

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
Tuesday, 22 July, 1980

Time - 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell): Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports By Standing and Special Committees . . . Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports . . . Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Attorney-General I would like to address a question to whatever Minister would be acting in his stead, in order to ascertain government policy on a practice of which I was not aware, Mr. Speaker, and that is apparently the practice that exists in the city of Winnipeg whereby the Police Chief will make arrangements for the use by private individuals of off-duty policemen in order to patrol public property and wearing police uniforms and police guns.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to take that question as notice on behalf of the Attorney-General.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could ask the Honourable Minister of Government Services when he takes that as notice, he also consider with the Attorney-General the advisability of having the Manitoba Police Commission look into the question of policy and principle and inform him, and through him the Legislature, as to what they think ought to be the practice as it applies to all of the enforcement officers in the province of Manitoba.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, again on behalf of the Attorney-General, I am happy to take that question as notice, but it would seem to me that a body such as the Police Commission would be in fact an appropriate organization through which such matters, policy matters, could be and should be vented.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, a final question in this regard. Could the government undertake to obtain and report back to the Legislature information from the RCMP as to what their practice is in this regard and possibly, at the same time, ascertain what are the practices by other police forces within the province?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health.

HON. L. R. (Bud) SHERMAN: Mr. Speaker, I wish to clarify an answer I gave the Honourable Member for Transcona this morning in the course of responding to some questions he had asked me. It is difficult to carry all the statistics in one's head, Mr. Speaker.

The reference to the increase in physicians in Manitoba, which I said was approximately 100 to 150 over very recent years, covers the four-year period from January 1976 to January 1980. Obviously, some of that increase would have occurred during the time of the administration of members opposite; some of it has occurred during our administration. The precise figure is 134 in that period and the total number of physicians registered with the Manitoba Health Services Commission as of January of this year was 1,598. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that there has been and continues to be a steady increase in the number of physicians in the province, but the 134 covered the four-year period 1976-80.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona.

MR. WILSON PARASIUK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Finance. I would like to ask him if his staff has been able to do any work to ascertain the negative impact on the Manitoba economy of high interest rates, the impact with respect to decreases in construction starts, housing starts, the impact with respect to the farmers, the impact with respect to increases in the cost of living. Has his staff been able to ascertain whether in fact the very high interest rates that we have been experiencing have had any negative impact on the Manitoba economy?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

HON. DONALD W. CRAIK (Riel): Mr. Speaker, the high interest rates had their greatest toll of course in construction and housing and in commercial and other construction and has shown up there most dramatically and there, of course, are other impacts on the economy such as the drought that show up in other sectors. The net result, as we get into some full discussion this morning, is production and the expected growth of the gross provincial product, the real growth.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona with a final supplementary.

MR. PARASIUK: Mr. Speaker, since the Minister apparently shares my concern about the negative impact on Manitoba, and Manitobans in particular, of very high interest rates, has his government done anything to deal with the commercial banks and get them to explain why their prime rate is some 2 percent higher than the bank rate, namely the rate that the Bank of Canada lends them money, and that is some 1 percent higher than the general historical relationship of the bank prime rate being only 3/4 to 1 percent higher than the bank rate? Has the Minister in fact looked at this very serious matter that is certainly affecting Manitobans?

MR. CRAIK: Concerns have been relayed, Mr. Speaker, in this case. The province, for instance, has

a recent loan that was taken out which is based on the bank prime rate and we therefore have a direct vested interest of course in seeing that it is as low as possible. Whether or not we are having any influence on it would be very doubtful but we have relayed our concern about the spread that exists.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Transcona with a final supplementary.

MR. PARASIUKE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would like the Minister in fact to indicate to us and to table the correspondence that apparently this government has undertaken with respect to raising concerns about the bank rate. It's easy to say that you have done so but, Mr. Speaker, have they contacted the Department of Finance federally, have they contacted the Minister of Finance and, more particularly, have they brought in the regional vice-presidents of the major chartered banks in for a conference to ask them why in fact the prime rate in Manitoba and across Canada is so very very high, much higher than that which the Bank of Canada charges them and is this some form of usury which is in fact affecting Manitobans very negatively, as the Minister seems to imply?

MR. CRAIK: As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, we have recently had a meeting with the western vice-presidents or western CEO's of the banks, primarily dealing with the drought but covering a wide-ranging number of topics regarding banking in the province and interest rates generally. But beyond that the decision is a federal decision and has to be made at the federal level by the Bank of Canada or I suppose, more directly, the banking system, not the Bank of Canada but it's made on a national basis. I don't think that the reduction has been yet enough. I think that two of the banks reduced their rates this week.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MRS. JUNE WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, my question is also addressed to the Honourable Minister of Finance. Is the Minister yet in a position to reply to my question of the 15th of July relative to the sewage clean-up of the Red River? At that time, I asked if the province had been approached by the city with respect to the 173 million expenditure apparently required and whether the provincial government is discussing or considering giving assistance to the city.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, I think at the time the question was directed to me, I took it as notice for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, the Minister reporting for the Environment. I'll have to refer the question to the Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): Mr. Speaker, in response to my honourable friend, if I

caught the question correctly, the department has been in consultation with the city of Winnipeg on this particular subject for some time and, to the best of knowledge, these discussions are continuing.

MRS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, on the same subject, on the day that I asked the question I asked the Minister of Finance if he would also, in taking this as notice, look into the situation where the report that has come to the city seems to indicate that we have such a serious situation in the Red River, in spite of the fact that millions of dollars have been spent in the past 15 and 20 years for water and waste clean-up and how this could happen. The Minister agreed with me that he also felt it was strange that suddenly we were hearing about this being such a serious problem. Can the Minister make any statement to the House on how this could come about?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, no, the report on the microbiology of the Red River was released by the federal government some time ago. My understanding is that the provincial environmental people don't agree with it. One simply has to accept the report at its face value and, if agreement can be reached between the province and the city of Winnipeg as to ways and means that the problem can be resolved, well then we will proceed. I might just point out to my honourable friend that the cost is a fairly substantial one and we are hopeful that perhaps we can involve the federal government in some way, as well, in order to meet the costs of this project.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member with a final supplementary.

MRS. WESTBURY: Mr. Speaker, if I'm correct in understanding the Minister to say that his professionals disagreed with the federal report, could we have a report from his professionals, so that we can weigh the two reports and try to come to some understanding of what really is going on at the Red River?

MR. JORGENSEN: No, Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the people in my department disagreed with the report. I said the city of Winnipeg environmental people apparently have some disagreement with the contents of the report.

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

MR. LAURENT L. DESJARDINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Deputy Premier, the Honourable Minister of Finance. Has the government abandoned the conviction that less government is good government?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

MR. CRAIK: I think we should call for the supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Chairman, a year ago the Premier was quoted as saying that he defended the slow workman-like session, saying that the passage of only 58 bills, many of them housekeeping in nature, reflected the Tory conviction that less government is good government. The effort to slow down the intrusion of heavy-handed bureaucracy was in marked contrast to the whole scatterization of legislative initiative under the NDP. So I would think now that maybe they will reverse their feel and feel that more legislation makes big government and better government. We know they reversed their feel on the question of tightening the belt and so on, of restraint.

MR. CRAIK: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that it brings about longer sessions. I think yesterday was the five-month anniversary of the opening of this Legislature. Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that 115 . . . I think the top number of the last bill is 115 -(Interjection)- I think you have the undertaking of the House Leader that there is no further bills, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Boniface with a final supplementary.

MR. DESJARDINS: Mr. Speaker, could we be assured that the government does not bring any more bills at this time, or is that still to be decided by the Attorney-General when he returns?

MR. CRAIK: Mr. Speaker, the House Leader could answer that more appropriately; I believe that was stated in the House a couple of days ago.

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

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct this question to the Minister of Agriculture. In view of his answers this morning concerning the allocation of hayland in the Red Deer Lake area, can the Minister indicate how he feels that his decision to overrule his staff's commitment about the unfairness of the situation by not allowing farmers in the area to be allowed the opportunity to tender for the haylands, instead by letting the municipality allow them without any tendering, is a fair decision?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JIM DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, that the recommendation from my staff was to proceed along the lines which had been established by the local authority, and I thought we could say 'Haymen' to that question.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs whether he feels that the actions of his colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, by not allowing the farmers of his area to participate in an open tender to cut the hay in the area, rather than a direct allocation by the municipality to two people who are not directly involved in agriculture, with no equipment, was a fair decision, and that the costs that are being quoted to the farmers for that hay are not excessive?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. DOUG GOURLAY (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I think that I indicated previously some answers to that question. With respect to the arrangement with the municipalites, the municipalities had made the decision they felt was the best way to handle the very difficult problem, and I am in agreement with the Minister of Agriculture in going along with the municipal people's decision.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George with a final supplementary.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, last week, to the Minister of Agriculture, he replied to a question concerning Gypsumville and the lands that were withdrawn from a draw that was originally carried out by the Department of Natural Resources. Would the Minister be prepared to table that lease that he indicated that land was under to that individual, that he indicated the land was under lease and that's why the draw was withdrawn? Would he be prepared to table the lease and the name of that individual that was under lease, too?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member is aware, the leasing of Crown land and some of the authority of that department falls within the Minister of Natural Resources. I would have to discuss it with that Minister to see if we could consider tabling the lease.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George with a fourth question.

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Natural Resources. Would he, if that land is under his jurisdiction, be prepared to table a copy of the lease that his own department put out a draw on and was later withdrawn, contrary to the notices that were put out by his department and the Department of Agriculture that the decision would be made by the appropriate branch of Natural Resources, contrary to your statements? Would you then be prepared to table that lease?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney): Perhaps the honourable member would be more specific in the land he's referring to, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: I'd like to address a question to the Minister responsible for Urban Affairs in the absence of the Attorney-General. I would want to know, Mr. Speaker, whether it is the government policy of the Conservative administration that the present mayor of the city of Winnipeg will be protected from competition by other councillors, as is the case with the bill which will be reported to the

House by committee, or is it a possibility that this question is not one of policy but will be decided according to the individual conscience of MLAs in the House, if an amendment is introduced?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

HON. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the member is asking what the position of the government would be on an amendment to a government bill. I'm in no position to give that answer until the members of the government have had a chance to discuss it.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that in committee the bill, as presently coming back to the House, will not permit a councillor to run against the existing mayor unless he resigns which is, by the way, contrary to the way in which the existing mayor got elected and did not have to resign when he ran for mayor. I am merely asking the appropriate Minister whether this is the policy of the government or whether it is a matter which is subject to discussion with members of the House?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the bill, amendments to The Winnipeg Act is a bill that is a government bill, and as far as discussion with other members of the House, the honourable member is free to do so. As I mentioned before, we haven't seen any amendment that has been presented at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster with a final supplementary.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, my question is that in view of the fact that in many pieces of government legislation from time to time the government indicates that although the bill is a government bill that a particular matter of it is not one of government policy. Will the Minister so indicate with regard to this particular provision, which would preclude an alderman or a councillor of the city of Winnipeg from running for mayor unless he resigned his alderman's position and thereby stood a greater risk of depriving the people of the city of Winnipeg of their full share of talented people on the council; can the Minister indicate whether that particular provision is one on which the government has no firm position?

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the member is playing games again. Mr. Speaker, really quite frankly, he knows it's a government bill, he's asking me if there's a free vote on the government bill, on that section of it with an amendment coming in on that section, if there will be a free vote on that section. I'm in no position to answer that. We haven't seen an amendment and that's as simple as that, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster with a fourth question.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Honourable Minister that I'm not playing a game. I would ask the Minister to remind himself that when

The Wildlife Act was introduced the section with regard to Sunday hunting was declared not to be one of substantial government policy. May I ask the Minister whether, in this government bill, the question which precludes a councillor from running for mayor unless he first indicates that he will not be a councillor if he's defeated, is that one of firm government policy? I'm not playing a game: I'm asking a simple question.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is repetitive.
The Honourable Minister.

MR. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the Minister of Urban Affairs said when he introduced the bill, I'll have to check with him to find out what comments he made. I would only ask the member if he's caucused it with his group?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

MR. RUSSELL DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Cultural Affairs, the only good-looking member on that side of the House. I would like to ask her whether she is seriously considering changing the name of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra to the Manitoba Symphony Orchestra?

HON. NORMA L. PRICE (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for his kind remarks. I did mention the other day, while I can't make them do it, I think it is worthy of consideration to have them change it to the Manitoba Symphony Orchestra because it is an orchestra that is for all of Manitoba, not just Winnipeg.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I'd also ask the Minister, in those deliberations or discussions, if she's having any, whether she would also take into account the possible adverse effects. I'm thinking of the fact that the city of Winnipeg makes bloc grants for that purpose and that their are corporations. I ask her whether she has considered any possible adverse affects of such a name change, or does she think there would be none?

MRS. PRICE: I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, if we look at it from all different facets, that there are downsides to it, whether it is the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra or the Manitoba Symphony Orchestra, but all I can do is recommend and I have mentioned it to them, and I think it is worthy of great consideration.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

MR. DOERN: Mr. Speaker, I would also ask the Minister whether she can indicate whether any of the 713,000 in Symphony debts have been paid off by the government. Has any portion of that amount been approved by your department?

MRS. PRICE: No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill.

MR. JAY COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Acting House Leader. I would ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs if the government has changed its policy in regard to notifying respondents who have indicated that they wish to make a presentation before a committee of the House on a particular bill.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, since the speech of the Honourable Member for Transcona the other day, I feel a somewhat kindred spirit with the Member for Churchill, so, as one draft dodger to another, I can answer him that will be up to a decision of the committee.

MR. COWAN: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister gratuitous remarks were entirely out of order and incorrect, but I will continue on my questioning. Can the Minister confirm that the Department of Agriculture is bearing the responsibility for notifying persons that they are to have an opportunity to appear before the committee that will be hearing the milk control bill?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, the practice, as far as I know, is unchanged to what it has been over the years.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill with a final supplementary.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the Minister to be even more explicit as to which years he is talking about and to answer the specific question, and that question was, is it now the responsibility of the department responsible for the bill to notify those persons who wish to make representation before the committee and is no longer the total responsibility of the Clerk's office to make that sort of representation?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, it has never been the Clerk's responsibility to be notifying people of the committee hearings. We have depended, to a large extent, on the media conveying that message for us and people taking their own initiative and keeping in touch with the Clerk's office or, on many occasions, people phone the various caucus rooms, depending on which side of the fence they are on, to keep themselves informed. That is the way it has been done and it has worked reasonably well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill with a fourth question.

MR. COWAN: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the Minister is, if that is the case, can he indicate why it is that the Clerk's office has been responsible for calling people to appear before the committee regarding the rent control bill, and why it does not appear to be the Clerk's responsibility to call people appearing before the committee to discuss the milk control bill?

