



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupert Island	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 14, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lillian Mae Jones, Peter Ash and Dolores Bestvater and others, requesting the government of Manitoba consider taking the necessary steps to reform the Pharmacare system to maintain its comprehensive and universal nature and to implement the use of the health smart card.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the petition of A.L. Armstrong, R. Puznak, P. Lowe and others, requesting the government of Manitoba pass the necessary legislation/regulations which will restrict stubble burning in the province of Manitoba.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

To the Legislature of the province of Manitoba

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the 1987 Clean Environment Commission Report on Public Hearings,

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

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

* (1335)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have risen twice to provide members in this House and Manitobans with information concerning the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation.

On April 4, 1991, it was my pleasure to announce the official opening of the centre, which is a world-class health research institute. On February 18, 1992, I tabled a report entitled Manitoba Health Care Studies and their Policy Implications.

Today I have received and am tabling An Assessment of How Efficiently Manitoba's Major Hospitals Discharge Their Patients, which is a study completed by Dr. Marni Brownell and Dr. Noralou Roos.

As its title indicates, the study compared the length of stay for patients in eight Winnipeg hospitals, including Brandon. Dr. Brownell and Dr. Roos adjusted for factors such as the reason for the patient's admission to hospital, how sick the patient was, his or her age, sex, socioeconomic status and other factors.

The data used in the study was obtained from the Manitoba Health Services Commission database for the fiscal years 1989-90 and 1990-91.

We believe this report will help hospitals identify specific areas where the efficiency with which they discharge patients can be improved. This is in

keeping with our plans outlined in "Quality Health for Manitobans: the Action Plan," which was introduced on May 14 of this year.

The centre's report illustrates the amount of money provided to hospitals in Manitoba. In 1991-92, 61 percent, or \$908 million, was spent on hospital services. The average daily inpatient cost in a Manitoba hospital increased from \$444.19 in 1989-90 to an average cost of \$490.40 in 1990-91, for an increase of \$46.21 per bed or approximately \$62.8 million in total expenditures.

Manitoba, Sir, is not alone. The growth in the cost of health care has left all provincial governments across the country to ask how they can contain hospital expenditures. In Manitoba we are fortunate that we have the expertise of the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation to assist us in finding the right way to approach the problem to ensure that Manitobans will continue to enjoy appropriate health care now and in the future.

We recognize that achieving efficiency is not an easy task, and it will require the co-operation of physicians, hospital administrators and staff. We also recognize that government has a responsibility to Manitobans whose taxes pay for services and equipment in our hospitals. They expect an appropriate number of hospital beds will be available and that the beds will be utilized to meet their needs.

I will leave it to the researchers to explain their use of data, how they compared factors affecting the length of stay, what diagnoses they compared and how they drew their conclusion.

They will be in Room 254 at 3:15 this afternoon to go through the report for members of this House, members of the media and anyone else who is interested. However, in reading the report, I noted one area of comfort for patients. The literature includes studies which indicate that shorter patient stays do not have any adverse effect on the success of the patient's care. Dr. Brownell and Dr. Roos found that this can be demonstrated in one of the Winnipeg hospitals.

Patients with psychoses who were discharged from the hospital with the shortest length of stay were not readmitted to hospital any more frequently than patients who were discharged from two hospitals which kept their patients much longer. The average was 28 days compared to 19 days in the most efficient hospital. This successful use of

the hospital should be implemented across the system.

It is important to note the report provides feedback that hospital administrators, working with care providers, can use to identify specific areas in which length-of-stay efficiency can be improved.

* (1340)

The report says that depending on the approach used, more efficient hospital practices could yield approximately 150 to 200 acute care beds which could either provide treatment for more patients or allow bed closures.

Reducing how long patients stay in hospital could play an important role in maintaining the availability of acute health care in Manitoba without the need for expanding other parts of the system, such as day surgery or chronic care beds.

We will review the recommendations of the report and work with a committee to oversee efforts to improve efficiency at hospitals.

I am pleased to note these initiatives could enable us to carry out the same number of procedures utilizing fewer acute care beds while maintaining quality and access to care.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am confident the centre's latest study will be very useful in assuring that our health care system continues to meet the needs of Manitobans. Thank you, Sir.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by first congratulating the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation for its ongoing work in health care and research pertaining to this policy field and specifically to acknowledge the release today of the report on discharge of patients in Manitoba's hospitals.

We welcome the invitation from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to take part in this afternoon's session, and we certainly intend on being there so that we can learn more about this situation. We all recognize we have much to learn and look forward to that opportunity.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to acknowledge in this ministerial statement the reference to early discharge being very much tied to alternatives in place, whether that be day surgery or available chronic care, continuing care facilities and beds.

If there is one thing we have expressed concern about continually over the last several weeks, and even before that, it is that in fact this minister, this government is doing the opposite. Beds are being closed, beds are being shuffled without those alternatives in place. Here the minister has acted with great haste, put the system in considerable chaos and confusion without relying on the benefit of such valuable studies and such important research before making decisions.

It is important to note that while the minister is willing to come forth in the House today and release this report, he is sitting on a stack of studies, numbering well over 15 or 20, that were produced by his advisory network on health care and his Urban Hospital Council.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have been raising these numerous studies and are anxious to receive the reports so that we can be more constructive in our opposition. However, the minister continues to sit on those studies and, in some cases, actually acts directly in opposite to the recommendations of those studies. I refer specifically to a study done by the advisory network dealing with obstetrics, wherein it is clearly indicated that the recommendations that they are advising this minister of do not include eliminating one of our acute care facilities and moving beds to community hospitals at this point. They make a number of important recommendations that need to be addressed before the whole system of obstetrics is thrown up in the air and people are left in confusion and bewilderment wondering if care will be there when it is needed.

Mr. Speaker, we would urge the minister to get on with providing us with those reports so that we can then help ensure that we are informed and so that the public of Manitoba is well informed. It is interesting that with all of the changes in obstetrics going on, the minister, by his own documents, has documented well over 2,000, close to 2,000, deliveries unknown in terms of their level of risk. Now it seems to me that with all the research capacity available to this minister, surely he would first question the 1,750 unknown births at the Health Sciences Centre, not being either high risk or low risk, before making a decision that deals with this whole area of which hospital is best able to provide the services of high risk and low risk.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say that while we appreciate the odd time that the minister comes

forward with some information, we know from experience that what is clearly lacking is this information getting to the public and opportunities being provided to the public for dialogue, for questioning, for expressing their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, our offices have been bombarded with phone calls and letters over the last several months because of the big changes the minister is announcing and the fear and uncertainty that is growing in the public. It was because of that that we organized a number of forums so that we could hear Manitoba's concerns and provide these Manitobans with the minister's own plan of action.

Mr. Speaker, at two meetings last week, over three hundred people attended, and they all had one thing in common. They want to know what is happening. Is this really reform, or are these cutbacks and not reform? Are we getting the whole story, and how can we get more information?

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker, I would urge the minister today, take these studies, take all the other studies, take his thoughts, take his plans, take them to the people, get their feedback, get their advice and then act on those findings.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to receive this report because, as the history of this centre is, when the centre's first announcement was made in this House, we supported a centre because we thought the centre has one of the best people in this country and, more importantly, North America, and we have the data in the Department of Health which can be used to make sure our health care system is going to survive.

Mr. Speaker, the question here is on the first page, that it is very important for the people of Manitoba to know that we are spending about \$908 million in the hospital services, and that is about more than—it is about \$440 per bed per day, and these costs have to be controlled. The cost has to be controlled, not simply for the sake of controlling costs, but also to make sure that we can get the best possible services in other ways of health care delivery.

Mr. Speaker, I have not examined it fully, but we will read this report, and if this report has to be used here, then the basic fundamental question is, if we are going to use this report to provide more services and then we can delay and we can cut the waiting

period, then that will help us in the long run. I would certainly ask the minister to look at that aspect, which is a very positive one.

