutes remaining. As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan.

This House now stands adjourned until Tuesday next at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 21, 1993

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