MR. JORGENSEN: I will say again, it has never been the Clerk's responsibility, the Clerk has been doing it as a courtesy and that is all it is, is a

courtesy. Perhaps he will continue to do it but I do not want my honourable friend to get the impression that it is a mandatory provision, that it's incumbent upon the Clerk's office to provide that information or to notify people, because it isn't.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Churchill with a fifth question.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would then ask the Minister of Consumer Affairs if his government has directed the Clerk's office to discontinue that particular courtesy; and I will ask him, in specific, in regard to the bill that will next be appearing before committee, one would imagine, and that is the bill dealing with the Milk Control Board?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I have given no instructions to the Clerk's office because there have been no instructions to give. The practice is going to continue as it has in the past.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

MR. LEONARD EVANS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to direct a question to the Minister of Energy, but in his absence I would direct it to the Acting Minister of Energy, or perhaps the Legislative Assistant to the Minister of Energy, and ask the government, or anybody on that side, whether the government of Manitoba has made its views known to either the National Energy Board or to the responsible federal minister with respect to the pre-building of a gas line in southern Alberta which would, perhaps ultimately, bring gas from Alaska to the United States?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

MR. RANSOM: If I recall correctly, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Energy took that question as notice a few days ago.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon East with a supplementary.

MR. EVANS: Well, if the Honourable Minister is telling me that the Minister took it as notice, I would assume that in his taking of notice that we will expect a statement from the Minister indicating what the position of the government of Manitoba is, whether it is for this line or whether it is opposing this line, in turn keeping in mind the interests of the Manitoba natural gas consumers?

MR. RANSOM: I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Energy would consider that point and many others in arriving at a position. I'll be pleased to pass on the comments and questions of the Member for Brandon East.

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

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Honourable the House Leader in line with the questions that have been asked by the Member for

Churchill and agreeing with him, as I do, that it has been the practice but not the requirement that the Clerk's Office should keep records and notify people to the extent of the Clerk's Office's ability so to do, to notify people who have requested notification of the meetings of committees dealing with particular bills. As I say, agreeing with him as I do that it has always been a practice and never a requirement, is there a change in the practice in relation to the particular bill - I believe the number is 86 - whereby calls are being made by the Minister's office, rather than by the Clerk's Office?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. JORGENSEN: That is not a change in the practice. The Minister, or the caucus I should say, will be notifying those people that have indicated to our caucus that they want to present briefs, and we have always done that. We have done that when we were on the other side of the House, we have done it on this side. People phone our office; we take it upon ourselves to make sure that they are informed when that committee meets, so that they are able to appear.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, in complementing the caucus of the Conservative Party for communicating with people who ask the caucus for that information, will the Honourable the Minister inform the House whether or not the practice for which people have been most grateful, of the Clerk communicating with people, whether that has been discontinued in relation to Bill No. 86?

MR. JORGENSEN: No, it has not been discontinued, as far as I know. I presume that the Clerk's Office will do that, as they have always done. What I object to, Mr. Speaker, is the assumption on the part of some people that it is the responsibility of the Clerk's Office, and what I am attempting to do is to make that very clear that, in my view, it is not the responsibility of the Clerk's Office to be advising people of notice of meetings. They do their best to try and get in touch with them. If they fail to do so, then I don't want to find some people, who should know better, writing letters to the Ombudsman complaining that the Clerk's Office has failed in its responsibilities.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, may I ask, in a gratuitous manner, whether the Minister believes that I, for one, who have been asking questions and have suggested that is a requirement and not a practice, and that being the case - he shakes his head - I am wondering whether, as House Leader, it might not be a worthwhile matter to ensure that the Clerk's Office is given sufficient time and sufficient staff in which that practice may be continued, since it is a desirable practice, and done without any abuse or attack on the Clerk, but with certainly the required time and the required assistance to carry out what has been a very good service to the public, and which I have not heard anyone feel is not desirable.

MR. JORGENSEN: I'm not prepared to impose on the Clerk's Office any more responsibilities than that are theirs by a statutory provision. If they are able to

do it as a courtesy service then I think that this House and the public appreciate it. If they are unable to do so, then I don't want anybody criticizing them for it.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member with a fourth question.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, I don't think the Minister really responded to my question, so in case he didn't quite understand it, the question was not the requirement and not the responsibility but the effectiveness of carrying out the practice. Would the Minister, as House Leader, undertake to review with the Clerk the possibility of ensuring that the Clerk's Office both has adequate staff and sufficient time to make an effort? Mr. Speaker, I mean by that, that they can't keep phoning somebody that doesn't answer the phone and I do know they make every effort, but if there is any possibility that shortage of time or shortage of staff makes it difficult, then would not the Minister investigate the possibility of improving that service which, as I say, has proven to be most useful and effective to the public of Manitoba?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I say again, I hesitate to impose a burden on the Clerk's Office that will create a situation where the public then come to depend upon the Clerk's Office for everything. Surely there must be a little bit of initiative on the part of the individual to find out for himself, to keep in contact with the caucuses or the Clerk's Office, or whoever. The kind of system that has been successful in the past is that very thing. I'm sure that my honourable friends have had people phone their caucus room asking when committees were meeting. They've certainly phoned our office and we attempt to provide that information. It doesn't require any addition to the staff. We just simply do it, as a courtesy, as the Clerk's Office is doing it. I would hesitate to have that a mandatory provision of the Clerk's Office.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister advise us whether it would not be a prudent practice in extending this courtesy, which I believe has been a courtesy and I believe that it continues to be a courtesy, would it not be a prudent practice for the Clerk to advise people, who say that they want to appear before a committee, that they should keep in touch with the Clerk's Officer every two days or so because they would not be necessarily getting further notice, and that if they want to make sure that their names are called that they be advised when they first make their indication that they wish to appear that they will have to keep in touch with the Clerk's Office every one or two days to find out for sure as to when the meeting would be held?

MR. JORGENSEN: In my view, Mr. Speaker, that would be a more satisfactory arrangement than placing the responsibility on the shoulders of the Clerk, himself. I would think that, if they choose not to get in touch with the Clerk's Office, surely there

are caucus rooms that can be phoned as well and information provided. There are ways that can be done and I wouldn't want to rule out any particular opportunity for a person to advise himself or herself when the committee is meeting. If that arrangement can be worked out, we will be happy to do so.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, if the Minister is considering any value in what I have just said, could I ask him to assure us that such consideration will be in addition to what is presently being done, rather than in substitution for what is presently being done?

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, I presume that it happens from time to time in any case that certain people do phone the Clerk's Office from time to time. If they choose to continue to phone the Clerk's Office, I'm quite sure that the staff of the Clerk's Office will respond to those telephone calls and answer their questions. So the initiative is really up to the individuals.

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

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct this question to the Minister of Government Services responsible for Telephones, whether he can assure myself and the people from the communities of Jackhead and Matheson Island that construction of permanent telephone services, rather than just services in terms of a one-line service to the community, will be concluded in 1981, as previously committed to the residents of those communities?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I'm reasonably certain that is the case, but I will undertake to get the information for the honourable member.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now direct this question to the Minister of Tourism and ask her whether she can advise or take as notice - (Interjection)- No, I'm sorry, I guess it would be called the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Speaker, dealing with museums and historic sites. With respect to an elderly gentleman in the community of Grahamdale by the name of Armand Lemiez, whether or not her department has continued the negotiations and the possibility of establishing a permanent museum to hold or to at least establish a site to hold the art collection of Mr. Lemiez and, as well, his sculptures, so that would be preserved as a historic site and, as well, possibly a wayside park within the western side of the Interlake in the community of Grahamdale?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Cultural Affairs.

MRS. PRICE: Mr. Speaker, I'll take the question as notice for the Member for St. George and check with the department.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George with a final supplementary.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This question is to the Minister of Labour and I wonder if he is prepared to respond to my questions several days ago with respect to setting up a works project to clear the Hydro right-of-way from the Gypsumville area to the communities of Anama Bay?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I haven't finished discussing the particular situation with the Ministry responsible for Hydro, but I can assure the member I'll get back to him.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ON SECOND READING

BILL NO. 86

THE MILK PRICES REVIEW ACT

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Call Bill 86, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 86, the Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I think I was first responding to the Minister with respect to this debate, so it's appropriate that I first speak after the motion to hoist the bill for a period of six months. Mr. Speaker, there was a very interesting and agitated response to my remarks from the Member for Emerson and I, too, Mr. Speaker, wish to say that I found the Member for Emerson's remarks to be the most interesting, to me, from him since he has come into the Chamber. So his position that he has sat and waited and been frustrated until he finally found something, which he felt that he could be certain to get to his feet and speak with complete feeling on, I think was a great profit to all of the members of the House because I think that he contributed significantly to the debate.

I certainly won't agree with the member, Mr. Speaker, when he said that my remarks represented a lack of knowledge on the subject matter of the debate but that's the member's privilege. I think that the debate has borne me out rather than has it borne out the honourable member. But I think, Mr. Speaker, all of us have learned something from the debate. The fact is that I have never been opposed to and, as a matter of fact, have been a proponent of agricultural people getting together for the purpose of dealing with their product in such a way as to get a reasonable return for their endeavours. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I have been a proponent of that legislation which has enabled the people to get together on marketing boards and most of my honourable friends have been opponents of it and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I don't wish to carry the can for the policies of the Conservative party, which has said, from time to time, that the best way of ensuring a price and a return to the investor is by a complete free market. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in the agricultural industry, it hasn't existed

in so many areas that it is only fictional to talk about it; it's like talking about Alice in Wonderland.

And what was most interesting, Mr. Speaker, from the debate and something which I probably should have suspected but I will concede that I didn't, was that milk control and the control of the price of milk did not come in as a consumer-oriented device. It did not come in so that there would be a price to the consumer which was not too high for him to pay so that he would be getting a cheap price for the product.

The Member for Burrows, gave us all what I consider to be a significant history lesson, when he showed that the free market was killing the producer, it was not killing the consumer; that milk was being used as a loss leader; that the fact is that farmers were going out of business and coming back into business with the price of milk; that milk was too cheap in price; that the producer was not getting a fair return and in order to protect the producer a Milk Control Board was put into existence. That board, Mr. Speaker, over the years, has had different functions and one of them has been, Mr. Speaker, what I will admit is a fairly anaemic attempt to protect the consumer, but there was something, Mr. Speaker, and I am not really overjoyed with what has been the result of the Milk Control Board. What bothers me, Mr. Speaker, is that the Minister has brought something in which is not a replacement for it and which has the danger, Mr. Speaker. My honourable friends on this side of the House have said that the greatest beneficiaries will be the processors and the retailers. I am not certain of that. What I am certain of is that the chief victims will be the consumers, because the board, Mr. Speaker, can protect the price for the producer. If the price for the producer is protected and passed onto the wholesaler and to the retailer, that price will be built into the retail price and if there is competition in retail - and I'm not certain that there will be - it will be competition above the wholesale price and that price the consumer will not be protected from.

Mr. Speaker, I have always agreed and do agree that there has to be some protection for the producer of the product from competition which will be wasteful to himself and which will not result in the product going to the consumer at a reasonable price. I think that everybody who spoke on the bill had that dual objective, to ensure - as a matter of fact, the Member for Burrows read out what was read out in 1932 - to ensure an adequate and pure and healthy supply of milk at reasonable prices to the consumer. That's what is being proposed. That is the desire of every member of the House and I said, Mr. Speaker, and I will repeat, and nothing that the member says tells me that I am wrong, that if you have the producers in a position where they can control the market, where the market is not competitive insofar as their production is concerned, and they are able to control the price and there is no effective competition, then I'm not sure that the retailer will gain a great deal but I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that the consumer will be without adequate protection, and that has been my opposition to this bill.

If you are dealing with vegetables; if you are dealing with turkeys; if you are dealing with all kinds of other commodities, there is . . . And this was a position that I took with respect to every marketing

board, Mr. Speaker: I want to know that if a marketing board exists and is able to control supply, insofar as production in the province of Manitoba is concerned, that there is an avenue to buy the product some place else, because that will keep the marketing board honest and I think that they should be kept honest. I don't believe that is possible with milk.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member assures me that it is going to be possible to purchase milk outside of the province of Manitoba and that that will keep the producer board in a position which does not let him have an unnatural power in the control of the price; I tell him that I have been advised by people who, I believe, know, that such is not the case. And, therefore, Mr. Speaker, the bill doesn't provide it. And then when I say that built into that cost of production, we will have all kinds of features which have no relation to the actual cost of production but will really relate to the purchase price of the right to supply milk, that that will be a cost of production, which is not an expense but which could be, Mr. Speaker, a windfall as between one producer and another, not necessarily the producer who's going into it but more likely the producer who's going out of it. Because if you have the right to supply milk and that right is a limited right, then you are going to sell that right, similar to what the Minister is proposing with regard to the fishery fishing licence. That then, Mr. Speaker, becomes not a return on investment, not a return for effort, it becomes a return for the purchase of a privilege, and that is what I wanted to keep out of the price of milk.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a proposal for the Minister. If all that we are interested in is to see that a farmer gets a return on his investment and a proper return for his efforts and the purchase price of equipment and the purchase price of supplies, and we are also saying that milk is a staple which everybody needs and therefore the price should be kept at the lowest price that can be reasonably be charged and still realize the cost of production, if that's what we are proposing, Mr. Speaker, then I would say that the province should look for a system which says that those people who are willing to supply milk and willing to fulfill certain requirements with regard to the supply of milk, have a certain number of cows, have a certain amount of equipment, all of which has to be indicated, and also indicate that they are supplying, Mr. Speaker, I would give them the land as a public utility. I would say that there would be no investment in the land, that it would be wrong because then we are building into the price of milk, the cost of buying the land, which shall increase as milk producers have more power to dictate the price of milk. The same thing will happen, Mr. Speaker, with regard to cows, unless there is a market for milk cows outside of the existing owners of milk cows, a price will be built into that. - (Interjection)- Well, if there is, Mr. Speaker, then I ask the Minister to look at it.

But let's take the price of land, Mr. Speaker, having increased from 200,000 to 400,000, let us assume, and a new supplier wanting to go into the supply of milk, if he has to pay 400,000 for land his investment is 400,000, he immediately has to recover 40,000, at 10 percent -(Interjection)- Well, you know,

I use that calculation to benefit my Conservative friends and to benefit myself. It's easy to calculate at 10 percent. It's something my father told me, that if you use tens it is very easy, so let us pretend that it was 10 percent, let's pretend, that's right.-(Interjection)- Well, Mr. Speaker, if the honourable member doesn't want to pretend, let's make it the right price, 15 percent, which will be 60,000.00. 10.5, that's right; 60,000 immediately has to be paid in interest charges for the cost of the land.

But that has nothing to do with the cost of producing milk; that has to do with the cost of having land available on which milk can be produced. So let the public say, and say it once and for all so that we are not building into the cost of milk to speculate a price of land, because that is not a legitimate cost, let the public say: Anybody who wants to produce milk, anybody who says that they are going to do this, who are going to buy cows, who are going to buy machinery and are going to guarantee a certain amount of production, and as long as they do it, the land will be made available by the state. That, Mr. Speaker, will be picked up by society, generally, and then it will not be the farmer who is subsidizing the consumer, it will be all of us, saying: We are willing to have a price of milk, which does not involve the land, which will be available statewide.