The other issue I want to ask the minister, this centre, as it has the reputation for the last number of years, we want him to expand the role of the centre, to monitor what is happening to the health action plan. Mr. Speaker, it is very positive. We want the minister to be very up front. I think, by releasing this kind of statement, the government is showing a commitment, and we want him to continue to move on that path.

Mr. Speaker, more importantly, we have to ensure in this House and to the people of Manitoba that the money will move where the patient is going to move. That can only be done if we deal with health care on a nonpolitical basis. This centre is one arm of that nonpolitical base that this government has formed, and we have supported all along.

So certainly we will ask the minister to follow with the recommendations. Certainly we will be at Room 254, and we will be asking some questions to the presenters. More importantly, people in Manitoba should have some comfort because the process is getting more and more open so that we can have it, we can contribute and we can tell them which way all the three parties are going to move. Mr. Speaker, it is so essential that people have to know, not only how we are going to criticize, but how we are going to deliver those services.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we want our health action plan to succeed. We want our health care to survive, but we want the minister to continue to follow the direction they have chosen for the last five years. Thank you.

* * *

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report 1991-92 for Government Services.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the annual Financial Statements of Boards, Commissions and Government Agencies ended March 31, 1991. This has been distributed previously.

Secondly, under Chapter P230 of the Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba, a statement as to fidelity bonds.

* (1350)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 13—The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 13, The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le fonds de participation des travailleurs du Manitoba, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 209—The Public Health Amendment Act

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 209, The Public Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, this legislation is being reintroduced again this session, because the matter of adverse reactions to vaccines remains an ongoing and serious concern for many Manitobans. I want to say in this short statement of principle that all of us in the New Democratic Party accept that immunization has been a major factor leading to the reduction of many diseases and benefits the population as a whole. However, there is significant evidence that immunization causes disability and death in some healthy individuals. This legislation is based on the principle that the risk of adverse reactions to vaccines must be reduced or eliminated. It does so by requiring mandatory reporting of adverse reactions so that we may have a body of information to work from. It does so by requiring information to all parents prior to vaccination so that the risks of vaccine are truly known and people can be fully informed about possible adverse reactions.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery,

where we have with us this afternoon, from the General Wolfe School, fifty Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Herold Driedger. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Also this afternoon, from the Linden Meadows School, we have twenty-four Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Larsen Moore. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Repap Manitoba Inc. Employment Creation

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

In 1989, in March, the government promised in the divestiture announcement they made with Repap, quote, a billion dollars of new investment and some 500 new jobs that would be created in the Swan River area and the northern areas of Manitoba.

We have been watching the government's veracity on the initial announcement change, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the security we had in terms of the promises that were made. We have watched the government change from: This is the greatest deal that we have ever seen in Manitoba, to: We have to renegotiate this deal, to: We are going to draw a line in the sand over the next two months, to: We have to move that line in the sand again.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey). When can we expect the billion dollars of investment that was promised before the last election, and when can we expect the 500 jobs that were promised by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to the people of Manitoba?

* (1355)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the member is well aware—and, of course, the question comes as a little surprise because the NDP were always opposed to the divestiture of Manfor—let me say that the commitment the government entered into, the commitment was made by Repap who, given the conditions of the industry at the time, were prepared to make that significant investment of a million

dollars, causing the creation of several hundreds of jobs.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I am told and by what I read, I believe, that because there have been losses in the industry of hundreds of millions of dollars, a billion and a half over the last two years, because financiers today will not lend to any forest products industry because of the nature of the industry, there have been deferrals with respect to almost every significant scaled operation, new operation within the industry.

Mr. Speaker, the member talks about the veracity of the statement. It was a commitment made by Repap, not a commitment that the government could guarantee, because indeed we did not guarantee a billion dollars. Some provinces may have, maybe the former government may have guaranteed a significant financing, but this government would not enter into that type of agreement.

Mr. Doer: The minister will note that financial institutions are dealing with companies that were dealing with the new technology and not dealing with the old technology that was signed off by this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and by this Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), dealing with chlorine bleach, Mr. Speaker, something that we debated with the minister some time ago in 1989 and 1990.

The minister will also know, Mr. Speaker, that his statements in the Chamber, in the legislative committee, talking about the ironclad guarantees that they had guaranteed in this contract, are somewhat contradicted by the admissions of the minister here today.

Mr. Speaker, my further question to the minister is—and he says he is reading the media, et cetera, on this issue. I guess he also stated a couple of weeks ago that he is going from being passive on his negotiations to aggressive in his negotiations. The shares unfortunately for the Repap corporation have gone below \$2, something that I think will concern all of us. They had one of the largest declines of any stocks on the Toronto Stock Exchange last week, I think the second greatest decline of any stocks over a weekly basis.

What contingency plan does the government have on the jobs and opportunities in Manitoba that were promised by this government in terms of their initial promise to the people? What contingency

plans do they have, or do they have all their eggs in the one basket?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I am dismayed also with the fall of the value of the shares. I have been engaged in discussions as recently as Thursday last with the principals of Repap trying to determine as to what contingencies they have in place. I am led to believe that there is some portion of short selling with respect to their shares. I am led to believe, of course, that there are some market analysts who are betting as to the demise of the company, but let me say, this is all within the marketplace. This is between buyers and sellers of shares, and ultimately the market will determine the value that is placed on the shares.

The member talks about contingencies. I am not going to divulge all of those contingencies to him, because indeed we have, in our view, a bona fide agreement. The contract still is between Repap and ourselves, and to begin to share with him what might be our contingencies would be unfair to that contract, it would be unfair to the people of the province of Manitoba and would be most unscrupulous, Mr. Speaker. The member knows that, and he should not put his question in that fashion.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, given the fact that this minister and this Premier (Mr. Filmon) told us he had ironclad guarantees in the first contract, given the fact that even the Auditor has to write up the fact of the \$78 million allegedly that this government placed in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, you will understand why we have pointed questions for a minister and a Premier who made all these "ironclad guarantees." We can see no fruition of those promises after the election that the government made before the election.

I would like to further then ask—and I do not want the minister to divulge all the details of the contingency plan. Obviously, I would not want to prejudice his bargaining position, especially now that he has gone from passive to aggressive in his negotiations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask: Do they have a contingency plan to deal with the jobs and economic opportunities across northern Manitoba in The Pas and Swan River areas, all those areas that were swept into the cutting areas that were negotiated by this government and the Repap corporation? Many value-added jobs were lost in smaller enterprises in

different regions. Do they have a contingency plan that will guarantee the jobs for northern Manitobans and people in the Swan River valley area?

* (1400)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would like to address most of the preamble, but I am sure you will not give me enough time. I would like to indicate to the member, and to all those who are taking some interest in this discussion that the government in its wisdom, and I would say wisely so, decided to include the southern wood cutting area. Thank goodness for that because today there are in place 50 or 60 jobs as a result of that.

The member seems to forget that 90,000 jobs have been lost in this industry. Of course, he would try and pretend that is not happening—90,000 jobs in the forest products industry over the past two years. Mr. Speaker, you have an industry not an awful lot different from the mining industry in Canada, indeed, all the natural product industries that are reeling today as a result of a world recession.

Mr. Speaker, the member asks what contingency plans are in place. Again, I am not preaching the demise of Repap Enterprises today. I fully expect that company is going to survive its present difficulty. I can tell you right today that Repap Manitoba, by what I am led to believe at least, is more or less balancing the books. That is because of good management, of tremendous productivity increases by the labourers.

Mr. Speaker, there still are 800 people—600 to 700 to 800 people being employed today as a result of the activity of Repap and workers working together. So let the member not say for one moment that we do not have a good operation in place, that we do not have a good corporate citizen, that we do not have in place activity that today is not costing the taxpayers in the province of Manitoba \$30 million a year, as it did under the government before us.

Shoal Lake Protection Mining Exploration

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, the failure of this government's economic policy is most evident in the environmental areas.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. I assume the minister is aware that Kenora miners and prospectors will begin a mining exploration within the Shoal Lake watershed early next month.

