



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 2, 1992

The House met at 8 p.m.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 34—The Surveys Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 34, The Surveys Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'arpentage, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 42—The Amusements Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), Bill 42, The Amusements Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divertissements, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? It is agreed.

Bill 43—The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 43, The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes d'assurance-revenue agricole, standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? It is agreed.

Bill 44—The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 44, The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le contrôle du prix du lait,

standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave? It is agreed.

Bill 45—The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), Bill 45, The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, la Loi sur les municipalités et d'autres dispositions législatives, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 47—The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. McCrae), Bill 47, The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'intrusion, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 49—The Environment Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), Bill 49, The Environment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement, standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 53—The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), Bill 53, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act; Loi

modifiant la Loi sur la manutention et le transport des marchandises dangereuses, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Stand. Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

* (2005)

Bill 20—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), Bill 20, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), the honourable member for Swan River.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the members of government for allowing me to speak on this bill this evening. Although it will be a brief comment, I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight rather than this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I met with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach). In his comments he indicates that this is a very simple matter of clarification and not a major bill. There are people in the community who have raised concerns, and I have mentioned this to the Minister of Rural Development, that there are concerns as to what the consequences of this bill will be. We have talked to them and people have raised the same concern when we were at the municipal convention in Brandon just the other day.

The date of the next property reassessment has been backed up from 1993 to '94. The people wonder why government would do this. When this legislation was first introduced, plans were put in place to deal with it in a timely fashion and the reassessment was to have been done in 1993. It makes us wonder whether the government was just moving too quickly or what they did that would result in their having to back up the date.

I remember having served on council at the time, and the information that was provided to municipal councils was that everything was all in place. Everything was in place, computers were in place, and there would be very little problem with putting in the next reassessment. People do not quite understand why all of a sudden it is a major problem and government is having to back up the date. It

would appear that they did not do their homework properly and are now having to do some backtracking to correct some of the inequities that they had put in place earlier.

People are waiting for their reassessment, particularly because many properties are assessed at 1985 values and, particularly in the rural community, land values are much higher than they used to be. When I raised that issue with the minister, he said, well, that does not matter, because everybody pays the same mill rate and the same number of dollars have to be raised, but in many cases it does matter. There are some packages or parcels of land, some buildings that have been disproportionately assessed, and people are waiting for their reassessment to be done by this government.

I would hope that they would reconsider and move forward. I hope that the government would reconsider this decision to push back the assessment from 1993 to '94 and go forward with the previous plan that had been put in place in order that people can be treated fairly and have those properties reassessed as they should be and bring things more in line.

The second part of the bill that we are concerned about and people have raised is the changes to the apportioning system that were also introduced in 1990. People are concerned about how the apportioning is going to work and what impacts are going to be felt by this change in system of taxation. I wonder whether the government has done the studies as to who is going to be the net benefactor of this system and who will be the net loser in it. There are many people who have raised this issue, and that is one area that we want to look at more closely, how the apportioning section will be implemented and what will be the impacts of it.

We are told that one of the reasons for the delay is to allow for the changes associated with the implementation of the new education funding formula. They want the new education funding formula to be stabilized before they implement all the changes at once. They seem to have the impression, Mr. Speaker, that the people are not going to be able to handle or comprehend the reassessment and the funding formula, and there is going to be too much confusion out there.

* (2010)

Well, I think that perhaps government should be able to, if they have put a system in place, of

reassessment, a system apportioning taxes, a new funding formula of education, they should be able to explain the system properly and implement it all at one time rather than use the excuse that there is a change in the education funding formula, so they cannot go ahead with the reassessment. I think that there are very capable people, and with the technology that we have today, we should be able to implement a new education funding formula and a reassessment formula at the same time. We should not have to worry about whether the people can comprehend this or not.

Government, if they are committed to reassessment and a new funding formula, should have the ability of putting the information forward to the people in such a way that it is not difficult to understand. I think that the government could be using the excuse of this to push back the reassessment for some other reason. I have raised this issue before and have asked the minister the reason for pushing back the reassessment.

He tells us the excuse of education, taxation and apportioning system. That is not what the people in the community believe. We would want to consult more and listen to what the people are saying and look more carefully at what this education funding formula is going to do and this reassessment formula. As I say, what are going to be the consequences?

The other issue that is covered in this bill is the right for farmers to appeal their assessment. Again, the minister has given us his assurance that there is not going to be a problem, that farmers will be able to appeal their assessment and, in cases where there has been destruction and damage, changes to the character of their property. If those safeties are in there, the farmers can still appeal and the appeal process is still there the way it was, that section of it should not be a major problem.

Again, we would want to know, as I said, Mr. Speaker, what are the implications? Why is it all of a sudden important to back up the dates to coincide with apportioning of taxes? Why was this issue not addressed when the government first brought in this legislation? Looking back at previous records, I know that this is legislation that has been worked on for a long time.

In fact, as I look at it, the reform process started during the Pawley administration, in response to the Manitoba Assessment Review Committee report, more commonly known as the Weir Report. Over

100 of the 160 recommendations were implemented before 1969. This part of the reassessment was something that we were dealing with when we were in government, something where we were moving forward. Giving the government credit, they did move forward on it.

I have to wonder whether or not they may have moved forward too quickly on it. If they are running into the kind of stumbling blocks that they are running into right now, that they have to push back reassessment for another year, perhaps, just perhaps, they did not do their homework properly and did not look at what the implications of this funding formula were going to be.

Perhaps they have not done their homework on the portioning system and did not realize what the consequences of that was going to be. Those are the kinds of things that have to be addressed very carefully.

One of the issues that I want to raise, also, is the taxation on farm land—education tax. The government is talking about bringing in a new funding formula. The government talks about the education reform they brought in, the taxation reform they brought in, and took the education tax off the farm land and moved it onto farm homes, which is a good move. Farm people should pay on their farm homes just as city people do. You should pay your education tax on the building that you live in or your place of business.

However, when they were bringing in the legislation, there was no indication that farm outbuildings such as granaries and storage sheds would be taxed. That has happened now. In reality, with the education tax that is in place now, farmers feel that they are being doubly taxed. They are feeling they are doubly taxed because they have the education tax on their buildings that is the same as everybody else in the province has, but then the special levy is applied, not only to the farm buildings, but it also applies to the land.

That, in reality, is a double tax for farm people. They are paying on their farm buildings and the land, where the legislation was supposed to take it off the farm land and only put it on the buildings.

That is one area that could be looked at if the government was looking at opening up this legislation, this municipal assessment amendment. Perhaps they could have looked at the inequities that are in the education section of it and the consequences that farmers are facing right now,

and in many areas feeling that they are being doubly taxed.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, at this point, because we have some concerns with the bill and have several issues that municipalities and towns have raised with us about the purpose for backing up this assessment date, and what the intention is of government, and a concern as to why they cannot put together the education funding formula on the taxation and the reassessment at the same time, there are some doubts as to what the agenda is of this government.

There are other people in my caucus who would like to make comments on this, and I personally would like to take the time to consult with more people in the municipalities who are particularly concerned with this change in date of reassessment. We would just like a little bit more time and are not prepared tonight to allow it to go to committee.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think that I will close my comments and, again, thank members for allowing

me to change the time when I could speak on this bill.

Can you adjourn?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that debate on this bill be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Acting Government House Leader, what are your intentions, sir?

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the business of the day appears to have been done, so I guess there is not much else to do but to call upon the unanimous consent of the House to call it ten o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it ten o'clock? That is agreed? Agreed.

The hour being 10 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m., tomorrow (Tuesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, March 2, 1992

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