MR. ENNS: . . . the honourable member, but I wonder if, at this moment, the member would permit a question?

MR. GREEN: Go ahead, have fun.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, the Member for Inkster always has these intriguing suggestions about turning the land that the milk and dairy farmer needs to feed his cows and run his operation into a public utility. My simple question to him: Who is he going to take the land away from to give to the dairy farmer free?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to take the land away from anybody. I am going to say to the farmer, to the milk farmer who now has land, that your land is now worth 400,000; we will take that 400,000, pay it to you, the land is now owned by the state; you will produce milk . . .

Mr. Speaker, what are they interested in? Are they interested in Conservative ideology or that a farmer should have land on which he is going to make a speculative value of 200,000 next year, which then goes into the price of milk, or are they interested in "a return on investment", and then the next guy, Mr. Speaker, will not have to pay 400,000 - the state will buy it once, that's all - the man will be required to produce milk; he will be required to buy cows; required to invest in machinery; but he will not, Mr. Speaker, speculate and sell his land then for 600,000, which that board will then calculate as being the price of milk and now, instead of paying 60,000 interest, you are paying 90,000 interest for milk.

Mr. Speaker, I am not taking the land away from anybody, I am saying to the farmer you will get a return on your investment: you will get a return on your investment in cows; you will get your machinery; you will get your labour. But, Mr. Speaker, the price

of milk will have removed from it the speculative value of land. Mr. Speaker, that is what will keep the price of milk up because it will be charged, either in a quota or it will be charged, Mr. Speaker, for the right to use a piece of Manitoba for the purpose of delivering milk, and that price will go up and up and so will the price of milk.

Mr. Speaker, I have given my honourable friend, if they will take off their ideological glasses, I have given them a return on their investment, I have given them a return on their labour and I have given the consumer a price of milk, which we will all pay for, not the farmer. We will all say that if the price of milk is going to be kept low then the land on which that milk is supplied cannot be a charge to the farmer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the farmer doesn't want that. He doesn't want to sell milk; he wants to sell land. What he says is that I am going to produce milk, get my cost of production every year, but I am going to wait until that land goes up and, when I sell that land, I am going to get 200,000 for land that's got nothing to do with milk whatsoever. And that land, Mr. Speaker, belongs to all of us. I am not saying expropriate any land; I am saying the land has always belonged to all of the people of the province of Manitoba. There could be no departure from that, no matter how Conservative you want to be. Whatever government you have had, the most violently Conservative government, has always said that the state has the final right in the land. What they say is that they will take that land and pay the farmer a fair value for it. But if you want to take out the speculative value of milk, and the cost of it as it is passed on to the consumer, then let land be provided by the state, let the state buy the existing land, let the farmer go on the land, let him buy his cows, let him buy his machinery. You will not have to pay 90,000 in interest, but he will give up something; he will give up something, there is no doubt. He will give up the right to say that I am today sitting on a piece of land that is worth 200,000; in ten years it is going to be worth 500,000 because I have the right to produce milk and I have got the cows; the guy who wants it is going to have to pay me 500,000.00. I want to earn that 300,000, which will then be built into the cost of milk.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can't vote for this bill, not because it doesn't have the motivations that my friend is talking about, we all have the same motivation, what I know, Mr. Speaker, is that it won't work and I am not satisfied that the existing bill works. I agree with you, the existing bill has not worked. The Milk Control Board has been in an impossible position and they have been told by the producer that he needs more money, and they have been told by the processor he needs more money, and the processor will prove it, too. The processor will prove it. He will show you, Mr. Speaker, that his present value of his land and equipment, although he has got them written down on the books to 150,000, that to replace that land and equipment today costs a million; and therefore, he is basing his charges on earning income on a million dollars, not on what he has invested.

Now, that is the way of the world. I am really not going to try to change that in society. -(Interjection)- Oh, my friend is right, I do want to change it. But let us talk about milk. We are all saying, Mr. Speaker,

we are all saying, let's not go into the other areas for the moment. It was agreed 50 years ago that milk is an area where this has to be done.

Now, I want to pick an effective way of doing it, not an ineffective way of doing it. The ways, up to now, have been not effective; the way that the Minister introduces is less effective. I said something before, Mr. Speaker, and I will repeat it. Better than do what the Minister is saying, I would say no price control, no commission, free market for milk, anybody who makes it can sell it, anybody who wants it can buy it. Mr. Speaker, it will be the producers who will suffer and the producers who will start screaming, just as they did in 1932. I should have suspected, Mr. Speaker, I thought the automatic sort of view is that if there is controls it is designed to protect the consumer. Isn't that what we think? Isn't it a fact, Mr. Speaker, that when we hear that there were wage laws, that they are designed to give a higher wage?

Mr. Speaker, isn't it interesting that the first wage laws that were ever enacted were enacted in Great Britain and they were enacted for the purpose of making sure wages do not rise beyond a particular point. They were laws to keep wages down. They were enacted during the black death. Workers were in great demand. They started demanding more money and the government said: The workers are getting too much money, let's have wage laws. Those were the wage laws; they were not minimum wage laws. And since then, Mr. Speaker, there have been laws to protect workers' wages, and boy, do they protect them. I mean, who here wants to work for the wage law of 3.05; is that the present minimum wage? 3.15, but if you serve liquor it's not 3.15. If you serve liquor, Mr. Speaker, it is not 3.15. You know why it is not 3.15? Because the guy you are serving liquor to is being softened up to give you a little bit of money himself. That's the pretention with respect to those laws.

So I tell the Honourable Member for Emerson that I enjoyed his remarks very much, but what has been said around this Chamber convinces me, Mr. Speaker, that I was not wrong in my fears about this bill, it convinced me, quite to the contrary, that I was right and it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that neither the consumer nor the processor is happy and that will always be the case. Unfortunately, when you come in with controls, you come in with the position that one side says they're not getting enough, the other side says they are paying too much, and you lose both ways, Mr. Speaker.

Eventually the damnation of rent controls will be that the controlled price will be the price and that if you didn't have them the price would go down. That's eventually, I'm not saying that today and I note, Mr. Speaker, that I have been greatly misrepresented on that form of control. I've never said that if you can't meet the price you should move; I've never said that to anybody. What I said is that a girl said that she is three years living under horrendous conditions and can find cheaper accommodation elsewhere, not more expensive but cheaper. I said to her, why, if you have lived under three years of horrendous conditions and there is cheaper equivalent accommodations elsewhere, why did you not move? And she said that on a matter of principle I did not move. But I have never said, Mr.

Speaker, that if you can't pay the price, move, although that has been represented by people who think that they are indicating that I have taken a contrary position.

I moved in this House a resolution which clearly stated my views with regard to rent control and I say, Mr. Speaker, with regard to milk controls, that the present bill is not an improvement of the old bill. The old bill is not a good one, the present bill is worse and the Minister had better come in with something better to achieve the dual objectives that everybody in this House has referred to.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. GARY FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member for Burrows says that I am going to speak for the consumers and he's absolutely right. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I'll clear the record right from the beginning and say that I am not a producer. I am not in any way involved with producers. I'm not in any way involved with processors or wholesalers, or retailers of milk. In fact, as my friend the Honourable Minister of Agriculture says, I've never milked a cow. In fact I know that he doubts that I'd know which end to begin with, if I were going to milk a cow. But, of course, he says I'm not alone in that, in fact most members opposite are in that same position. But that doesn't mean that I can't speak to this bill with some concern, with a viewpoint that I believe should be heard and with a viewpoint that I believe has not been said by members opposite with respect to this bill.

I am, myself, a consumer. I don't, I believe, or to the best of my knowledge have one producer living in my constituency in River Heights. I represent consumers totally. My view in looking at this bill, Mr. Speaker, my view in looking at the question of milk supply in this province is to ensure that the consumers, who I represent, have as much milk as possible at as reasonable a price as possible and I say what I have to find in this legislation or what I have to look for in legislation on milk control and milk pricing in this province is how we can best achieve those two objectives: As plentiful a supply and as reasonable a price as we can possibly provide.

There are problems today, there is no question. The Member for Lac du Bonnet says, is anybody short today. The fact of the matter is, nobody is short today but the same argument can be used about energy. Is anybody short of petroleum energy today? No. So, does that mean that we have to hide our heads in the sand and say what's this about energy shortages; what's this about not having enough petroleum energy for the future? Everybody has enough today. That's all we need to be concerned about, if you follow the viewpoint of the Member for Lac du Bonnet.

But that's a very shortsighted viewpoint, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of viewpoint I'm sure that we'll only get if we listen to the members opposite. That's the kind of viewpoint that they gave us in eight years of government here. Why not take a foreign loan; why not take a loan from a foreign country, in foreign currency? You could get it for one

or two percent less than the going rate in the mid-70s. But what are we paying now that the exchange rate has changed and that foreign currency is so much stronger than ours? The net rate of those cheap loans that they got us in the mid-70s is 30 percent; 30 percent interest, that's what it's costing the people of this province because of your shortsighted viewpoint, and we're not going to take that shortsighted viewpoint when it comes to milk. Mr. Speaker, we've got to look at the long view and it's not good enough to say that there's enough milk around today. Let's look at the facts and let's look at what's happening to the milk industry in this province.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. There is time in this debate for everyone to be heard at the proper time, when they are recognized by the Chair. The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. FILMON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I say we can't afford to take the shortsighted view, Mr. Speaker. I think we have to look at the problem that's facing us. As I understand it, and I'm sure members opposite will get all of this information from the Minister of Agriculture when he wraps up debate on this bill, we have, at the present time, approximately 1,300 producers in this province, producers of milk. Not more than five years ago we had something close to 5,000 producers in this province. That's a drastic change. The change during the past year alone has been in the range of 5 to 10 percent decrease in producers which means it's an ongoing process, which means that we're having fewer and fewer milk producers in this province, year upon year. That cannot continue, Mr. Speaker, because inevitably it means that we will not have the source of milk production in this province. Just as we are facing that same problem with energy, with petroleum energy that is rapidly depleting in our world today, so we have the producers of milk decreasing and decreasing every year in Manitoba. To the point that, if not today, if not next year, some time in the foreseeable future we will not have enough production capability of milk in this province.

If members opposite aren't concerned about that, I am very concerned on behalf of the consumers I represent. Because I know that not being self-sufficient in the production of milk in this province inevitably means that the consumers of this province will be at the mercy of producers from outside the province. They will have to have their milk being provided to them by somebody in Saskatchewan, or Alberta, or Ontario, or North Dakota, or Quebec, or wherever else, and that's a great concern to me because I know that milk can be produced as cheaply in this province for the consumers as it can anywhere in Canada or anywhere else in north America, and if it isn't being produced here, it's got to cost more. All we need to do, for proof of that, Mr. Speaker, is look at what the prices of milk are right across this country. The price of milk for retail sale all over this country is higher than it is in Manitoba today. So if you had to take milk that was being produced elsewhere, bring it into Manitoba, it's got to cost not only what it costs in other provinces but add on the cost of transportation, so it's got to

cost a great deal more. How much more? Take a look at what's happening today, Mr. Speaker.

Here are some of the prices right across this country per litre of milk: Prince Edward Island, they are paying 74 cents a litre; Nova Scotia, they are paying 68; New Brunswick, 69; Quebec, 64; Ontario, from 69 to 75; Manitoba, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are about equal, we're about equal. We're in the range of 60 to 63 cents, depending on what grade of milk fat, what portion of milk fat we have in the milk, so we're in the same range in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. B.C. is up at 75 cents a litre. Everywhere else in this country they are paying more for milk. Now, obviously, if we have to bring our milk in, we're going to be paying that price, plus the cost of transportation, considerably higher than what we're paying today.

So I'm saying to you that anything that's in the interest of regulating the production, allowing a reasonable return so that we will encourage producers to stay in the business and not go out of the business, is to the benefit of the consumers. Because when Manitoba producers produce milk for our consumers here in Manitoba, they will produce it at the least possible cost and, not only that, of course, I haven't even told you about the other benefits that accrue because we support the dairy industry in Manitoba. The jobs that occur, not only in agriculture, but the jobs in processing, in delivery, in retailing, all those areas, not all of them would be there if we didn't have a large production supply of milk in this province.

Those are very important to us on this side and I think to all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, even if it's not important to the members opposite. Because throughout all of this debate, we haven't heard a great deal about what it means to have a good supply of milk in this province. All we've talked about is one shortsighted viewpoint depressing the retail price as low as possible so that members opposite can go to the voters and say, look what we've done, we've kept down the price of milk for you at the retail level, we've given you cheap milk but we've lost jobs, we've lost an industry and in future we're going to lose the productive capability and the supply, the continued supply, at reasonable costs for our consumers. Because they take the shortsighted view and I'm not willing to do that, Mr. Speaker, I'm not willing to do that at all.

If you don't think that this is a universally held view, take a look at what's happening today with the drought relief programs. Where have they been earmarked; where have they been zeroed in, both provincially and federally? At maintaining the herds, maintaining the producing herds in the dairy side and in the cattle production side. Specifically, 60 million being spent by the federal government, over 40 million by the provincial government to maintain herds in Manitoba. If you don't think that's important, I suggest to you that there are people all over this country who think it's important and we can't afford to ignore that important a sector of our agricultural community and our production industry in this province.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that others will and have made the comparisons between the costs of soft drinks, of alcoholic beverages, of fruit juices and everything else, and the way they've gone up in the

past, and the way milk has not gone up. I know that others -(Interjection)- not to the same extent. If you compare the rise in the cost of Coca-Cola versus the rise of the cost of milk, it hasn't got up anywhere near that. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, those things, although they are an interesting comparison, they don't get to the fundamental part of the problem. The fundamental part of the problem is we can't allow milk production to continue to be depressed in this province to the point that it won't be sufficient to meet the needs of our consumers, that it won't be sufficient to meet the needs of all other people in this province. We have to take action. We have to do something that's in the best interests of all Manitobans, both producers and consumers, and this bill gives us the legislation that's required.