Would the minister tell the House when he was first informed of this development and what his position is regarding an environmental assessment of the exploratory mining as well as on the mine itself?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, we received information that a meeting was being held on November 30, and staff attended that meeting.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, we do have considerable concern that has been going on for quite some time with the province of Ontario about how they are dealing with exploration in mining in the area of the source of water for the city of Winnipeg.

I had occasion to speak personally to Mr. Wildman, the minister of mines for Ontario, about the same time as this meeting was occurring. Unfortunately, I was unable to engage him in very extensive debate. As it turns out, his department is providing some \$40,000 worth of support for exploration of this mine.

I note as well, Mr. Speaker, that the concerns probably are raised today because there was a press conference by the Winnipeg Water Protection Group held in this building. I hope they made it very clear that it was an initiative of my office that they were notified that this action was in fact taking place.

Management Plan

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, given the commitment made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) last spring—[interjection] The Premier of Manitoba is the Premier I am referring to.

Mr. Speaker, given that the Premier of Manitoba has committed to basin-wide management last spring, when will the minister bring in basin-wide management prohibiting development on this side, on the Manitoba side of Shoal Lake, across to the Ontario border?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, that is a good question, as a matter of fact, and one which I think the people of Winnipeg and the members of the opposition will be very interested in, because we have been the proponents of a basin-wide management plan for this area. In fact, we proposed regulations that we were actively proceeding to put in place last year, and we were approached by the native bands in the Shoal Lake region who asked us to defer the implementation of those regulations while they were

able to explore further options with the Province of Ontario about possible basin-wide management.

Mr. Speaker, in that deferral, I made it very clear that if we were unable to see some results in terms of basin-wide management that would provide the protection that we needed, we would be quite prepared to take unilateral action and put those regulations in place.

Mining Exploration

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, will the minister table correspondence he has had with the government of Ontario over this mining proposal?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, this particular mining proposal was brought forward in what I have to refer to as unseemly haste. I would assume that the Province of Ontario, seeing it as an exploration project, believe that they can proceed with this type of development without involving the people of Manitoba.

It has always been our view and we will continue to press the position that, first of all, we do not want this type of development within the region that would potentially impact on the drinking water. Secondly, if any proposals are brought forward, they should in fact include information and hearings in this province.

Shoal Lake Protection Mining Exploration

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, whether it has been Rafferty-Alameda or Conawapa or Shoal Lake, this government has consistently failed to protect Manitobans' water supply in transboundary negotiations. Now, the only thing that saves them is that apparently the government of Ontario is doing a worse job.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened or has not happened since November 17, 1990—[interjection] Well, I hear my friend saying about research—November 17, 1990, Premier Rae was the newly elected Premier of Ontario.

Can the minister tell us what has or has not happened since that time when Premier Filmon said after a meeting with him, quote, Winnipeggers might never have to worry about commercial

developments endangering the quality of water from Shoal Lake. He further said, Premier Rae gave his personal commitment that when faced with the issue of a gold mine or drinking water, people came first.

Has this minister gone beyond Mr. Wildman and asked Mr. Rae? What has happened to his word, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not think the people of the city of Winnipeg or the province of Manitoba need take much comfort from the member for St. James. When I contacted the former Liberal government, they did not know where Shoal Lake was.

Mr. Speaker, the Consolidated Professor proposal was the issue on which most of this debate was originally predicated. It was the reason that the basin-wide management was contemplated, because we knew that this whole area lies within a greenbelt, and there is a great deal of potential for development, development such as is now being proposed in terms of this exploratory shaft. It is certainly our intention to make sure that the Province of Ontario continues to consider the potential impacts on probably the largest single portion population in this province, and we will be actively pursuing that protection.

Mr. Edwards: I think the minister has the wrong phone number. Again he has called the wrong party, because we have represented that seat since 1986, Mr. Speaker, in Kenora, the Liberal Party has.

Mr. Speaker, again for the same minister—[interjection] 1986, we have represented it; Frank Mclash is the MPP.

Joint Public Hearings

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, again for the same minister: On February 22, 1991, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) told Manitobans that Premier Rae was, and I quote, very amenable to the prospect of having a Manitoba presence on a review panel of a proposed gold mine, at that time, Consolidated Professor, and holding hearings in Winnipeg. He further said that a joint management committee was being discussed and was going to be set up which could rule out all gold mining on the lake.

What can the minister tell us about this order, this permit that was issued last week, and in his discussions which he says started November 30,

was there ever any discussion about joint hearings, about Manitobans being involved, about any hearings, Mr. Speaker?

* (1410)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, this is one of the difficulties that we have experienced in dealing with this issue. The Province of Ontario and the proponent are not amenable at this point to having hearings in the province of Manitoba. The fact is that as an exploratory shaft, it is presently their view that hearings are not necessary.

Mr. Speaker, my concern is that we were attempting to work with the native population in the area when they said that they wanted to be part of a larger co-management basin-management plan for the area. I think we would be well served, as the province of Ontario originally contemplated, that there would be a larger agreement between the two provinces but would also include the aboriginal interest in that area, because basin-wide management includes more than just the province of Manitoba and the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, those plans are slow in coming, and in the interim, we will be dealing and dealing strongly with these types of proposals, because the first line of defence is to make sure that these projects do not proceed to a point where they can have any impact on the water.

Mr. Edwards: I will say they are slow in coming, Mr. Speaker. This minister has been on this issue for over three years. I will say they are slow in coming.

Management Plan

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My final question for the same minister: Will he now acknowledge that his lying-down-and-taking-it-on-the-chin approach with Ontario is not working. Mr. Speaker, in August of 1989, he said, if I am not standing up on a chair and jumping up and down, it is because I believe in taking a proactive approach and a communicative approach. That was 1989. Will he now acknowledge three years later it is time he did his job?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member would not be proposing that we bring in the United Nations to negotiate between Ontario and Manitoba, but the concern that we need in putting in place

water-quality management and basin-wide management where if we can put in place a plan where we have the two provinces agreeing to participate in management on alternate sides of the boundary, between the two provinces, that would in fact be precedent setting within this country.

Mr. Speaker, we are also making every effort to be sure that the federal authorities, the federal Department of Environment, the federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs are involved in these discussions. Because if the Province of Ontario is unwilling to take the appropriate action to protect our drinking water, then it seems to me that the federal government will have to become the regulatory authority that will give the protection that we need and to support the position that this province has taken from the start, that we cannot and have not been shown that this is a potential area for development without having some impact on the province of Manitoba's drinking water.

Health Care System Obstetric Services Consolidation

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Last week in this House, the Minister of Health confirmed reports regarding the consolidation of pediatric beds and services into one facility, despite concerns about admitting privileges, cost savings and community access.

I would like to ask the minister today if he can tell this House and the people of Manitoba if he is planning the same consolidation for obstetrics into one facility.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): No, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I will table a document presented by his own department at recent stakeholder meetings on health care reform indicating Phase III of the minister's plans.

My question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is: Will he now confirm that his government's long-term plan is to consolidate all labour, delivery and post partum services, all obstetrics, all neonatal care services into one centre, and could he provide us with the rationale for such a plan?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend asks me to confirm something that is happening in the exact opposite.

Now I know that logic confounds my honourable friend, but my honourable friend the New Democratic Party critic must surely by now be aware of the LDRP program—labour, delivery, recovery, post partum at Victoria General Hospital, wherein the 22 beds that were closed by the NDP unilaterally, without consultation back in 1987, in the good old days when my honourable friend planned health care and made decisions behind closed doors without consultation, unilaterally and secretly, were reopened as a labour, delivery, post partum unit at Victoria General Hospital.

They reopened that with a quarter of a million dollars less budget and have increased the number of safe deliveries and happy babies and mothers and fathers and parents by 20 percent, Sir.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, it is the lack of logic in the minister's thinking and in this plan that is exactly why we are asking the question.

Let me ask the Minister of Health, whether this consolidation into one centre is finalized or in the planning stages, it still begs the question, why is the minister moving 300 deliveries from tertiary hospitals to community facilities now at questionable savings, and despite the advice of his own advisory network, when the longer term plan—

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

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I guess maybe I have to take my honourable friend into my office and sit down and have a nice, long fireside chat with her so she understands what is happening, that health care is changing, that the old-think that my honourable friend is locked into is not appropriate. It is not appropriate in Manitoba. It is not happening in Ontario. Check Ontario. Check Saskatchewan. Check British Columbia, where progressive reform is happening.