I might indicate, Mr. Speaker, that even the present Milk Control Board has gone on record as saying that the present system is not sufficient to our needs. It isn't working; it needs a great deal of improvement. They have said so, so we're not acting against the interests of the Milk Control Board. We're not acting against the interests of the producers, I can assure you that, Mr. Speaker, despite what members opposite have taken advantage of in little remarks that they've gleaned out of the newspapers. I know that those producers are going to be at the Agricultural Committee for the hearings on this bill, and I know that those producers are going to tell you that they need this bill, they would like to see it go even further. That's probably a criticism they will bring to bear, but I think that we have to bear all the Manitoban's interests in mind when we come forward with legislation. Our government, I think, is wise enough to look at both sides of the coin, not take the cheap and easy political trick of saying, oh, we'll get the consumers because everybody is a consumer, but there are only 1,300 producers, so what's in it from a voting viewpoint. Everybody is a consumer, go for the big numbers of people, play to the galleries, play to the audience. It won't work, Mr. Speaker. People know that in order for the economy to work, in order to have everything work, that you have to have a balanced view, a balanced view that takes into account everybody's needs, including the consumers that I represent, with respect to something like milk pricing.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that now is the time for us to take action. Members opposite were in government for eight years. They were faced with this problem for eight years, but they put their heads in the sand. They ignored the needs of the producers and they said let's keep the price of milk down because that's worth votes and that's going to have us re-elected. Mr. Speaker, we want to be re-elected, too. There is no question about it; that's why we're here in government. We want to be re-elected, too, but we also want to be able to face everybody that we represent and tell them honestly that we've done the best to ensure that they're going to have their needs, a guaranteed supply of milk at a reasonable cost in the future and, as well, keep the industry in Manitoba, the agricultural producing industry sound, so that all Manitobans throughout our economy can benefit from what we've done in government. That's very important to us, Mr. Speaker.

We cannot afford to take the short-term view. We cannot afford to take the short-term view as was done by members opposite with respect to their foreign borrowings, as they did with Lake Winnipeg Regulation over the Churchill Diversion so that they could avoid tussling with an environmental issue, and instead, do the short-term, quick objective gain in Lake Winnipeg Regulation. We can't do that; we have to look at everybody's needs and we have to come up with a solution that satisfies and is for the best interests of all Manitobans. So, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're doing with this legislation. If there are concerns about what we can do at the retail level, Mr. Speaker, the bill has the power. It's all there; it's been said before. Any person who is dissatisfied with the price of fluid milk in any given locality or in the province generally may apply to the commission in writing to review the maximum price or minimum price, so fixed, or to fix maximum prices or minimum prices, or both under that subsection.

I'm concerned, too, about what happens at the retail level because, at the same time, as we are putting in a formula in place that will give the producers a fair return, that will ensure that the producers can stay in business and continue to provide us with the strong agricultural base we need in this province and the ready supply of milk.

At the same time, we don't want to have price gouging going on in a commodity as basic a necessity as milk is to all Manitobans, to all consumers. Because, I think it's been said over and over again that milk is nature's most perfect food; milk is a product that's required by mothers, by babies, by others, by all people in this province. So we want to make sure that there isn't price gouging and I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, I'll be the first one to ask the Milk Prices Review Board to step in if anything goes wrong with the milk price setting, because I know that retail distribution in this province, particularly in the city of Winnipeg, in the area I represent, has changed over the years.

Many of us remember what used to happen in the old days when we had corner stores that were owned and operated by families that we all knew, families that we grew to love and families whose children we went to school with, and so on and so forth. But that isn't the case now. Now even our corner stores are owned by big chains, the convenience stores, and there is a risk there because those people are the only game in town after 10 o'clock at night and on Sundays and holidays. So there is a risk there and I recognize it, and I'll be the first one to say, we'll have to watch very closely.

The Minister and all members on this government will have to be vigilant to ensure that nobody is being disadvantaged by the fact that we haven't stepped in with a tough hand, the iron hand, and set the price. But we want to have some opportunity in the market, because we'd like the retailers to be able to put sales on for milk; we'd like our consumers to be able to get milk even less expensively than they do today. Use it as a loss leader; have a price war, that's fine. As long as we guarantee the return to the producers, why not? Competition is good for everyone in the marketplace.

At the same time, we also know that the right of appeal is right here in that legislation and we'll ensure - I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that we will

ensure that the Milk Prices Review Board will step in when anything goes awry. When the Member for Churchill's northern prices are set outrageously high and it impairs the ability of his people to buy milk at reasonable cost, we'll be willing to go forward and ask that board to take a look at it and ask them to step in and set limits where they have to. But it's far better to have the mechanism in place and not have to use it, because the market can better understand the checks and balances that are there. Milk that's a day old might be put on sale and many more will be able to drink it, and that's the kind of thing we would like to see and not have it set by somebody going in and saying that's the price, take it or leave it, nobody else can change it. -(Interjection)- Well, perhaps they will give it away. For every litre of Coke, you'll get a half litre of milk free; that may happen but, at the same time, we are going to ensure that there are incentives in the marketplace for people to sell milk cheaper than it is today.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I represent consumers. I want to say that I represent people who are interested in having a ready supply of milk available at all time in the future, at reasonable cost and, in doing that, I believe that this bill will ensure the supply, plentiful and economic, to all consumers in Manitoba, will preserve an industry that's good for all of us because it's good for Manitoba's economy, for the jobs that it produces throughout the province, and it will protect the consumer. Because we, as a government, are prepared to act where action is necessary, as we have in the past and as we will in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR ACTING SPEAKER (Albert Driedger, Emerson): The Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I simply want to ask the Member for River Heights a question. His expectations are that milk prices might be used as a loss leader - at least that's what he alluded to - after this legislation is passed. I ask him why it has not been used in that way to date, because only maximum prices are being established, Mr. Chairman, and the industry is free to discount today if they wish to? Why hasn't that happened?

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, I think the member is well aware of many instances in the marketplace in which the maximum price becomes the minimum and accepted price. Why doesn't anybody have a taxi today -(Interjection)- Can I answer? Why doesn't anybody have a taxi today in Winnipeg that'll give you a ride at a lesser price than the rate that's set by the taxi-cab board? They can, the taxi-cab board sets the limit. Why doesn't anybody give you a cheaper ride? Because that's the way it works in marketing.

MR. ACTING SPEAKING: Order please. The Member for Wellington.

MR. BRIAN CORRIN: Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat bemused at hearing the Honourable Member for River Heights provide us with his opinions of this particular bill, only not because I don't value when I listened to his remarks, his particular point of view,

but rather because he described himself more or less as a consumer advocate, as the consumer's representative.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that member represents consumers and it is certainly true that he doesn't represent producers, but, Mr. Speaker, he has obviously not spent sufficient time reviewing the provisions of this particular bill. Because I can't believe if he had read the provisions of Bill 86, I can't believe that he could conclude that his government had attended to the concerns of the consumer. Not, Mr. Speaker, in a way that he would, I presume, regard as being responsible and necessary. -(Interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member for River Heights is becoming an expert on milk production economics, while speaking and making the case for the consumer. He seems to be largely premising his remarks on production economics. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that he review the provisions of this bill and listen very seriously and attentively to the remarks made, not necessarily by myself, but the remarks made by other members on this side of the House, because I believe, Mr. Speaker, if he does that, he too will have cause for concern.

I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that this represents anything less than an emasculation of consumer rights and protection. That is what I see it as, Mr. Speaker, and I think essentially, Mr. Speaker, the only sensible thing that has been suggested to date in this regard is that it be hoisted. I think that that advice is eminently wise and I think that it should be seriously considered by members opposite.

The bill is an abortive effort. It is deficient from the perspective of anyone who values consumer rights and the consumer's right to be involved in the price-setting mechanism. It substantially takes away the rights that had been introduced into the legislation over the years, and I understand that those rights were conferred by a variety of governments, with different political stripes. I understand this legislation, as a matter of fact, goes back to somewhere in the mid-1930s and apparently was introduced originally to prevent the under-cutting of price and dumping of extra provincial milk products in Manitoba. Apparently it was intended to do exactly what our honourable friends opposite seem to think it cannot do and, Mr. Speaker, I am seriously and very very deeply concerned about what is transpiring in this regard.

Just before we commenced our sitting this afternoon, the Member for Transcona and myself were looking, Mr. Speaker, at some figures that were provided under the auspices of The Federal Election Act and those figures revealed the nature and amounts of contributions and contributors made to the three political party contesting the last election. We couldn't help, Mr. Speaker, but look at the list of persons contributing moneys to the Conservative party and, Mr. Speaker, I tell you that this is the essence of this debate because it is becoming very difficult for honourable friends opposite to serve both their constituents, their friends and that list, Mr. Speaker, of contributors represents their friends, their special interest friends and themselves, Mr. Speaker. If they had their way, Mr. Speaker, they would do things that were consistent with re-election. So, Mr. Speaker, what they do is in their confusion and haste to seek out political opportunity, they

stumble all over themselves trying to appear to be dealing with matters on an even-handed and regular basis.

In appearance, Mr. Speaker, we have a bill that at first glance looks like it was designed with the producer in mind and, at the same time, is evenly balanced in such a way as to protect the consumer as well. But, Mr. Speaker, the person who pays that price, calls the tune as well and Mr. Speaker, it's not just mere coincidence that in that list there were a number of corporations who indeed would have a vested interest, and it's appalling, Mr. Speaker, it's appalling to see that sort of special interest. The four chartered banks of this country, each contributing exactly the same amount, 50,000 a piece. 200,000 in purchasing power in one fell swoop, and we're going to be advised that we're not to believe that there is any connection between the boards of directors and interests of those four chartered banks and the interests of the major retailing and wholesaling companies that will be affected by this bill. We're supposed to pretend that that doesn't exist. Well, Mr. Speaker, if it existed ten years ago or twenty years ago or fifty years ago, it exists more to day because there is increasing concentration in all the industries, in all the sources of capital in this country.

I can tell you, as my Leader did earlier this morning, Mr. Speaker, that this bill is in truth designed with a view toward facilitating the ends of not the producer but facilitating the ends of the wholesaler, the processor and the retailer, whose interest most often which, Mr. Speaker, is in exact precise coincidence. As my Leader indicated, we have statistical information which indicates that companies such as Modern Dairies control up to 50 percent of processing and retailing, companies such as Lucerne and Safeway. There's grave cause for concern.

Mr. Speaker, if this represents the second platform - and this is what I presume it does - it represents the second platform or plank in the government's consumer protection platform, along with rent decontrol, Mr. Speaker, we can say that there's good reason for not only members on this side, but all people, to be critical of the government's lack of concern for people.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that just before this legislation was introduced in this House certain findings had been made by The Milk Control Board and they were very important, Mr. Speaker, and the Honourable Member for River Heights stated that he represented the interest of consumers. Well, he didn't represent the interest of the consumers that The Milk Control Board was concerned about. They spoke about the plight of people in northern communities and remote communities, in the inner core of the city of Winnipeg. They spoke about lack of nutrition for youngsters, for expectant mothers. They talked about the position of aged people with respect to nutrition standards and, Mr. Speaker, I think it's well worth our time to share with them their perspective, because I think what they said was very much to the point and should be on the record of this debate.

I'll quote from the press release that accompanied the new schedule of maximum retail prices that they fixed at the beginning of June of this year. The board said as follows: "The Milk Control Board is

concerned with the effect of any price increase on disadvantaged individuals, particularly low-income, expectant mothers and the aged. Evidence presented at the board hearings has increasingly projected an emerging crisis in nutrition and health, with the consequences of rising cost to society down the road. The Milk Control Board, of course, has no authority or moneys to initiate any sort of subsidy as requested by consumer groups. However, The Milk Control Board today announced they will initiate a review of possible means by which fluid milk may be made available to these particular target groups at a cost less than the maximum prices allowable by the board for regular milk sales."

Mr. Speaker, that is very significant; that is very significant, because before they could initiate those proceedings, before they could do the necessary research and make their recommendations known, they had their legs cut out from under them. The government moved quickly and swiftly to destroy any such initiatives. Mr. Speaker, that was simply wrong.

The Member for Churchill was quite right in the course of his remarks made last night. There is cause for concern and The Milk Control Board has shared in that concern. The question is, why; why are we moving when the Milk Control Board has, on the basis of evidence submitted to it in numerous hearings, when The Milk Control Board has decided to do a comprehensive evaluation of the situation vis-a-vis low-income consumers, why is the government moving away from those sorts of regulatory controls? -(Interjection)- Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Government Services was sincere, he would be fighting for a mechanism that would assure - and he could do this, Mr. Speaker; he could have done this - price stability for the producer.

Mr. Speaker, I would be willing and I'm sure many people in this House would be willing to consider legislation that allowed producer costs to go quite high, as long as there was some regulatory mechanism that prevented retailers and processors from exploiting the consumer. That is the vast efficiency, Mr. Speaker.

The Milk Control Board, Mr. Speaker, in coming to its conclusions, didn't conclude that northern people were suffering as a result of high milk costs, as a result of producer-induced costs. That wasn't their conclusion. They, like other research groups, concluded by and large that was a result of the oligopoly or monopoly concentration at the retail and processing end.

Mr. Speaker, there was survey taken by a department of government, I believe, in 1976. It was a working group on nutrition doing policy guidelines for nutrition improvement programs in the province and it dealt with this problem, as well. It talked about the very special difficulties in providing milk at a reasonable price to northern and remote communities. Mr. Speaker, they didn't conclude that it was producer initiated, that the hardship was induced by the farmer. They talked about the high costs of transporting milk. They talked about the fact that price levels in communities in northern Manitoba ranged, as they found them on a survey, from 75 to over 125 percent higher than Winnipeg. I mean is that not reason for concern. Is it appropriate that we should be stopping The Milk Control Board's investigative research at this time, Mr. Speaker,

when we have those sorts of facts on the record? In this bill, Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely no provision for an independent investigation by any body unless the Minister authorizes and approves it.

It sounds a lot like the rent decontrol legislation, doesn't it, Mr. Speaker? Such a common refrain; everything is available but access is limited to the Minister. This is significant because with respect, Mr. Speaker, this Minister has not - and I'm now speaking to the Minister responsible for the protection of consumers, not producers - particularly evinced a bias in favour of the people he is supposed to represent. Mr. Speaker, this is cause for grave concern. So nobody has found that the producer of milk is the villain in the piece but everybody seems to agree, Mr. Speaker, that something has to be done in order to deal with the practical problems that present as a result of the monopoly.

They also pointed out - and I'm sure the Milk Control Board would have come to this conclusion, as well - they talked about the pricing of reconstituted milk. This, Mr. Speaker, is often the only form of milk that's available in the remote communities because of lack of refrigeration facilities, because of difficult transportation problems. This is the only sort of product that gets up to those communities and, yet, there is a fantastic differential with respect to pricing, the pricing treatment of the two products. So you have again good reason, Mr. Speaker, for all members, not just the people such as myself who only represent the inner-city consumer, the low-income consumer, but all members, even the Member for River Heights, whose people presumably don't have this problem when they go to Safeway. They don't have to worry about the unfair pricing of reconstituted milk, I'm sure.

But, Mr. Speaker, when any member rises in this House and says that he represents the interests of consumers, he should have consideration for the fact that there are a great variety of consumers in this province, people who by choice or by necessity live in disadvantaged areas. This is, Mr. Speaker, the reason that the members opposite are seeing such an adamant protest, such a strong resistance on the part of the opposition members on this side because you have, once again, done something that has shown little or no consideration for the rights of the little people, whoever they may be, the average people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, are we going to have an assurance from the Minister, whichever Minister, the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Consumer Affairs, that they will exercise their collective prerogative on behalf of the government and join the new milk control mechanism - whatever that might be, because there are so many different avenues now and I'll deal with that in a few moments - to do the same extensive research as was being done by The Milk Control Board? Have we had that assurance? I don't think so, Mr. Speaker.