Mr. Speaker, part of that progressive reform is the example I have given to my honourable friend, of Victoria General Hospital. I will provide her with a report: six-month interim, quarter of a million dollars less budget, 20 percent more deliveries. Why? Because someone in government dictated to those mothers they should go to Victoria Hospital?—no, Sir. They chose to be there because of the safety, the ambience and the choice of being in Victoria Hospital. Mothers chose that option.

Social Assistance Child Tax Benefit

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, in October of this year, Winnipeg Harvest provided food to 8,500 families, approximately 30,000 in total, up from 7,500 a year ago.

This morning, the Community Coalition on Unemployment presented the deputy minister with 3,500 postcards saying, food banks are not the solution to poverty, jobs are. The Deputy Premier's response was to blame the problem on the world-wide recession, suggesting there is nothing that this government is willing to do.

Well, there is something that this government can do. Will the Minister of Family Services at the very least promise, give us a commitment now, before the House adjourns, not to deduct the new child tax benefit from social assistance recipients?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the member for Burrows has asked a number of questions within there. I want to tell you that the commitment from our department is to provide that safety net for Manitobans who need that sort of assistance.

We have consistently increased the social allowance rates far more than other provinces have. We have the third lowest incidence of social allowance recipients across this country. At the same time, our rates are compatible, where Manitoba should be within that system. We are proud of many of the enhancements that we have brought forward, and I know they have been supported by the member for Burrows.

There are still other decisions that have to be made, and the government will be making those decisions in due course.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, once again the minister did not answer the question.

Will the minister, at the very least, do what Saskatchewan has done, that is, promise not to change this current situation, not to make it worse for people on social assistance? He can do this by not deducting the new payments from people on social assistance.

* (1420)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan probably is not a good example for the member to use. The Saskatchewan government has

consistently not exempted a number of payments from the federal government to social allowance recipients.

I indicated to the member privately last week and in the House last week, when this question was raised by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs), that there are certain aspects of changes with our relationship with the federal government that are under review. Before we make a decision, we want to be sure that we have sufficient time to analyze these.

Mr. Martindale: Will the Minister of Family Services then follow the lead of the province of Alberta who last week by press release announced that they will not deduct the child tax benefit? Will they follow the lead of the province of Alberta? Will they make this announcement, rather than waiting until December 24 or December 30, a few days before the new benefit starts? Will he give the House a decision now?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, what the member is referencing is that all provinces are looking at this new child tax benefit. Some provinces have made decisions, and others are in the process of making that decision. I can assure the member, once decisions have been made, they will be communicated appropriately.

Social Assistance Food Allowance

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Family Services, as well.

Mr. Speaker, there is a group in this province which calls itself the nutrition and food security network of Manitoba. They are made up of individuals such as the home economists of the province, some of whom are employed by the province, the Manitoba Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the registered dietitians, as well as the Manitoba association of poverty.

What these people have reported in this study is very significant. They have indicated that the province does not provide enough money in its social assistance budget for a nutritionally balanced diet for the infants of the province of Manitoba. They went on to say that the City of Winnipeg's welfare system did provide enough money for infants so that their nutritional needs can be met. This province

has chosen to push the City of Winnipeg into picking up an additional \$5-million cut.

In light of this new information provided by these experts, some of whom are employed by this government, will the minister change his policy with regard to the funding of social assistance of the City of Winnipeg?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, when we brought in Bill 70 last year, we had an opportunity to debate that legislation here in the Legislature. It was approved by this Legislature to standardize the ability to access social allowances across this province and also to give government the ability to standardize those allowances. The member is well aware that there were a number of jurisdictions across this province that paid social allowances below the provincial rate. About 60-65 percent of the municipal corporations paid the social allowances at the provincial rate, and we have implemented that legislation.

We will be going forward with that, come April 1, to have one level of social allowance across Manitoba, but at the same time, municipal corporations have the ability to increase that, if that is their wish, at their cost.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the City of Winnipeg, in its wisdom, recognized that food for infants between the ages of birth and one year is probably the most important nutritional period of a child's life. For that reason, they gave them a more generous allowance for food than is provided by the provincial system of social assistance.

Can the minister tell this House why the province will not recognize the needs of infants in their establishment of social assistance rates?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, in bringing forward the legislation that was encompassed in Bill 70, we had a process in place where representatives of the City of Winnipeg, representatives of UMM and MAUM came together on a committee called the SARC committee and held a number of meetings and hearings, dialogued with the municipal councillors across this province and brought forward to government the SARC report which recommended that we go to one level of assistance.

The member is asking that we increase the social allowances that are paid to individuals in Manitoba. We do that on an annual basis. Two years ago we

increased that allowance by 4.5 percent, last year by 3.6 percent. That was the second highest increase of social allowances across this country, and we have indicated that there will be new benefits put in place this year at the cost of living.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that 89 percent of the social assistance recipients live in Winnipeg, but they did not make up 89 percent of the SARC committee.

Child Tax Benefit

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Can the minister tell this House today if he is going to at least guarantee that social assistance recipients can keep all of their money that they will receive on the new child tax benefit plan from the federal government without having to pay and provide even less nutritional value for their infants than they are presently providing?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): That is similar to the question asked by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), and the answer is the same.

CP Rail

Customer Service Operations

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, we have received word that CP Rail is moving to downsize their 360-employee Canadian customer service operations while centralizing the remaining 212 jobs. Winnipeg, Calgary, Regina and Moncton are potential locations for those new jobs.

My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Has the Minister of Transportation held discussions with CP Rail to determine what impact there will be on the Manitoba railway jobs in this situation?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of having those meetings right now.

Mr. Reid: My question is for the same minister, Mr. Speaker.

What action is the minister prepared to take to protect the current 61 jobs while attracting the 151 new jobs that have a combined payroll of \$7.8 million.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, that is also part of the discussions that are taking place right now.

Transportation Industry Employment Decline

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): It is very clear, Mr. Speaker, judging by those comments and the throne speech itself, that "jobs" is just a four-letter word to this government.

My final supplementary to the same minister, Mr. Speaker: What action plan does the minister have to stem the growing tide of transportation jobs that are leaving our province?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I could spend an hour answering that question; it is such a broad question. I just want to indicate that together with my colleagues, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson), we are in negotiations and will be meeting with representatives from both CN and CP in terms of looking at what they are doing, the impacts that it will have in the province and how we can help alleviate some of the concerns that are there.

Social Assistance Housing Allowance

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

Mr. Speaker, many people are facing tough times in Manitoba currently, including tenants who are finding increases in excess of 11 percent, in a number of cases, particularly those who are on social assistance in those units.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services a very direct question: Will he review the current guidelines for income assistance that are resulting in people, in suites which have received increases of as much as 11 percent, being forced out of their accommodation because Income Security will not fund the additional increase?

* (1430)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, if the member has a specific case that he wants to bring forward to me, we will certainly review it.

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I do, and I would hope that the minister would look at the general situation, because there are problems across this province in regard to this situation happening.

Housing Conditions

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I would like to ask a further question, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, and that is, in view of the fact that Income Security indirectly pays a significant amount of rent in this province for those on social assistance, will he have his department take a proactive role in dealing with the increasing problems of slum housing that many income security recipients are faced with, whether it be in the city of Winnipeg, city of Thompson or many other areas? Will his department actively lobby on behalf of income security recipients to get them better accommodation?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the provincial guideline for increases in shelter this year was 1 percent, and I anticipate that other provinces—Ontario, for instance, have increased their housing by 6 percent. If there are specific cases that the member wants to bring forward where landlords are in violation of provincial guidelines, we would be pleased to review those.