I would suggest, if I were cynical, Mr. Speaker, that was one of the reasons that this particular bill was brought before this Legislature. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, that my honourable friends had more or less had the last straw. That when The Milk Control Board said that they were going to look into this, they decided that was it.

There wasn't going to be any sort of research done of that sort while this government was in power. We've seen that, Mr. Speaker, all too many times, that sort of approach, that the government must have its way and that way, regardless of whether that way is dogmatic or doctrinaire, nobody is allowed to deviate. It smacks of the same sort of repression that we saw during the course of the rent review debates and the consideration by the Minister that the Civil Service Commission should look into the release of reports that he should have gladly have released to this House. Mr. Speaker, we don't like it. It's not the way the business of the House should be handled.

We have two basic problems, Mr. Speaker. We have consumer rights being restricted and we have the basic provision with respect to the investigative powers of The Milk Control Board going by the boards. We are not satisfied that the government is moving to stop either of those deficiencies. Mr. Speaker, there is good reason to believe that many people in this province, many consumers in this province, are very concerned about the price of milk and the system that we use to set it.

There are a number of groups, Mr. Speaker, who have banded together in order to attempt to move the government to retain the present milk price system. They are asking that a milk subsidy program be instituted with respect to low income-high need groups. They share the concerns and probably they, to a large extent, motivated the concern of The Milk Control Board. I won't belabour the House, Mr. Speaker, with the names of all of them, but I think it's worthwhile to look at the sorts of consumer interests that are represented by them, if for no other reason, Mr. Speaker, just to indicate to members opposite that the Member for River Heights does not, indeed, represent all the consumers of the city of Winnipeg. -(Interjection)- That's right, but I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Consumers Association of Canada probably does, and I would suggest that the National Farmers Union probably does, and the Family Services of Winnipeg. -(Interjection)- Yes, and the Family Services of Winnipeg. Are they not representative either?

I note there's a smug smirk on the Minister of Consumer Affairs' face. -(Interjection)- The Native Clan Organization. Does the Minister perhaps feel that he's more representative than The Native Clan Organization with respect to the rights of native consumers? How about The Winnipeg Police Association, are they suspected? How about the Winnipeg Society of Seniors? How about them; are they not representative? How about the Manitoba Paramedical Association; what about them? Should we not listen to their concerns, Mr. Speaker? How about the University School of Social Work; are they unfamiliar with the needs of low-income families? How about the north-end Machray Day Care Centre; do they not know about the problems of the inner city? How about the Native Alcoholism Council, Shaughnessy Park Community School Council and the Manitoba Association of Social Workers? How about the Learning Assistance Centre of Winnipeg and the Freight House Day Nursery of Winnipeg? How about Clinic; Marymound School; University of Winnipeg Student Association Day Care? How about the Kids Centre Co-op in the inner city? How about

the Fred Douglas Lodge Senior Citizens Home? How about the Winnipeg Native Pathfinders Association? How about the William Whyte Community School? How about the Canadian Association of Industrial Mechanical and Allied Workers? How about the Argyle School Parents Association? How about the Nor'West Co-op Health and Services Centre? How about the Munroe Day Nursery? How about the Norquay School? How about the Independent Co-op? How about the St. Vital Montessori School Parents Association? How about the Dufferin Community School Association; the Community Education and Development Association of Winnipeg; St. George's Nursery School and the Health Action Centre of Winnipeg?

Mr. Speaker, who better knows the plight of low-income consumers, the Member for River Heights or these two dozen organizations in the city of Winnipeg? I ask you and I think the answer, Mr. Speaker, is self-evident. My honourable friends may not want to listen to the concerns expressed by these groups and I know that they will be out to speak at the hearings if they are given an opportunity; that, Mr. Speaker, is not assured either, is it, unfortunately?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Public Services.

MR. ENNS: Yes, on a point of order. I think that kind of innuendo ought not to be left on the record. I think the House Leader has made it painfully obvious to all that the opportunity of representation before Law Amendments or before any committee that this bill is referred to, that the usual practice of allowing full hearings, full representation from all the members that he reads off is there. That kind of snide remark about suggesting that they will not have an opportunity to be heard really cannot be left on the record.

MR. CORRIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, it is very important that government members not only listen to the Member for River Heights in the interests of the consumer he represents, but it is also important that they listen to the ordinary people, the common folk that inhabit the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba. - (Interjection)- As I said, Mr. Speaker, to the member who is concerned about representing farmers, if they feel so strongly, let the producer charge whatever he, she or it wants because they do, I presume, trust the producer. I'm willing to go along with that, but at least let us have effective regulation of the processor and the retailer. I'd like to see what response they can make.

Let's go, Mr. Speaker, to the substance, if we can call it that, of this particular bill. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to talk about how they are going about setting the producer price. It's almost laughable. They are talking now about basing the farmer's price on a cost of production formula. The Milk Control Board, Mr. Speaker, did that. So what else is new? - (Interjection)- Oh, yes they did. You don't even know and unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, members opposite didn't take the time to go out there to those hearings. If they did, Mr. Speaker, and some of us

did, they would have found that there was lengthy determination and discussion on the basis of a formula. So, Mr. Speaker, it is highly misleading for members opposite to suggest that was not the practice followed by The Milk Control Board, it was. So what's new?

There was one difference though; under the milk control legislation there was a requirement that there be public hearings, and that is what my honourable friends seem to feel so strongly about because that is what they have left out. They have taken away the opportunity for the consumer to come before the regulatory board and indicate his or her position. There will be no opportunity, at this stage, Mr. Speaker, for a consumer to come forward and contest the formula itself. It happens much later down the line, Mr. Speaker. And the point is that that's unnecessary and it is ridiculous. Freedom of information should be the basis for every piece of legislation that is introduced into this House. There should always be a provision that assures the right of the average person to gain access to information. And this, Mr. Speaker, has not been afforded the citizen through this particular bill.

So, we don't know, Mr. Speaker, we don't know. Since we can't obtain information from farm producers, we don't know how the new Milk Commission is going to guarantee that it is receiving accurate information when they set the formula. I mean, if members can tell us, in the absence of that sort of information, how we can gain an assurance that the formula is properly structured, then I think we will all be enlightened.

Now, Mr. Speaker, nowhere today has the Minister explained how this is supposed to happen. They closed the door to the information and then they suggest that somehow the commission can guarantee the consumer that his or her interests is being looked after. How? Just tell us how? It is an obvious deficiency in the legislation. It is an obviously notable flaw. It is like that notable provision in the landlord and tenant bill that provides for arbitration, except there is a Catch-22, that there can be unilateral withdrawal by the landlord. So it sounds great when you first hear it, it sounds fantastic, except what does it mean? It doesn't mean anything if it is not compulsory. So we have a problem and we expect that the Minister, when he winds up, will address that.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that somebody has been allowed an appeal right; the producers have been allowed the right to appeal. And we can all see the producers, Mr. Speaker, we can see them in long lines marching to the commission appealing for lower prices. We know that they will exercise their right of appeal and protect the consumer in this regard. So, Mr. Speaker, it isn't a question of being anti-farmer or anti-producer, it is just a question of common sense and being pro-citizen. We believe that people should have the right to know what is going on.

Now the government is assuring us, Mr. Speaker, that they will monitor retail prices. They said that we needn't worry because nobody is going to be exploited in Manitoba. While, on the one hand, they are looking after the interest of the producer, they are also protecting the consumer. It is quite a juggling act, Mr. Speaker. So they are telling us that the Minister will gladly intercede on behalf of the

consumer if anything gets out of hand. What they don't tell us, Mr. Speaker, is how they intend to keep an accurate accounting of all the thousands of retail outlets in this province. Given their mindset, Mr. Speaker, and their seeming unwillingness to allow government to do its job, to commit government to its proper offices, how can they assure us that they will provide the employees and inspection facilities and agents necessary to do the thousands of inspections that will be necessary every month and every year, in order to do a job of monitoring?

Mr. Speaker, they must think that we are very naive or very stupid. Mr. Speaker, perhaps they are right, but Abraham Lincoln said something about fooling some of the people some of the time, and he went on and, Mr. Speaker, it is so true. Because eventually it simply won't wash any more. We can't believe that this restraint-minded government is going to hire dozens and dozens of inspectors to go out and monitor all the various thousands of outlets across the province; it is crazy, it is absolutely crazy, Mr. Speaker.

Then, Mr. Speaker, since they are only going to deal with cases when prices are "unreasonable", we have to find out what they regard as being unreasonable. When does a milk price become unreasonable? When does that occur, Mr. Speaker? We would like some elaboration on that point because the legislation talks about that; we'd like to know that, Mr. Speaker. What does that mean? Does that mean that it's out of whack with the investment, as some members have spoken? Does that mean that the price should bear a just proportion, in the minds of my honourable friends, to the investment; or does it have something to do with the consumers ability to pay? What does it mean, Mr. Speaker, because it is not defined? So, Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis, we are left to the good graces and tender mercies of the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

MR. ENNS: You couldn't be in better hands.

MR. CORRIN: The Minister of Government Services somewhat facetiously indicates that we couldn't be in better hands.

Mr. Speaker, we have that concern, we also want to know what they are going to do when there is a particular case of price gouging. How are they going to deal with that, Mr. Speaker, if there is an isolated instance of abuse? How are my honourable friends going to deal with that? The Act doesn't talk about it. Are they going to set a special price for one particular retail outlet; are they going to have a special investigation? I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that in reality nothing is going to happen at all, except that if it is in a small town all the residents of that town are going to suffer, or if it is in the inner city . . . My honourable friend from River Heights tell us about all the supermarkets in the competition. He was a bit concerned about the fast service 24-hour merchants. Well, Mr. Speaker, he should know that in the inner city that's the retail; those are the retailers. Safeways, Dominions and Loblaws don't have a lot of outlets in the inner city core. As a matter of fact, in some areas there is nothing at all, but there are 7-Elevens selling cigarettes all night and other sorts of confections.

So what is he going to do about that, Mr. Speaker? We're supposed to believe that we are going to have some sort of vigilant inspection and monitoring; it won't happen, Mr. Speaker. I would submit that under the section of this bill, Mr. Speaker, that the government wouldn't even be able to deal with a case of abuse if it was only with respect to one merchant, one retailer. I don't think the bill is drafted in such a way as to provide for that sort of relief.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like also to deal with the provisions of this bill dealing with appeals against the retail price of milk. Consumers have two levels of appeal now; they can make a complaint to the Milk Commission, and then, as I understand it, the Milk Commission has to make a decision, after doing an internal investigation, whether it wants to look into it. God knows how the consumer, how the average citizen is supposed to be assured that they have done what they should have done. How will we know, how will I know, when a complaint is lodged? Right now, when the Milk Control Board has a hearing it is done in front of the media. Anybody can go down, even an MLA can walk in, as I at the end of the spring, early summer, can walk in and sit and listen for as many hours as he or she wishes. It is all in the open. How am I now to be assured that the interests of consumers is going to be represented by this commission? Everything takes place in a rather clandestine nefarious atmosphere. It sounded good, again, at first blush when it was first announced, it sounded good. It sounded like there was going to be an appropriate appeal mechanism, but where is it? There is nothing.

So, if the commission decides, they can have a hearing. Now, as I understand it, if the complainant, if the consumer is dissatisfied, they can go on to the Manitoba Marketing Council. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, all these layers of bureaucracy? We can't just have a simple hearing. We can't approach it with that sort of simple black and white format. We've got to have layers of intrigue and bureaucracy so the consumer, John Smith, if he's not satisfied, can take his appeal to the Manitoba Marketing Council. God knows how he is ever going to get there. It's Byzantine and it's full of complex little permutations; it's absolutely incredible.

So we pursue the second appeal. The question is, what does the consumer appeal against? First we have to know, Mr. Speaker, the legislation requires that the Manitoba Marketing Council, if it receives an appeal, has to conduct the appeal within 15 days. Now, there is no information, Mr. Speaker. It is not like the current situation where The Milk Control Board provides information about the industry, its costs and its overhead, to everybody who wishes to participate in the hearing. Oh, no, Mr. Speaker, now John Smith has to go to the Marketing Council within 15 days after filing his appeal and he has access to no information. Goodness, Mr. Speaker, can you imagine the degree of confidence this will require?

What they have done, Mr. Speaker, is they have provided the perfect Catch-22; they have provided a mechanism that will assure no appeals. Mr. Speaker, the industry-wide material is not provided, even though the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench recently said that, if anything, the trend should be towards more information, not less, and chastized

the Milk Control Board for even the provision of only the industry-wide material, now we are getting into a situation where there will be no material at all.

So the very reason for commencing the appeal, Mr. Speaker, the deficiencies of the information provided by the producers and the retailers is no longer afforded the prospective appellant and, therefore, Mr. Speaker, it becomes virtually impossible for anybody to launch a proper appeal.

Mr. Speaker, there are many good reasons why members on this side have risen and will continue to rise during the course of this debate to speak in opposition to this bill. It is nonsensical. If it really was the government intention to deal with this on an even-handed and fair basis, they have obviously failed to do that. I don't believe that the caucus has shared with the responsible Minister the contents of the bill. I can't believe that they are aware of this. Otherwise, the Member for River Heights couldn't stand in his place . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member's time has expired.

The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. BEN HANUSCHAK: Mr. Speaker, I consider myself to be as much of an expert on dairies and other matters affecting the people of Manitoba, in total, as the Minister of Government Services may be. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister, when he gets up to speak about public regulation of prices, public ownership, government controlled regulation of whatever, immediately he waves a red flag. He has been singing that same tune over and over and over again, going back to 1966 when he was - (Interjection)- And I will get back to 1932 for the benefit of the Minister of Agriculture because there are a few things that he has forgotten about what happened in 1932 and he has to have his memory refreshed on that. But firstly, I would like to assist my colleague with whom I have sat longer in this House than I have with the Minister of Agriculture, and namely, the Minister of Government Services, and rather than repeating that same tune over and over again, which is getting to be rather boring, I would like to suggest to him a new one and it's a new version, well a different version, in fact its an older one that his because this one goes back to 1934.

MR. ENNS: That was a good year.

MR. HANUSCHAK: The Honourable Minister says, that was a good year. And in 1934 the State of New York passed a law regulating the price of milk, and the State said that milk sold within the province must be sold at 9 cents a quart. There was a grocer by the name Nebia, who maintained that he was being deprived of his property rights and denied equal rights under the law. And so he proceeded to sell milk, two quarts of milk, plus a five cent loaf of bread for 18 cents and he was convicted. He was convicted, he took his case to the Supreme Court of the United States of America and the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of the lower court.

I would like to read to the Honourable Minister, and I will get to the decision of the majority of the court later, but I would like to read the dissenting opinion and in fact, to assist the Honourable

Minister, I would like to indicate to him that I am reading from a book entitled "Public Utilities - Regulation, Management and Ownership" the authors are one Faris and Sampson, and Mr. Faris is from the Department of Economics, Arizona State University; Mr. Sampson of the College of Business Administration, University of Oregon. I doubt very much, Mr. Speaker, that they are Communists and as I've indicated to the Minister, that this is from 1934, the book was published right recently, about six or seven years ago.