Housing Allowance

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question to the minister again, Mr. Speaker: Will the minister commit to sitting down with the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) to ensure that those who are on social assistance in this province receive a better deal in housing? As I said, people are either in substandard conditions, or they are being faced in some cases, because of large rent increases, with being forced to have to leave their current accommodation. Will he lobby on behalf of those individuals with his own minister to change those regulations?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Well, I suspect the honourable member had those questions ready for the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) today.

We are certainly concerned with the circumstances in which social allowance recipients find themselves in. We have worked actively with the groups such as SACOM, MAPO and WORD to address a number of their issues as far as social allowance regulations go, and we will continue to do so.

North American Free Trade Agreement Government Action Plan

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the Minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Tourism announced the government's "new position" on the North American Free Trade Agreement, and there seems to be considerable confusion about what the government's position actually is.

In the press release, in the minister's statement, the minister responsible said that in fact they had no problem now with the North American Free Trade Agreement because there were parallel agreements to deal with the concerns that this government continued to have, both with respect to environmental issues and labour standards.

My question to the minister is: Has he now agreed with Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Wilson that in fact the North American Free Trade Agreement will be going ahead as initialled in San Antonio, Texas?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): The answer, Mr. Speaker, is no.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, some Manitobans will be comforted by that response.

My question to the minister is then: Can the minister then table his action plan for getting the federal government to address the issues in some meaningful way before the agreement is signed on Wednesday?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, at the end of last week, I sent a letter to the Honourable Michael Wilson, the federal Minister responsible for Trade, outlining the many concerns we have that were addressed in some detail here in the House subsequent to the tabling of our discussion paper that was provided to members of the opposition on Friday. That discussion paper was faxed to Mr. Wilson's office on Friday as well. He certainly has the position of our government.

It is not a new position, I should outline for the member for Flin Flon. It is a consistent position, addressing the six conditions that we put on the table back in July of 1991, that we have continued to express on behalf of Manitobans. We have been consistent, unlike in many respects what we hear from across the way.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call second reading, Bill 12, and we will follow that with adjourned debate, Bill 4.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 12—The International Trusts Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 12, The International Trusts Act (Loi sur les fiducies internationales), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, The International Trusts Act, when enacted, would enable Manitoba to adopt the convention on the law applicable to trusts and their recognition.

The convention was adopted by the Hague Conference on Private International Law in October 1984. The principal objective of the convention is to provide for the recognition of the essential characteristics of a trust in countries that are members of the conference and whose legal systems do not recognize the concept of a trust.

Here in Canada, we already recognize trusts, and the convention would extend a set of basic international conflict-of-law rules for trusts into countries that do not recognize trusts. [interjection]

I sense, Mr. Speaker, from the slight buzzing sound in this room, that a number of honourable members here have not yet grasped the significance of the nature of international trusts and the importance thereof.

The convention describes the primary characteristics of a trust. This is necessary because the noncommon law jurisdictions require rules for determining when a trust exists. The convention also sets out the minimum extent to which the law of the forum will recognize a trust. The forum is the country in which a trust is seeking to be recognized. The major benefit of this convention is that it will relieve the numerous problems that arise when common law trusts have international operations or connections.

The nonrecognition of trusts in civil law jurisdictions is a real and increasingly common problem. We all recognize that the concept of a global village is becoming a reality and we are witnessing an increase in international trade and investment.

Here in Manitoba we have a large immigrant population. Many newcomers to our province hold property or investments in their home countries. Most of those countries do not have common law systems. Also an increasing number of pension plan and other group investment arrangements use the trust and deal with investments internationally.

The convention will be beneficial now and become increasingly necessary in the future. Manitoba's legislation is essentially the same as the international trust acts passed by Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. The main difference is that like the New Brunswick and Alberta legislation, Manitoba's act is drafted so that the convention will not be retroactive. This means the convention would not apply to trusts created before Manitoba's legislation comes into force.

Canada's federal government ratified the convention in October 1992, and it will come into effect on January 4, 1993, in the five provinces that have already passed legislation to adopt the convention. Canada is among several other countries to ratify the convention. The United Kingdom, Australia and Italy have ratified the convention. Luxembourg and The Netherlands have signed the convention, and the American Bar Association and the American Bankers Association have endorsed the convention. The State Department has initiated the process for signature by the United States which will lead to its ratification of the convention. This process is expected to take a number of years. Given the many benefits of adopting the convention, we feel that Manitobans will be better served with the passing of The International Trusts Act.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank all honourable members for their close attention this afternoon and commit this bill to their support.

*(1440)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

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

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), Bill 4, The Retail Businesses Sunday Shopping (Temporary Amendments) Act; Loi sur l'ouverture des commerces de détail les jours fériés—modifications temporaires, standing in the name of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek, who has eight minutes remaining.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to complete my remarks, and I think that I can start by suggesting to you that the legislation that we are dealing with right now is legislation that was brought in in 1988, and this is now in place in Manitoba. This legislation, I think, in today's society is legislation that could be considered as restricting. It is restricting on the businesses that are trying to carry out business in this province, and it is restricting the people in Manitoba, the people who are supporting those businesses.

We as government should not be imposing legislation on the choices of business, and we should not be imposing legislation or affecting the choices of people in this province. I can just say that if people want government to legislate, then we have three choices. The first choice would be shut down everything on Sunday shopping, or shut down for what people would not normally make the choice themselves, and not allow even anybody to work on Sunday. I think that would be the extreme where policemen would not be allowed to work, or doctors would not be allowed to work, or nurses. I think we would shut down everything.

The second choice would be a compromise. That is where government would issue guidelines in which people will have some restricted freedoms in terms of what they can do as far as shopping on Sunday is concerned. I think that is what this legislation is proposing to do, in providing the freedoms with some restrictions.

The other option is to open up Sunday shopping totally like they have in some cities in the U.S., where Sunday is no different than any other day when it comes to shopping. I think that Manitobans are not ready for that yet, and I think that could be

found to be detrimental as far as our society and the people are concerned here in Manitoba.

I choose to believe the compromise this legislation is imposing is timely and what the majority of Manitobans are looking for. However, I would suggest that if we are going to be sensitive as legislators, which is what people are looking for us to consider in view of the fact that we brought in legislation in 1988, and to be compromising in the legislation, I think, that one thing that we could consider if we were going to be sensitive to the church community, possibly we could look at altering the hours of legislation from say 12 to six, say from one to six.

One of the things that some of the people of the churches are looking at are the church services run from 11 to 12 or 10:30 to 11:30, in which case some people who are going to attend church are unable to meet the requirement of going to work, to be there at twelve o'clock and to still attend church services. The other alternative would be for churches to consider the service and instead of having church services at eleven o'clock, to moving those up to ten o'clock, which would allow them to still attend church and to meet their requirements as far as their work was concerned.

I think that the legislation in total does enable people to make the choices. I think that there are going to have to be some compromises made on all aspects, not only as far as the government is concerned. I think that people are going to have to make some choices which this legislation is enabling people to do.

So, as I have indicated previously, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this legislation as it is going to provide the freedom and the choices that people are looking for and people are going to have to make some adjustments with their lives. Saying that, I would conclude my remarks. Thank you for the opportunity of speaking.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this particular bill and particularly appreciate the attentiveness of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and other members across the way, because I think this is the kind of bill that we should have a considerable amount of debate on. In the past, we have had consensus in this House. One of the rare occasions we had consensus in the Pawley era from 1981 to 1988, was on Sunday shopping.

One only has to recall what had happened. We had legislation, Mr. Speaker, that had been struck down by the Charter of Rights that dated back to the original federal Lord's Day Amendment Act in 1905. What we did in this Legislature at the time is we discussed amongst the three parties in place at the time, a position that would reflect the consensus of this Legislature. Indeed, we passed legislation that was supported by every member of this House. As a result of that process, the legislation I feel was a very excellent compromise, and I will get into some of the reasons for that later on.

(Mr. Harold Neufeld, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, we are here today debating this issue because this government has chosen not to follow the consensus approach. I would say not only have they chosen not to follow a consensus approach within this Legislature, but I would say that they have chosen not to follow a consensus approach within their own caucus.