Anyway the dissenting opinion by Justice McReynolds, in part, goes like this, and the Minister may be interested in this because I'm sure he's getting tired of hearing himself repeat the same speech over and over again. The judge said, about the regulation of the price of milk by the State of New York, he says "This is not regulation, but management control, dictation. It amounts to the deprivation of a fundamental right which one has to conduct his own affairs, honestly and along customary lines. This is but to declare that rights guaranteed by the Constitution exist only so long as supposed public interest does not require their extinction. To adopt such a view, of course would put an end to liberty under the Constitution".- (Interjection)- I knew that the Minister would like that.

Then this dissenting judge went on to say, referring to the New York law regulating the price of milk: "Here we find direct interference with guaranteed rights, defended upon the ground that the purpose was to promote the public welfare by increasing milk prices at the farm. Not only does the statute interfere arbitrarily with the rights of the little grocer to conduct his business according to standards long accepted, complete destruction may follow, but it takes away the liberty of 12 million consumers to buy a necessity of life in an open market". The Minister likes that, Mr. Speaker. "It imposes direct and arbitrary burdens upon those already seriously impoverished with the alleged immediate design of affording special benefits to others. To him with less than nine cents" it says, "you can not procure a quart of milk from the grocer, although he is anxious to accept what you can pay, and the demands of your household are urgent". A super-abundance but no child can purchase from a willing storekeeper below the figure appointed by the three men at headquarters. And this is true although the storekeeper himself may have bought from a willing producer at half that rate and must sell quickly or lose a stock through deterioration. "A Legislature cannot lawfully destroy guaranteed rights of one man with the prime purpose of enriching another, even if for the moment this may seem advantageous to the public. And the adoption of any concept of jurisprudence which permits facile disregard of the Constitution as long interpreted and respected, will inevitably lead to its destruction. Then all rights will be subject to the caprice of the hour, government by stable laws will pass".- (Interjection)-

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm getting through the Minister. Mr. Speaker, the results of this legislation, what this will do, will take Manitoba back, not to 1934 but prior to 1932, at a time when the Minister - the Member for River Heights, what did he say when from my seat I asked about price wars? And he said, why not, why not have price wars for the benefit of

the consumer? You know, one store will sell milk for 63 cents a litre, another for 60, another for 55, another for 50 and so forth. Oh, the consumer is going to be the beneficiary of this. But, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we had in Manitoba in the early 30s, which lead to an undersupply of milk; which lead to the state of affairs that the Honourable Member for Roblin is so much concerned about importing milk from Alberta and British Columbia, when they had to import milk from Saskatchewan and Minnesota. That free enterprise system, that private enterprise system, that was what it created at that time, Mr. Speaker. The Member for River Heights says, why not have a price war? Why not throw in the supply of milk with the sale of junk food? He says this will be good for the consumer. Why just sell milk? You know, sell some coal tar product for edible purposes. Sell a coal tar milk shake flavour. And, you know, if the mother buys 2 worth or 5 worth of the coal tar derivative she'll receive a litre of milk free. He says, why not? That's going to benefit the consumer. What nonsense, Mr. Speaker. What nonsense.

I repeat again, it is that state of affairs that existed in 1929 and 1930 when milk plummeted from nine cents a quart to five cents a quart and both suffered, the consumers suffered and the producer suffered. Now the Honourable Member for River Heights talks about the decrease in the number of producers from 5,000 to 1,300, whatever that's supposed to mean. I mean, that expert in the dairy industry seems to equate the number of producers with the production of milk. You could have one producer the size of a thousand others and produce just as much milk. We don't know that but he says, oh look this is very very terrible, the number of producers is decreasing.

Then of course there's another related problem because I think we know why the reduced number of producers and we know what this legislation will lead to eventually. The control of the milk industry by the producers-distributors and I hyphenate the two, Mr. Speaker, because I make no distinction. I'm sorry distributors-processors. I want to correct myself, Mr. Speaker, processors-distributors, because I make no distinction between the processor and the distributors, they are one and the same, they're like Tweedledee and Tweedledum, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Weston has both within his corporate structure; he has processors, he has dairies, he has the distributors. Safeways have both. Safeways Canada or Canada Safeway, whatever the official name of the company is, it has both, it has the retail merchandizing outlets, the supermarkets, and it also has the dairies, so really it's just a question of how the two related corporations do their bookkeeping, where they're going to show the loss and where they're going to show the profit. But it's really the same shareholder, the same board member that controls both corporations.

Mr. Speaker, those are the ones who are going to be controlling the milk industry and, given the fact that this bill - in fact I will say that it offers no control at all, it has no regulatory power but it appears to have some - it's written in a way as to make the public think that it exercises some regulatory power, but only a portion of the milk production and selling process, because in the end what happens to that milk on the shelf of a supermarket, of the corner

store, this board has now control. Now it says, oh yes, the Minister will be very quick to point out, he's going to say, oh, but they're going to monitor the prices of fluid milk. They're going to monitor and where the commission deems those prices to be unreasonable, the commission may, by order, establish schedules of maximum prices. So, Mr. Speaker, the prices may skyrocket and you may complain to the commission all you want, and the commission's answer will be to you we do not consider these prices to be unreasonable, and therefore we're not going to do a damn thing about it. And that's what the Minister is saying in his legislation. That's exactly what the Minister is saying in his legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned when we spoke on the second reading of the bill, that there was a time when milk was declared a public utility. And this is a long time ago, Mr. Speaker, it's 48 years ago, darn near half a century. In fact, on May 7, 1932 the public utilities - at that time it was known as the Municipal and Public Utilities Board Act - was amended to declare milk as a public utility. Then it set out the procedure for the regulation of the price of milk, at all levels - the producer, processor and the consumer's level, the distributors consumer's level.

Well, Mr. Speaker, to this day I don't know of anything ever having occurred, until this bill was brought before the House, of this principle ever having been abandoned or it ever having been suggested, by anyone, that the principle ought to be abandoned that milk is a public utility. I think it was always regarded as such. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that for the first five years that milk was declared as a public utility the price regulation function was exercised by the Public Utilities Board. Then in 1938, on a trial basis, on a year-to-year trial basis, and to correct what, Mr. Speaker? To correct, I'll tell you what it was to correct, Mr. Speaker, to put an end to a milk war that was raging in the Winnipeg district and which the Member for River Heights, today, is advocating. Forty-eight years ago the Legislators said we must put an end to the milk war because both the consumer is suffering and the producer is suffering. The price of milk is going up and down; its driving producers out and then it'll bring in an influx of producers with the increase of the price of milk; they will stay in a while and then the price drops again and they go bankrupt. The smaller ones go bankrupt, the larger ones they manage to weather the storm and they survive. In the meantime the processors acquire greater and greater control of the industry.

The consumer, on the other hand, he's being shortchanged. Momentarily the price of milk may drop; then the supply of milk dries up and there's no milk available; there were periods in the city of Winnipeg, periods of six to eight weeks when no milk was to be bought, at whatever price. The Member for River Heights says, let's have price wars, that'll benefit the consumer. Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba they've been through that and they condemn that state of affairs. And they condemned that state of affairs in very clear and crystal terms in 1948. And they said, no, milk is going to be a public utility and it's going to be treated as such.

And not only that, Mr. Speaker but, at that time, it was also written into the legislation - and that section seems to have fallen by the wayside somewhere - prohibiting the use of milk as a loss leader, or in a combination sale. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, and I quote it from a number of advertisements from 1930-31, a sale on milk for one day which regularly sold for 9 or 10 cents a quart, tomorrow, 8 cents a quart.- (Interjection)- Yes. You buy a box of breakfast cereal, you get a quart of milk free; you buy a pound of coffee, you get a pint of milk or a half-pint of cream or whatever free. They said, at that time, we're not going to have that; we're not going to tolerate that; we're going to outlaw that type of activity and they said so in very clear terms. The Minister of Agriculture who claims that this bill, which he has now brought before the House, is really bringing the regulatory practices of the sale of milk in Manitoba in line with that of other provinces. That's nonsense, Mr. Speaker, because there still are provinces in Canada which do outlaw the sale of milk as a loss leader.

In 1937, in the Milk Control Act - there was a prohibition - it gave the Milk Control Board, well, it read as follows: "It shall be the duty of the board and it shall have power", so in other words, it said two things. One, this bill told the board that they must do it and they also assured the board that they have the power to do it, to prohibit, by order, within the limits of any territory designated by it under Section 6, any sale or delivery of milk, or of cream, or of milk and cream alone, or in combination with any article of trade at a price lower than the current price of milk or cream, or of a combination of milk or cream with any other article, and that was prohibited.

Now the Member for River Heights says, no, let's throw it wide open, it's going to benefit the consumer. As I said before, Mr. Speaker, the consumers of Manitoba, they have been through that. They've already been through it. The Honourable Minister of Government Services, who just at the mere suggestion of government regulation of the sale of a commodity immediately sees "red". Well, I would like to read to him what the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States was in the case that I've made reference to a bit earlier, and indicate to him the rationale upon which the court decided that milk is a public utility and that the State of New York had the power to regulate the sale of milk and the setting of price at which milk is to be sold. Mr. Justice Roberts, speaking for a majority of the judges of the Supreme Court said this, "Under our form of government, the use of property and the making of contracts are normally matters of private and not of public concern. The general rule is that both shall be free of government interference, but neither property rights nor contract rights are absolute, for government cannot exist if the citizen may at will use his property to detriment of his fellows, or exercise his freedom of contract to work them hard. Equally fundamental with the private right is that of the public to regulate it in the common interest. This court from the early days affirmed that the power to promote the general welfare is inherent in the government. These correlative rights, that of the citizen to exercise exclusive dominion over property and freely to contract about his affairs, and

that of the state to regulate the use of property and the conduct of business, are always in collision. No exercise of the private right can be imagined which will not, in some respect, however slight, affect the public. No exercise of a legislative prerogative to regulate the conduct of a citizen which will not, to some extent, abridge his liberty or affect his property. But subject only to constitutional restraint, the private right must yield to the public need."

The same judge goes on in direct reference to the dairy industry. He says we may as well say it once, that the dairy industry is not, in the accepted sense of the phrase, a public utility. But if, as must be conceded, the industry is subject to regulation of public interest, what constitutional principle bars the state from correcting existing maladjustments by legislation touching prices. We think there is no such principle. It is clear that there is no closed class or category of businesses affected with the public interest. The phrase "affected with the public interest" can in a nature of things mean no more than an industry for adequate reason is subject to control for the public good. There can be no doubt that upon proper occasion and by appropriate measures, the state may regulate a business in any of its aspects, including the prices to be charged for the products or commodities it sells.- (Interjection)- Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not here to assist those who chose not to listen at some time. That's why we have Hansard. So far as the requirement of new process is concerned, then the absence of other constitutional restriction, the state is free to adopt whatever economic policy may reasonably be deemed to promote public welfare and to enforce that policy by legislation adopted to its purpose.

Mr. Speaker, in other words, the main principle established here is that it affirms the right of a province to declare any type of business efficiency affected with the public interest to be brought under public regulation, and milk has always been regarded as a commodity that should be subject to public regulation, as I have indicated, from the production stages to the vendor stages at the supermarket.- (Interjection)- Now the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie says that in reading this, I have just increased the prices. Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to a fair return to the producer. I am not opposed to a fair return to the producer, and I'll be happy to sit down, right this moment, and hear from the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, because you will know, Mr. Speaker, that during this debate, we've heard very little from the backbench. The backbench has been muzzled; we know that. You've seen it, Mr. Speaker, you've seen it. Very very few members were given the green light, were given a script and said, okay, you stand up, you can read these five pages. You can read those five pages. Very few members of the backbench were allowed to do that, and when I sit down I'd be happy to hear the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie get up and speak, and the Honourable Member for Roblin. I told the Honourable Member for Roblin what book I was quoting from and, Mr. Speaker, I think if you . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. Order please. We can only have one speaker at a time. The Honourable Member for Burrows.

MR. HANUSCHAK: You are so right, Mr. Speaker, but the contribution from the seats of the pants of the backbench does not regard that as speeches. Therefore, I didn't even pay any attention to that.

Now, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for Roblin, he's very anxious to read in more detail from some of the excerpts that I've quoted. I had indicated to him the text from which I read. I had indicated to him where the text is available. I think I did. If I did not, I will remind him again that it is from our own library, so when I am through with it, he is free to have it.- (Interjection)- I certainly wouldn't call upon the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie to assist me in that way. That, I will not do. That, I will not do. He's got a hell of a long way to go before he can offer me assistance of that kind.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for River Heights and others who say that, oh, the private enterprise system, it will take care of prices, it will take care of the prices, but yet, in the same breath the Honourable Member for River Heights said, oh, we're going to have to watch those fellows over there and if they just step out of line, we'll have to step in. But, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Economic Development has a little statue in his office, the goddess of private enterprise, and every morning he kneels and pays homage and prays to that little gilded goddess.

Then his backbenchers say, oh, but you know, we can't really be sure about the private enterprise system. From time to time, from time to time, we've got to peer over their shoulders and make sure that they're treading down the straight and narrow and they're not overstepping the line. If they should be overstepping the line one way or the other, then we've got to clamp down on them. That's what the Member for River Heights said. If this private enterprise system is so holy and it solves all problems and it can't do no wrong, why should the Member for River Heights have those concerns and apprehensions? Mr. Speaker, why did 48 years ago, this great private enterprise system -(Interjection)- or 1937, why did the predecessor of the riding that the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie represents, and the Minister of Government Services, because the boundary of that riding was somewhat different then, it took in a bit of both - why did Mr. D.L. Campbell, then Minister of Agriculture, representing the same constituents as those two honourable members do, why did he vote for resolution wherein the first paragraph of the preamble read as follows: "Whereas in order to put an end to a milk war that was raging in the Winnipeg district." Why didn't they say, whereas a milk war is in effect in the Winnipeg area, be it resolved that participants in the price war be commended for having initiated a price war, because it has become evident that the price war is to the advantage of the consumer and the producer? But that didn't happen, Mr. Speaker, that didn't happen. So they passed legislation putting an end to price wars. They said that milk is too precious and valuable and necessary a commodity to allow these idiots in the private sector to fool around with in this fashion. That's what they said. Who built this country? Who built the CPR? Who built the CPR, Mr. Speaker? Who the hell built the CPR and who built this country? - (Interjection)- There he goes again, there he goes

again.- (Interjection)- You know, when we talk about public intervention, that's their standard line - Marx.