In my comments today, what I want to do is talk about some of the things that this debate, Mr. Acting Speaker, is not about and more specifically what it is really all about, because I think that we are seeing some very significant signals on some very important issues, some very significant issues that are being raised by this government's actions rather than indeed by its own words in this House.

The first thing, Mr. Acting Speaker, is, let us recognize what this debate is about. This debate is about Sunday working. It is about the degree to which the government is sanctioning wide-open Sunday work. I want to state that, because it is not accurate to say this issue is strictly one of Sunday openings.

Under the legislation we currently have, we have Sunday openings that are allowed in certain cases. People can buy groceries, or could before the government made unilateral changes that have expanded upon that original legislation. They could go to restaurants. They had access to essential services. That was all part of the consensus approach that was developed by all parties of this House, that reflected I think the concern, at the time, of many people that there should be some reflection of the concerns of rural Manitobans, of small-business people and indeed of many working people.

I hope that the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister), a new member in this House, will look at some of

the discussion that took place that led to this consensus, because I think he would do well to look at some of the underlying reasons why that consensus was adopted.

The bottom line, Mr. Acting Speaker, is, this issue is about whether we are going to be sanctioning wide-open Sunday working, with all its various consequences, or not.

Let us deal with the second thing that this issue is not about. It is not about cross-border shopping. Indeed, if it was about cross-border shopping a few weeks ago, I would suggest that if there are any members across the way who are going to base their decision on the argument that we have a problem with Sunday shopping, that the Sunday shopping problem is to do with cross-border shopping, that this is because of the availability of Sunday shopping and of the pull, of the attraction of shopping in the United States, I would suggest that members look at *The Globe and Mail* today, as I speak, Monday, December 14, 1992, the current edition, which states very clearly, the headline is: *Cross-border shopping is over.*

* (1450)

Why, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that the case? Canadian and American retailers are citing a number of reasons. The falling dollar has reduced the price differential between U.S. and Canadian goods. The dollar was at 88 cents last year; it is currently 78 cents. A crackdown by customs officials has resulted in more duty being paid and, as the initial rebellion over the GST has waned, what was once a trendy habit is no longer the thing to do.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) was listening, he would note that people have observed statistically that the problem that had existed in terms of cross-border shopping is no longer the significant problem it was because of the three reasons I outlined.

The government is saying that it is introducing this legislation by and large because of cross-border shopper, when the facts show that because of the lower dollar, because of the other reasons I outlined, the problem is no longer as serious. In fact, people are saying now that cross-border shopping has returned to its traditional level. [interjection]

The member for Portage obviously has some difficulty in accepting what is the clear indication. If the member for Portage is not aware what has happened with currencies the last number of years,

that that might lead to a slight disincentive to shop in the United States, I would suggest he look into his economics.

If he is not aware of the impact the GST has had, he should look into his economics. If he is not aware what has been happening with customs officers, he should look into that fact, too, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I find it interesting that the member, who is very vocal right now, has not been quite as active in the debate on this.

We are anxiously awaiting the first speech of this member on a substantive bill. I would like to hear where he stands on this bill. I am sure the residents of the city of Portage would like to hear, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I suggest that he might want to consider speaking on the bill, instead of simply speaking from his seat. [interjection]

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would be quite willing, if I could continue my remarks afterwards, to let the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) have his speech now. I am quite willing to finish off my speech after his. [interjection] Does the member wish leave of the House to speak? Well, the member should realize that we all have the opportunity to speak for 40 minutes from our feet, and he has his opportunity right now if he wishes.

We are dying to hear what he has to say on the issue of Sunday shopping. We are dying to hear how much he has talked to his constituents in the city of Portage and how he can defend—and how any Conservative member can defend the kind of unilateral move they have made, a bill they have introduced after they have already legalized it, a bill that probably will not even be passed until after this trial period is finished, how anyone on that side can actually talk about consultation with individuals in their constituencies when they are so violating the democratic process by ramming through this bill. But it is not about cross-border shopping.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I said, we are quite anxious to hear from many of the Conservative members opposite, particularly members from rural communities, what they have to say to the concerns that have been expressed by many rural communities about this particular legislation.

As I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, the problem with cross-border shopping that this government, in fact the minister himself in his opening comments, referenced so significantly as being a factor, by the very basis of statistics that we are seeing now is no

longer the great factor. The minister, by the way, on page 392 of Hansard, said, it will help stem the flow of some spending by Manitobans to the U.S. markets. So it is not about cross-border shopping. If that was the original decision of this government strictly on that basis, they should recognize the reality of what is happening in terms of the economy.

Well, let us talk about some other things that this issue is not about, because I found it rather interesting that a number of members opposite, in their speeches, said that they did not want to see politics on this issue and then spent quite a great part of their speeches talking not only about politics but bringing in the usual Conservative approach on issues such as this, attacking labour leaders, attacking the NDP. I suppose that is to be expected. This government has, on this issue, broken away from the nonpartisan approach that had been adopted previously.

I do find it rather unfortunate, Mr. Acting Speaker, because I think what is happening essentially is that this government, in its anxiousness to justify this bill, which has to probably be passed under the normal course of events with which we deal with any legislation in this House, not until after the trial period is over, that they are going to great lengths to try and justify what is clearly a unilateral action on their part.

As I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, if they want to attack us or attack the leadership of the labour movement on these issues, they had better realize that it is not just the New Democrats in this House who have spoken on this issue who are expressing the concerns on Sunday shopping. It is not just the labour movement. It is the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. It is many people who are concerned in society about the impact of this particular bill. There is a broad number of people who have expressed concern over Sunday shopping. Indeed, there are many Manitobans who support it, but it is a concern that is broad-based on those who do oppose it and have many concerns which I do share.

I want to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the fourth thing this bill is not about is all the buzzwords that the Conservative members seem to have adopted as of late. They talk about "new." They talk about "innovative." I notice they have spliced in now the word "choice." It is interesting how we are seeing Conservatives in this House so active proponents of unfettered Sunday shopping that they used the word "choice," whereas on other issues they do not

seem to have the same affinity for the concept of choice.

I was particularly struck by some of the references to some of these buzzwords, Mr. Acting Speaker, that have been creeping into speeches, in this case on Sunday shopping. The member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), in trying to justify the shift to Sunday shopping, talked about adapting to change, about the winds of change are upon us. We are in the '90s now. He even went so far as to suggest, I think the legislation as proposed is visionary, people have the freedoms. He even talked about the Great Wall of China and the Soviet Union with the heavy legislation that is there. I quote, we know what happened with the Great Wall of China; we know what happened with the Soviet Union with the heavy legislation that is there. People have to have the freedoms, freedom, freedom, freedom. It sounds like a Monty Python skit that I remember. Freedom to what?

Is the member seriously comparing Sunday shopping legislation in Manitoba to legislation in the Soviet Union and China? Is the member seriously saying that those who are arguing for the maintenance of the current legislation, those who are concerned for whatever reasons, whether it be the working people, the rural merchants, in fact, many religious leaders, are they supporting legislation that we have seen in the Soviet Union and China? We may all get carried away at times. Hyperbole is not exactly unknown in this Legislature, but let us get serious, Mr. Acting Speaker. When we are talking about Sunday shopping, we should not be throwing out these broad pictures, these word pictures that the member opposite is trying to create.

* (1500)

I want to quote some of the other things that the member said, because I think this is an interesting view of what the vision of the government is. The member said in his speech that, and this is a quote, this is the time—we are talking about Sunday—when families can share the time with their children and go out and window shop. Is this the vision of the Conservative government, freedom to window shop? Is this keeping up with the change, that this is a time when families can share the time with their children and go out and window shop? Mr. Acting Speaker, if this is what the government has in its own mind as a vision, I think we are seeing just how shallow that vision is.

So it is not about a vision; it is not about change in the '90s. What it is, is about a very conscious policy decision that was made after some discussion in the Conservative caucus and that reflects a number of factors that were made. It is not about that—and I referenced this already as the members opposite saying this is about choice—this is about unfettered choice.

We have regulations in regard to employment standards, a number of issues, a wide variety of issues. We are seeing greater pressure now, particularly in light of the increasing number of two-parent families in the work force, single parents. We are seeing increasing pressure on analysis of employment standards legislation, particularly for those who do not have the benefits of a union contract, because many union contracts will have as part of the fabric, part of the wording, part of the legality of those contracts, specific protection of certain employment rights on behalf of the employees and certain clear agreements between the employer and employee in terms of employment standards.

What we are talking about in the case of this bill is something that particularly affects those who do not have the benefits of a union contract. It is not just in terms of Sunday shopping that we make these kind of decisions. We make them in a whole series of other employment issues, whether it be in terms of vacations, for example. We have requirements that employees receive a minimum of two weeks a year. If one runs through The Employment Standards Act, we have requirements in terms of employment standards, for example, with female employees working late. We have requirements in terms of working alone. We have a whole series of requirements.

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

This bill incidentally amends The Employment Standards Act. It directly relates to employment standards. It is a bill that affects the employment standards related to Sunday working. It is a Sunday-working bill, and to talk in that way of unfettered choice that the members opposite have talked about, for example, the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer)—and I was reading his speech earlier—thumbs down to the old adage that the people and the market are dictating a choice, Mr. Acting Speaker. We do not accept that on many issues. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Finance

(Mr. Manness) says we are against. I will tell you what we are against. The dictation of choice in ways in this case are not really choice for the people who are forced to work on a Sunday.

I will get to that one later in my remarks because this is going to lead, no matter how this government phrases the debate on this bill, no matter how they try and spin sections of this bill, this is going to lead, in fact, has already led to people not having a real choice about whether they work on Sunday.

So there are a lot of things that this is not about. It is not about whether there will be any Sunday openings or not because we have a compromise in place already. It is not about cross-border shopping, or at least it should not be given the latest evidence. It is not about the kind of debates we often have in this House where people tend to want to pit one group in society against another in terms of the labour movement, for example. It is not about change, innovation, a vision, and it is not about choice.

What is it about, Mr. Acting Speaker? What is this discussion, this debate, all about? Let us look where the pressure for Sunday shopping, Sunday working on a wide-open basis is coming from. We have heard many comments in debate from members opposite talking about the great demand there was for Sunday shopping, how they were responding to the public's demand, I think was the word used by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). There were references I note also in the speech from the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) about this great public demand.

I have regular office hours, I visit my constituents on a regular basis, and do you know how many calls I have had on Sunday shopping? You guessed it, I have had exactly one in 11 years up to the introduction of this bill, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Harold Neufeld (Rossmere): Which way did they go?

Mr. Ashton: For the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld), I got a call once from somebody who wanted wide-open Sunday shopping. I will be right up front, Mr. Acting Speaker, one call, one phone call in 11 years on Sunday shopping.

I look at other members in this House. The member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), how many phone calls has he received in the two years he has been

here? None. The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale)? None. The member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), how many calls have you received? None. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm), how many calls did you receive on Sunday? Two. Ah, wait a sec. The member for Dauphin received 200 percent the number of calls that I have received. Double, and they are both against. Well, now it is running two to one against.

The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) on the Liberal benches, how many calls did he receive?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Leave me out of this.

Mr. Ashton: He wants to be left out of this. Okay. The way the Liberals are going, Mr. Acting Speaker, they do not have to ask to be left out of things; the people are leaving them out on an increasing basis.

Mr. Lamoureux: I will let you know by next week.

Mr. Ashton: Yes, well, we are anxiously awaiting the member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) speech. We will see how this fits in his leadership platform. We always look forward to his speeches.

But, quite honestly, how many members opposite have had any difference of experience from members on our side in terms of this being an issue? How many calls have members opposite received prior to this becoming an issue?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): The same as afterwards.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Acting Speaker, I think the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), tongue in cheek, with a large element of truth there says, the same as afterwards. The same as before, the same as after, we will see what happens in terms of this issue, but I think if he goes a step further, he will also acknowledge that he has not exactly received dozens of phone calls and letters and people demanding that Sunday shopping be made wide open in Manitoba.

Indeed, that was the case. We had a compromise. We had a consensus. It was supported by the three parties in this House, and while not everybody in the province was happy with that legislation, by and large there were no significant demands for it to be changed so it was not coming from the people.

I know the minister responsible for Industry, Trade and Technology (Mr. Stefanson) will say, well, we ran a survey and it showed that 50 percent were in favour and 43 percent were against. Well, we know

they are running surveys. We know they have probably done that on NAFTA. We saw these great Tories oppose NAFTA, to which I could just say, yeah, right, or in the terminology of a recent movie, the Tories opposed NAFTA—not. If the Conservatives want to trot out, they have run a survey on this, and they have run a survey on that. What other surveys do they want to bring out?

An Honourable Member: They ran a survey on trade and found out people do not like it.

Mr. Ashton: Well, in fact they ran a survey on trade indeed, and they found out people do not like it. I am sure the next step for this government is they are going to retroactively oppose the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, which they supported, because now, since they have run a survey showing people are against it, they are going to listen to the people of Manitoba. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that the extent of the vision of this Conservative government, the latest poll they can run? Is that the essential basis on which they are making their decision, because you know I think in this House we might also all want to reflect on how fickle polls can be.

Does anyone remember the referendum? I think most members in this House do. I seem to recall a poll showing the vast majority of Canadians supporting the Charlottetown accord, and regardless of whether we are on the one side or the other side of the issue, Mr. Acting Speaker, we saw what happened when people sat down, looked at the information and made their decisions. The result was a dramatic change in polls. That is the problem when you make decisions based on opinion polls. You make decisions that are based often on a quick reaction from people without necessary full exposure to the facts. In a lot of cases, you get a reaction that is changeable; it may change dramatically before you are finished.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when I look at this Conservative government of Manitoba, the supposed heirs to the John Diefenbaker's, he had some rather graphic descriptions of his use for polls, which I do not even know if I can repeat in this House. In fact, I know I cannot repeat it. He had some very graphic descriptions of what he saw the only use for polls were. Indeed, I already asked the government, is this how they make decisions now, they run a poll? Is this how they decide issues such as this, on polls? I suspect that it is very much the case.

* (1510)

It obviously was not a poll that was run other than after they decided they were going to look at this issue, so that is not even the reason. It may be a rationale; it may be an excuse, but it is not a reason. Why would the Conservative government change legislation that has been in place for a number of years, that was supported on a consensus basis by all the members of this House? Well, they got lobbied and who did they get lobbied by?

Let us look at who was concerned about the previous legislation. I say, previous because it is still in force, but it is being ignored by this provincial government. It was the large department stores; it was the large grocery stores; it was from pressure from some of the malls in Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce lobbied for the openings.

Mr. Acting Speaker, was it the entire business community? No. In fact, the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce is overwhelmingly against the actions of this government. So when it came to looking, obviously—[interjection] What I am saying to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is that he and his colleagues in government have ignored the rural communities in this particular case and have listened to the lobbying from some of the major stores in Winnipeg.

Well, was it from all the businesses in Winnipeg? Are all the businesses in Winnipeg supportive of what has happened? No. Once again, the pressure is primarily from the large businesses that were not able to open on Sunday, so I say department stores and large grocery stores. So we have a lobby. Was it from the labour movement? No. The labour movement has been very clear on its position on this. Was it from employees at the stores themselves that lobbied for this? No. The employees working in the stores did not lobby on this particular issue.

So a very narrowly focused lobby put its pressure on the government. The government had a discussion over about a year. I imagine they probably had some heated and lengthy discussions. When it came to making a decision, what did they decide? Well, they did two things. They decided to listen to the Winnipeg large businesses, and perhaps, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. They decided to ignore the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and many rural communities that expressed concerns about this. They decided to

ignore the concerns of the labour movement. They decided to ignore the concerns of others who have expressed concern about this issue, many religious groups, et cetera. So they made a decision. That is the first thing they did in the political process, and it was based again on some very intensive and very narrowly focused lobbying.

Mr. Acting Speaker, something that this government is particularly vulnerable to, and we have heard it on other issues, whether it be this issue or Autopac, where we increasingly see who this government represents in this House and how it makes its decisions. It is based on those who can get to this government and, indeed, some people did get and others did not.