Talk about public ownership, talk about public regulation, here's one common explanation for the last 50 years that fellows like the Member for Portage la Prairie used.- (Interjection)- One explanation which might be called - no, he's just made reference to Marx. Oh, the other one - which might be called the conspiracy answer - is that public ownership of utilities is the entering wedge of a vast Marxist-inspired plot. It is alleged that when enough essential services are controlled by the conspirators, they will be able to disrupt the economy sufficiently to allow a revolutionary takeover of the economy; or alternatively, the precedence established by public ownership of utilities will weaken the resistance of private investors and other industries and condition the minds of the general public to an acceptance of government ownership, thus facilitating a gradual evolution into socialism or communism. This "explanation," in the opinion of the authors, Mr. Speaker, would not be worthy of mention in a serious discussion if it were not so vociferously expounded by several small, but apparently well financed groups with access to communications' media in all parts of the country, despite the lack of any sound evidence whatsoever in support of their position. These groups do make themselves heard, and we hear that line time and time again from the First Minister.

Mr. Speaker, you know how many times have we heard that line from him? The Member for Government Services, you know, mumbblings, knee-jerk reactions and responses on occasion from the backbench. But, Mr. Speaker, up to this point in time, and we are now debating the resolution giving a bill a six-month hoist, despite all the concerns and questions and apprehensions that this side of the House has raised about the bill, we have not heard any defence of the bill, as it reads; we have not heard any explanation. We have had a speech writer who prepared little blurbs for different members of the backbench to say - not that many of them, two or three - but we have not heard really anything assuring the people of Manitoba that the consumer will have some opportunity to participate in determining what a proper price level for this commodity, namely milk, should be. We have not heard any indication or any explanation from anybody from the backbench as to what the cost of production formula is going to be and what it is going to reflect, or any defence of the provision, a reasonable return on investment to the producer of such milk and how this is going to be interpreted and administered fairly and equitably to all; how the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie is going to equate a reasonable return on investment as between the dairy farmer who is just on the boundary of the city limits of the City of Winnipeg, or perhaps even within it - and I am sure that there are dairies within the City of Winnipeg boundaries where the value of the real estate could be two, five, ten or fifteen times higher than the value of the real estate of 50 or 60 miles out of the city, which is still within the Greater Winnipeg milkshed - how the value of the one investment in Winnipeg is going to be equated as with that in Teulon or near Emerson, or

wherever else the dairy may be. We haven't heard any explanation of that, none of that at all.

The government has had ample opportunity, even though I know that the Minister, himself, has not had the opportunity because under the rules of our parliamentary procedure he introduces the bill and then he closes the debate. But that speech writer who supplied his backbench with the little bits that they threw into the debate, surely that speech writer could have provided those spokesmen for his party with the answers to the concerns and the apprehensions that were expressed by the people of the province of Manitoba and in this House through the opposition, Mr. Speaker. But that we haven't heard, and hence, Mr. Speaker, the six-month hoist.

Now we have not heard, Mr. Speaker, where, even if one were to persuade the Milk Commission, because they are going to be nothing more than stooges for the Minister and he knows that; his flunkies, his lackies. That's what this commission is going to be. In fact, they are going to have no power to do anything, Mr. Speaker. It say, "On receipt of an application the commission shall conduct", now he's going to say, now look I'm saying that the commission "shall conduct such enquiries as it deems necessary". Mr. Speaker, the commission is going to determine what enquiries are deemed necessary, the commission. The Chairman of the Commission may consider it sufficient and adequate to check with his wife, to check with his girlfriend . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member has four minutes remaining.

MR. HANUSCHAK: . . . as to here opinion on whether milk is, or is not, unreasonably priced. And if that individual says, no, in my opinion, I really see no hardship caused anybody by the price level of milk, the commission will then say, or the Chairman, on its behalf, will say we have conducted an enquiry. And if you were to ask what type of an enquiry did you conduct, the response of the commission will be, we have conducted such an enquiry as we deem necessary. They have complied with the Act, Mr. Speaker, and they have complied with the Act.

But what is even more important, and this point was made by my honourable colleague, the Member for Wellington, and the Minister will remember that comment because it sort of touched a soft spot because the Member for Wellington said that there was no provision for consumer involvement in price review. And the Minister said, oh yes, there is, but it is after the fact; it is after the fact, after the price is increased. After the price is increased then, if you wish, Mr. Speaker, if you feel that it is unreasonable, you may complain to the commission, but not before. And then, after having complained, the commission, as I have indicated to you a moment ago, conducts such an enquiry as it deems necessary.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does nothing for the consumers, nor the producers. It will put both back in the same position that they were in prior to 1932, when milk was declared a public utility. The fluctuations in the price of milk are going to do nothing to benefit the consumer. It will in fact harm the consumer and harm the producer. Perhaps a larger producer may be able to weather the waves

and survive; the smaller producer, who will be living from milk paycheck to milk paycheck, will go down under and will be absorbed by the larger ones. The consumer will be entirely at the hands of the distributor and the producer. In fact, he is going to be a pawn within their control, that's what he will be. He will have no assurance that tomorrow he will be able to buy a litre of milk for his children at a reasonable price; in fact, he wouldn't even have any assurance that there will be milk on the grocery store shelf tomorrow, because before the declaration of milk as a public utility that was the state of affairs at that time.

Mr. Speaker, again, I ask the backbench - and I think the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie is very anxious, waiting to rise to make his contribution to this debate. Mr. Speaker, I'd be very happy to sit down and yield the floor to him and let us hear his contribution.

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

MR. USKIW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was most interested in the contributions to Bill 86 on the part of the Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Government Services, and in particular, the Member for River Heights, who demonstrated his total lack of knowledge of the subject matter before this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I say that without wanting to be unfair or unkind but, in reading the bill and reading the verbiage that we heard presented to this Assembly on the part of the Member for River Heights, one has to conclude that the member hasn't read the legislation; doesn't understand the import of it, if he has read it; doesn't understand the nature of the industry and has never probably attempted to understand it. But he gave us a very superficial kind of presentation without having any background or basic information on which to rest his argument.

The Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Government Services, however, is more knowledgeable, in fact I would say completely knowledgeable, as to the history of the industry, the way it has evolved over a good number of years. He has had the responsibility as a Minister of the Crown in dealing with the dairy industry, from time to time, and I know that he is no stranger to the arguments that have been put forward over that period and will continue to be put forward, Mr. Speaker, by all sides of the issue. But, Mr. Speaker, he attempted to drive a sort of a wedge into the policy position of the New Democratic Party. He thought that what he should do in his comments is to point out the fact that the New Democratic Party is, indeed, in contradiction with its own stated agricultural policy. And, you know, its unfortunate that the minister is not here because I would want him to hear what I have to say in response to those comments.

I would like to suggest to the Member for Lakeside, the Minister of Government Services, and indeed, to members opposite, that there is no contradiction between the stated policy of the New Democratic Party, the New Democratic Government, over a period of eight years, and the position that we are taking on this bill today, Mr. Speaker. There is no difference of policy at all, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that the dairy industry has always

been looked upon as unique, as compared with all of the other sectors in the agricultural community in Manitoba, and it is unique throughout Canada, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Government Services tried to draw an analogy between other marketing boards, which he suggests that we have brought into being and promoted and established as our main thrust in agricultural policy, and that we were not prepared, at this stage, to do the same thing with respect to the dairy farmers of Manitoba and that somehow that was a deviation.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many times I have indicated to Members in the Assembly, over the years, that because of the uniqueness of the dairy industry that there has to be a departure from the sort of stated policy with respect to the operations of marketing boards and, to the extent that we can facilitate marketing board legislation for the dairy industry, we did do that, Mr. Speaker, during our term of government. It was the New Democratic Party government that introduced the Milk Producers Marketing Board for the first time and which continues to function and to hold responsibility over 50 percent of our production, dairy production, Mr. Speaker, over which there is no untoward government regulation of price, and so on. But, rather those prices are established by that board alone, without interference from any government agency.

Now that differs, Mr. Speaker, from the other 50 percent of the industry, which is the bottled trade, the milk that consumers pick up at the store on a daily basis. And it differs for a good reason, Mr. Speaker, in that the commodity that is controlled by the Producer Marketing Board, the cheese, milk, the ice-cream milk, all of the industrial by-products of the dairy industry or products of the dairy industry, that is a matter that the Producer Marketing Board must price in competition with commodities of a similar kind from other jurisdictions. The Milk Marketing Board, therefore, has some comparison against which they would adjust their prices, and in the knowledge that, if they are out of line, that they would lose a percentage of their market and that other areas would creep into the market and take away their production rights. So there are market checks and balances with respect to that 50 percent of the industry, Mr. Speaker. Cheese can be imported from one end of this country to the other, or exported, or whatever the terminology is; it is a product that moves interprovincially and internationally and so do a number of other industrial milk products. Powdered milk is another example which, of course, we recognize that there is a tremendous amount of Government of Canada involvement with respect to target prices and with respect to subsidization.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Government Services cannot succeed in misleading, certainly members in this Assembly, on the point that there is some contradiction in the position of the New Democratic Party as between marketing boards generally and the milk marketing board, because we have pointed out time and again that there is quite a distinct difference, a uniqueness in the dairy industry, that is not comparable with respect to any other commodity produced in Manitoba, or indeed in Canada. The uniqueness, of course, Mr. Speaker,

and the Minister knows full well, is that the supply of dairy milk, fresh milk on a daily basis, is based on a local milkshed system. It is not something that can be imported and exported on a daily basis over long distances and where there could be a marketing check and balance system in place as there is with other commodities.

And it isn't true, Mr. Speaker, that the marketing boards handling over commodities have it all their way, Mr. Speaker. They do have to meet competition, as between provinces and as between countries, and the only cushion they have, Mr. Speaker - and they have cushions and we recognize them and they're there for a proper reason, Mr. Speaker - they have freight cushions, they have tariff cushions, tariffs which are negotiated under the general agreement on tariffs and trade. And so, yes, there are those things in place that give them added protection, if you like, or added muscle power in the marketplace and they take full advantage of it and that is precisely why those things are there, Mr. Speaker, for those producers to take full advantage of it, in recognition of the fact that we have to in some way ensure that their costs of production are met to a fair degree. Now I don't want to suggest that it's adequate, but those measures are in place and have been in place for many many years, Mr. Speaker.

So we do have to make a distinction between marketing boards handling other commodities and industrial milk commodities and fluid milk, Mr. Speaker, as between that and fluid milk, because fluid milk is something that we must have, fluid milk is something that we cannot depend on the market forces to provide for us, and so we have to assure ourselves, Mr. Speaker, that the producers of milk are adequately compensated in order that they maintain their production, so that there is no gap in supplies and we must, at least to this date, Mr. Speaker, assure the consuming public that because of the monopolistic position that the fluid is in, that we not exploit the consumer through that monopoly, Mr. Speaker.

So that is the nature of the beast, Mr. Speaker, that is the sum total purpose of the operations of the Milk Control Board, and it was not a perfect agency, as one would have to admit and I'm sure that no one would argue that it operated with a great degree of perfection. But, Mr. Speaker, it is the best that we have had in terms of the mode of its operation. Now the complaints that arise with respect to its operation of recent times have to do with the volatile nature of our economy and the fact that the milk control board is not mechanically in a position to respond as quickly as other forces are moving the economy and therefore there is a lag time between changes in cost of production and adjustment in prices and so on. But, Mr. Speaker, as I've stated before, the milk control board has recommended a solution to that problem to the Minister, but he chose not to adopt their proposal. He chose instead to use this adverse situation, albeit it could be temporary, Mr. Speaker, to wipe out the milk control board, with it wiping out the protection that consumers of Manitoba enjoy, and allow the market forces from this point on, or after passage of this bill, to determine the price of milk at the consumer level.

Now, Mr. Speaker, given that the government is moving in this direction to decontrol milk at the wholesale and retail level, you know, I can't logically fault those producers who put the argument that perhaps they should have greater independence in the price-setting mechanism for their product. I don't think that you can truly fault them for putting that position forward. Given the fact that the government has gone so far in changing the rules and regulations and legislation with respect to the whole of the milk industry. So I can appreciate the reasoning, Mr. Speaker, of those producers that are advocating that there ought to be greater independence in the fixing of formula and the establishment of milk price formula. They have a credible argument in light of the actions of this government.

Mr. Speaker, what I do fear is the eventual outcome of what is taking place. And, Mr. Speaker, before I get into that aspect of my comments, I think it's worthwhile noting, and I know that there may be some slight variation in these figures because there may have been more recent changes, but if you look at the price of milk across Canada, Mr. Speaker, to the producers, you will find that it is not all that much out of whack, or that Manitoba isn't all that much out as compared with other provinces in Canada.

In Prince Edward Island, the June figure was 35.74; in Nova Scotia 38.19; New Brunswick, 36.80; in Quebec, 36.40; in Ontario, 35.57; in Manitoba, 36.08; Saskatchewan, 37.69; Alberta, 36.37; British Columbia, 44.88. That gives you a picture of milk prices across Canada, and there are some slight variations to that, Mr. Speaker, because I believe there have been some very recent adjustments in some of those areas, but not significant, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is not all that out of whack, although I admit they probably need an adjustment. Without having indepth knowledge as to the cost of production, I am not putting the argument that they shouldn't be adjusted and that the adjustment process shouldn't be made with greater ease than the mechanism that is now employed by the milk control board. That is not to be argued against, Mr. Speaker. But to put in perspective, I think it's worth knowing how we stack up with the rest of the nation.

The Member for River Heights singled out British Columbia as his comparison with Manitoba and so, Mr. Speaker, if he singled out British Columbia, I have to wonder whether the intent of the government isn't to allow the industry to go completely out of control, to the disadvantage of all members in society, Mr. Speaker, including the dairyman. Because, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at what happens in British Columbia, let's understand the nature of the industry in British Columbia as compared to Manitoba and it's unfortunate that the Member for River Heights is not here because he made the point.

In British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, the land values are somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 an acre, as of this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. That compares with 200 to 400 an acres or something like that in Manitoba, by and large, maybe five. Okay, that's one comparison. In British Columbia they have to import a 100,000 tons of alfalfa every year because they are not self-sufficient in feed, in roughage, and that

comes from the State of Washington, Mr. Speaker, at a great price to the producers of British Columbia. This year they can't get it because of the ash from the volcano and therefore they will be looking elsewhere for feed supplies, but they are not self-sufficient, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you would be most interested to learn and this is what the Member for River Heights is advocating and the Minister is advocating, to go back to a system that is wrong in principle, is a cheat on society, the code of value in British Columbia, per cow, in other words the right to produce milk, is 6,000 per cow. Yes, the right to get into milk production in British Columbia is 6,000 per cow. That's just to get the rights to production. Now on a 100-cow herd, Mr. Speaker, the aspiring farmer must raise 600,000 just to buy production rights. Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, it's next to zero. The price of cows in British Columbia ranges between 1,500 and 1,800 per dairy cow, an average of 1,650 per dairy cow gives you, for 100 cows, 165,000.00.

Land at 4,000 an acre. If one had a half-a-section in British Columbia it would cost 1,280,000, Mr. Speaker. But let's assume that in British Columbia they are importing their feed and they are not extensively involved in land ownership, but they are more intensive producers. Let's assume they operate on a quarter-section, the cost of land is 640,000 on a quarter-section dairy farming. So, Mr. Speaker, on a half-section operation, without buildings, without equipment, it costs 2,045,000 to set up a dairy operation involving 100 cows. On a quarter-section basis it's 1,405,000, without equipment and buildings. So, Mr. Speaker, what is the logic of the comparison of the Member for River Heights that milk prices in British Columbia are much higher than they are in Manitoba? Is that where he wants this province to go, in terms of artificially pushing up the cost of production, so that we will be forced into - (Interjection)- yes, artificial cost of production, all of these things that I have illustrated, Mr. Speaker, are artificial costs of production, especially, the quota values.

That is an insane system perpetrated on the people of British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, that should be gotten rid of because, Mr. Speaker, those quota values have no place, no place in a regulated system where the state gives the quota production rights for nothing, where the state gives the production rights for nothing, there is no place for that kind of value to accrue to the rights of production. It's inevitable, Mr. Speaker, that if you allow that to happen, there is only one way milk prices can go, because every time there is a turnover of a farm unit, the price is higher and the quota goes higher and you just keep multiplying up and up and up. You know, we'll have to 10 a quart for milk some day, because we are perpetuating the increase by allowing this kind of system to establish itself. That's what we had in this province up until the early 70s, Mr. Speaker, which we influenced and got rid of, influenced against and gotten rid of, Mr. Speaker, and it's something the government must be vigilant and make sure that it is rid of on a permanent basis, Mr. Speaker.

Now I know that there are people in Manitoba, in the dairy industry, that don't appreciate those comments, Mr. Speaker. I know there are some that didn't like the fact that quota values dropped

dramatically when we changed dairy policy in this province in the early '70s, Mr. Speaker, I know that, I knew that at the time. But, Mr. Speaker, that was the only commonsense thing to do. And so, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the Member for River Heights, let him understand that if you allow the system that is going to take place with this Minister and this government, that we have no choice but to push the price of milk up artificially because we will be building in production rights, artificial costs, Mr. Speaker, that need not be there, and we are allowing, at the same time, the free reign of the marketplace on the wholesale and retail end. Mr. Speaker, the Member for River Heights, who knows nothing about agriculture, is suggesting to . . .

MR. DOWNEY: Point of order?

MR. USKIW: Absolutely.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, would the member agree that there is nothing to do with production rights in this proposed legislation?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, the Minister just verified what I am concerned about. There is nothing about it in this legislation.- (Interjection)- That is right. He is talking about a cost of production formula that somebody is going to establish, but a formula which we know nothing of, Mr. Speaker. We don't know whether he intends to enshrine a cost of production or a quota value aspect to the cost of production. We don't know that. It's not in the legislation. We only have to assume, we have to guess and, Mr. Speaker, if this Minister allows it, there will be hell to pay, I can assure you. I can assure you. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you this Minister will rue the day that he allowed it to creep back in, not only from the point of view of members on this side of the House, from the point of view of the reaction of the people of Manitoba to that kind of artificiality in the costs of a very necessary commodity that everyone must have.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On a point of order? The Honourable Minister of Agriculture on a point of order.

MR. DOWNEY: I have a question. I wonder if the member could point out in the present Milk Control Board where it refers to the rights to produce.

MR. USKIW: I can't find it.

MR. DOWNEY: It's not there, is it?

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, I believe that to date we have been successful in eliminating and minimizing, if not eliminating. I agree with the Minister that it is not enshrined in law, excepting for this, Mr. Speaker, that the Milk Control Board, as a policy of our government, was never allowed to use quota value in their cost of production calculations.- (Interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Minister says they aren't in ours either. I'm glad to hear that they are not. The Minister might want to enhance that position by putting that in the legislation, Mr. Speaker. He might

want to enhance that position. The Member for River Heights suggested that the position of the opposition to this bill is shortsightedness and that statistically he was able to show us that we have a reduction in the number of dairy producers in this province. Therefore, to him that means that there is something drastically wrong with dairy policy in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for River Heights should take a good look at what is happening in the dairy industry.- (Interjection)- No, it's his ignorance that has to be displayed. No, it's his ignorance that has to be displayed, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that there have been reductions in numbers of dairy producers for a good number of years, in fact, historically, all the way back to the beginning of this province's history, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this is a phenomena that has been with us for economic reasons, all the way back to the beginning of our history. Yes, the same as the quota section farm has disappeared, the same as has occurred with respect to all other sectors in the agricultural economy.- (Interjection)- Yes, that's right. This is what has happened over the years and the only thing that has reduced the impact of that has been some regulatory powers with respect to marketing. That is the only measure that has reduced the depopulation situation that has taken place.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have more milk production today than we've ever had before, so let not the Member for River Heights tell his constituents that he has to pass this bill in order that the babies in River Heights might have a sufficient supply of milk, because there is no relevance. The remaining producers are producing more milk and they are producing it for more money, Mr. Speaker.- (Interjection)- Yes, they are producing it for a higher return than they were before. Now the members say the return should go up; I'm not arguing with them, Mr. Speaker. There is no argument with that. The primary purpose of the Milk Control Board has been and continues to be to assure two things: a continuous supply of milk and a price to producers that will keep them in production, Mr. Speaker. Those are the two main criteria, the two main responsibilities of the Milk Control Board.

The government wants to deregulate the industry, as far as the consumers are concerned, so they have to hide behind a bushel somewhere. Yes, this is what they have to do. They now want to tar the Milk Control Board as the villain that they must get rid of and, therefore, we are going to set up a new agency that's going to have protection, Mr. Speaker, for producers and protection for consumers. For the benefit of the Member for River Heights, there has been protection for consumers since 1932. Where the devil has he been, Mr. Speaker? The Member for River Heights suggested it's in this bill. I challenge him to cite chapter and verse, because it's not there. There is no section in this bill that commits the government and the new commission to the establishment of a controlled retail price. The only reference there is to consumer pricing is an appeal provision, as the commission deems advisable or necessary, it may or it may not. That is the language of that bill. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to do anything if it deems it unnecessary. So we have to rely on the discretion of the Minister in the

appointment of people to the commission and then we have to rely on the discretion of the commission as to whether there's any need for intervention in the price of milk to the consumers of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that the Member for River Heights knew at all -(Interjection)- I read it. I don't believe he knew for one moment the protection that was in that legislation. He had listened to the Minister of Agriculture indicate and imply that we will have consumer protection and we will have producer protection without knowing and without recognizing, Mr. Speaker, that for 50 years there has been producer protection and consumer protection. For 50 years; it's not a new invention, for the benefit of the Member for River Heights. We aren't re-inventing the wheel today, Mr. Speaker. This is old hat.

Now the Minister of Agriculture with this bill is taking us back to pre-1932 with respect to consumer interests, Mr. Speaker. With respect to producer interests, I don't know where he is taking us because we, again, are dependent on the discretion of the Minister in his appointments of the commission and we are dependent on the commission in their discretion on the questions that they will have to adjudicate on in the operations of that agency over a period of years.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question in my mind whatever that the existing milk control authority, with a minor amendment to its terms of reference, could have dealt with the problems that have been presented to the Minister, on the part of the producers. There is no question about that but, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has to have some pretense, when he wants to so much sabotage the interests of the consumers of this province. When he wants to be in step with the Minister of Corporate and Consumer Affairs in deregulating the cost of housing to the consumers of Manitoba, he must somehow emasculate his position, and so he puts in terminology, phraseology, that implies that there is some mechanism but, in fact, Mr. Speaker, there is no mechanism. We are reducing the protective features, that is, with respect to the protection for consumers. We don't know what we are doing with respect to the interests of the producers. What we do know, Mr. Speaker, is that the members in this House have debated, not all too well, and have used comparisons, Manitoba versus British Columbia, Manitoba versus Ontario, without telling the people of Manitoba that there is a huge difference in the cost of production between Manitoba and the jurisdiction west of the Rockies; and likewise to the east of us, Mr. Speaker, where there are tremendous costs attached to land, to the privileges of production, which we do not have to pay for in this province.

So there is no logic in making the argument that the price of milk in Winnipeg should somehow relate to the price of milk in Vancouver. No logic whatever, Mr. Speaker. It's an absurdity that the member is promoting here, the Member for River Heights, because on that basis, Mr. Speaker, if we are to bring our milk prices up to, whether it's for the producer or for the consumer, the levels of milk prices in British Columbia, then really what the Member for River Heights would be advocating is huge profiteering that should take place with respect

to the milk industry in this province, because they do not have the same costs of production.

I suggest to the Member for River Heights that he consult with the Department of Agriculture in Manitoba and get the stats, get the statistics, on what our costs of production are, compare them with costs of production in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, before he stands up in this Assembly and tries to suggest to the people of Manitoba that what this legislation is going to do is protect consumers in the constituency of River Heights. Do a comparison, Mr. Speaker, not a con job, which he is doing, but I believe unknowingly - unknowingly, uninformed. I wouldn't suggest, Mr. Speaker, that he is doing it with all of the information that is available. He is doing it with a lack of information. He is not informed on the subject matter; he doesn't know our cost of production. He has been sold a bill of goods by his Minister, and he believes that to be the gospel, Mr. Speaker. I can assure him that if he walked over to the Department of Agriculture, just down one floor, and took a look at the comparative figures for all the provinces in Canada, if he took Stats Can figures, if he took Canadian Dairy Commission figures, he will have to rise in this House, Mr. Speaker, and vote against this bill, if he did all of those things.

Yes, or, Mr. Speaker, failing that - and I'm going to let him off a little bit - I believe he should be the first one, after we have this price adjustment at the retail level, he should be the first one to appeal to the commission for a review.- (Interjection)- Oh, yes, he should be the first one, because he owes it, and he will owe it his constituents, Mr. Speaker, that he be responsible with respect to how he represents that particular part of Manitoba and in whose interests he is working. Mr. Speaker, if he is working for the interests of those that have more greed than need, he will find that he will soon expose himself.- (Interjection)- Oh, yes. I am going to leave it up to time, Mr. Speaker, for that to take place. I am not sure, Mr. Speaker, that that will be a great problem for the Member for River Heights, given the fact, Mr. Speaker, that he doesn't necessarily represent the lowest income group in our community, although there may be a few, but by and large he doesn't represent the lowest category of income earners in Manitoba, within the constituency of River Heights.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that because of the uniqueness of the dairy industry, that we should have learned a great deal from history. We have 50 years of it under a regulated system and if it needs some correcting, let's correct it, but we shouldn't abolish it, Mr. Speaker. -(Interjection)- Oh, yes, the Minister says we are abolishing it, Mr. Speaker. We are now approaching an era where there will have to be consumer resistance, positive consumer resistance, before we get fairness, or even an attempt at fairness, at retail price setting. It is an after-the-fact event, Mr. Speaker.

Now, after the fact is not my mode of operation, Mr. Speaker. We have an agency that is fully knowledgeable, fully experienced, and it is not the board that is fully knowledgeable and fully experienced, it is the expertise, the staff that works for the milk control board that has gone through this backwards and forwards, year after year, for 50 years, and have developed the expertise to know

what it costs to bottle milk, to know what it costs to transport milk, to know what it costs to produce milk. And they will err from time to time, Mr. Speaker, but I can assure you that I would prefer to rely on marginal errors on the part of that authority than the authority that the Minister is setting up under this legislation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has already spoken.

MR. FILMON: Would the member permit a question, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: I'm sorry, questions would impinge on the time of other members, unless the member has leave from the House. (Agreed)

The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. FILMON: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the member would indicate whether he said that the only possible control of the retail price in this bill was by appeal.

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

MR. USKIW: Mr. Speaker, the member has the bill before him, I needn't recite him chapter and verse. There is a provision for a consumer to complain and the complaint must be followed up. But that provision is compromised by the fact that the board or the commission may choose not to do anything. - (Interjection)- There is an appeal provision, so what?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I find the honourable member is debating now, not seeking information.

The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Agriculture of this province, who made very few comments when he introduced this legislation, hasn't at least availed himself of the opportunity that has been afforded to him, to at least bring forward his reasons for bringing in this legislation. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has sat back, as one could say, in the bush, and either hidden under a tree or just plain hidden. I don't know whether the Minister of Agriculture of this province is prepared to even speak; he may just likely sit back and say, well I've answered all the questions.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite are indicated, give him an opportunity. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture had an opportunity at 2:00 o'clock, right after question period today, any time he chose to rise, to indicate and refute any of the statements that were made, in the hope, Mr. Speaker, that they could, what one could say, the way he made his remarks this morning, browbeat the opposition into silencing itself and discontinue its criticism of this legislation, and then he could be home free and do as he pleased.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he has only himself to respond to and to think about, because he really hasn't been able to respond to the criticisms that we have levelled and the questions that we've raised with respect to this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister, in his remarks when he closes debate, that he at least will have the gumption to request and bring before the committee, the members of the Manitoba Milk Control Board, that he should be prepared to bring the milk control board before the Agriculture Committee of the Legislature to testify as to what they see as the problems and to be cross-examined by members on both sides of the House as to what they see as the problems in the industry, what they see as the problems of the producers.

Mr. Speaker, this minister, if he is really sincere in dealing with the problems of the industry, which we don't know yet what he perceives the problems to be, or at least he hasn't indicated, or members opposite haven't indicated. I know, I have talked to producers in the hallway and I have made mention in my remarks when I spoke last week that the greatest dissatisfaction - and we have no difficulty with that - in terms of the length of time of the hearing. And the producers felt that they were subjected to cross-examination and public opinion unfairly. Mr. Speaker, we have not argued that there shouldn't be a change in the way the hearing are held. But, Mr. Speaker, no one on the government side, including the Minister, in his brief, four pages of remarks, has he indicated what he perceived as the problem? What is the Minister's perception of the industry? He hasn't said that. What he has said, he has said that it is their intent to make sure that an adequate supply of top quality milk is maintained for the people of Manitoba and it is provided at a reasonable price, but at the same time making sure that the producers receive adequate and fair returns for their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, no one on this side has argued, and has even hinted that producers should not receive a fair return for their labour. But, Mr. Speaker, it is misleading to indicate that this bill will bring about reasonable prices to consumers. It is misleading in the highest form, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister was misleading the people of Manitoba that it is his intent to bring about reasonable prices. Because, Mr. Speaker, even the Minister admits . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hour being 5:30 . . . The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MR. JAMES. R. FERGUSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move a couple of changes on committee. Mr. Anderson for Mr. Hyde on the Agricultural Committee; and Mr. Kovnats for Mr. Blake on Private Bills.

MR. SPEAKER: Are those changes agreeable? (Agreed).

The Honourable Government House leader.

MR. JORGENSEN: Mr. Speaker, the committee meetings that I announced tonight were, of course, contingent upon this bill passing this afternoon. Since it has not passed, the House will resume its consideration of this bill at 8:00 o'clock.

Tuesday, 22 July, 1980

MR. SPEAKER: The hour being 5:30 the House is accordingly adjourned and stands adjourned until 8:00 o'clock this evening. (Tuesday)