There is another thing about the political process that this is about as well, and you know, Mr. Acting Speaker, it has been raised by a number of members in this House. It is about the cynical way in which this bill has been introduced.

I cannot think of anything more cynical than introducing a bill in what is a limited three-week session—and this is something we have moved increasingly to is a fall and a winter sitting—but we had an agreement that said this sitting will go no longer than four weeks, and the government chose to have a sitting of three weeks. So they introduce the bill which is a dramatic change from the past, breaks not only from the kind of legislation we have that may have been of support or opposed by different sides, but breaks from a consensus from all parties in this House.

They introduce it, knowing full well that the throne speech takes eight days worth of debate. The end result is, how many days of debate do we end up having in this House on this bill, maximum in this sitting, let alone the fact that we have other bills that are before us? Seven days.

Seven days, is that not interesting? Now what is likely to happen? Well, we are adjourning on the 16th. That is by the government's decision but based on an original agreement. We are going to be back sometime in March. The final date has not been finalized. So given the limited amount of time available, surprise, surprise, Mr. Acting Speaker, it might appear that this bill was introduced with the full knowledge that it certainly was not going to pass through second reading in this part of the sitting.

I want to go a little bit further. I suspect that even members opposite know there would be a

considerable amount of public presentation on this bill, so I think somehow along the way, somehow at the inkling, this bill might not pass by the 16th, interestingly. Then there is a gap. We are back in March sometime. This is a temporary measure.

Is it not interesting how immediately we take a chunk of time off this trial period? Knowing the way in which we proceed in this House with our compulsory hearings, I wonder if someone across the way actually sat down and said, oh, is this not interesting? We can introduce this bill, and by the time it ever really gets to a vote, the trial period is over. Oh, no. Mr. Acting Speaker, why would they want to do that?

Might it be due to the fact that some members opposite might not support this? Is it not perhaps that those members who are not in support of this might have an easier time not voting against it if the trial period had already happened? Is that not interesting? Talk about cynical politics.

Introduce a bill that has been brought in unilaterally, no support from other sides of the House, and then have it come in retroactive no matter when it is passed. Mr. Acting Speaker, sounds awfully Machiavellian to me, and I would say when I look across the way, no one is going to be fooled about the strategy of this government on this bill. They knew this right from the start.

There is no intention of seeing this bill passed before the trial period is pretty close to over, if not completely over. The Conservatives know that, we know that, and it is one thing that the people of Manitoba would be interested to know. So indeed it is about the political process.

But, Mr. Acting Speaker, people will say we bring in retroactive legislation on other matters. We do on budgetary matters, but I want to paint the scenario for you because I think this has all been thought through. It is no news to any members on the Tory benches. What if when this bill finally comes to a vote, it is voted down? [interjection] Good question, indeed.

Mr. Acting Speaker, what are we going to do? Are we going to retroactively enforce the law? Are we going to charge those that stayed open when it was under the old law? Are we going to ask shoppers to return their merchandise? I mean, the absurdity of bringing in retroactive legislation under the very cynical planning they have in terms of the

agenda. I mean, let us get serious—cynicism supreme.

Now, members opposite will say, well, this government brought in retroactive legislation on this or that government brought in retroactive legislation on that. Mr. Acting Speaker, if they want me to say on the record that I believe this kind of retroactive legislation, as cynically timetabled as it is, is wrong and it does not matter who brings it in, what kind of government, I will do so. It is wrong.

It is cynical, and I find it is particularly distasteful given the fact that on this particular legislation, we have had consensus in the past. In fact, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) will remember well discussions that took place at the time and the consensus that existed at the time the current legislation was brought in in response to the court ruling on the Charter of Rights.

* (1520)

So this is cynical politics, Mr. Acting Speaker, and the cynicism is not just a question of running opinion polls and making decisions. It is not just a question of deciding on behalf of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the heck with everybody else. It is bringing in a bill retroactively that you know is probably not even going to be voted upon until after the fact, so that you do not have to face the embarrassing prospect of having some of your own members not only vote against this bill but potentially defeat it as well. So it is cynical politics of the worst kind.

Let us go a little bit further and look at what this debate is all about. Let us talk about the rural-urban issue, because I find it interesting that sometimes members opposite on this bill are getting into some rather twisted logic, to say the least. [interjection]

Well, the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) is commenting here, Mr. Acting Speaker. I am glad he is doing that because it is interesting, he said two things in his speech. He said that we need this bill to deal with people going to the United States, cross-border shopping. But when he dealt with the question of the rural community's concern that it is going to take business out of the rural communities and bring it into the city of Winnipeg, you know what he said? He said, Manitobans for the most part are loyal to their communities. He is saying they are not loyal when it comes to cross-border shopping, but they are loyal when it

comes to shopping between the rural areas and the urban areas.

Mr. Acting Speaker, you can argue it one way, you can argue it the other, but you cannot argue it both ways. If people are loyal to their communities in terms of this, I think you are going to see the illogic of what is going to happen. In fact, I think if you look at what the member opposite should reflect upon, it is the fact that in many cases, if you look at the factors in terms of visits to the United States, you have to include the question of geographic proximity. My constituents in Thompson do not drive to the United States for Sunday shopping. Why? Because they are too far away.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the real concern in the rural communities is in terms of communities that are far closer to the city of Winnipeg than the United States shopping centres are to those communities, indeed to the city of Winnipeg. If you look at the logic of it, if you are half an hour away from the city of Winnipeg and you live in a rural community, it is more likely that you are going to cross from the rural to the urban areas to shop. In the case of the Americans, it is further away even then, so if the argument can be made that anyone is likely to shop outside of their community, it is most likely going to be those communities within a close proximity of Winnipeg. You cannot argue it both ways.

You have to be very careful in terms of the arguments you use, not just in terms of debate in this House, but because it is important in terms of the policy decision that you make. When you say no to the rural communities and the concerns expressed by them and the rural chambers of commerce, Mr. Acting Speaker, you better have your facts right. You better have your arguments right, because I have yet to hear any persuasive evidence from members opposite, any persuasive arguments in terms of the concerns being expressed by rural businesses. I want to point out in terms of the rural-urban concerns that the concern is expressed even in northern Manitoba.

I had the opportunity to attend an event this weekend sponsored by many local businesses and the chamber of commerce. I can tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, many people in Thompson, many small business owners and operators are opposed to Sunday shopping, because we have the same sort of situation that develops. Woolco, the major department store, opens up. There is pressure on everybody to open up in the mall. If they do not

open up—we have two malls in Thompson—somebody else will open up in the other mall. They will lose business. It puts pressure on people.

You know, the argument of many of those small communities has been that it costs money, Mr. Acting Speaker, to open on that additional day. It will not pay, whatever additional business, if any will be received.

There is another issue, as well, and it is a question of work and family. I will be continuing to raise these concerns at committee and in terms of third reading.

What this bill is going to do is it is not going to adequately protect those who do not want to work on a Sunday. Just talk to people who work in stores where they are having to work now on Sunday. Most people I have talked to said they do not trust, in any kind of legislation—to stop an employer from saying, well, you have reduced hours now, nothing to do with the fact you will not work on a Sunday, but you have reduced hours. Indeed. Nothing to stop an employer from saying, we are firing you for another reason, you are an unsuitable employee for this, that or the other reason, nothing to do with the fact that you will not work on Sunday. People do not believe that, Mr. Acting Speaker.

That is what this issue is about. It is about listening to the concerns of workers, because that is a real issue, Sunday working. I would ask how many people, really, if they were asked a question, if they were going to have to work on a Sunday, how their response would be in this House. It is a question of work and family, about allowing greater family time and still providing the essential services that people demand. It is about fairness for small businesses, for businesses in rural northern communities, and I would say about economics, too. It does not make sense.

Let not this government in its haste to justify its cynical political moves fool anyone with the kind of arguments that it has brought forward today. Let us see what the members opposite have to say and let us see, Mr. Acting Speaker, when this bill does come to vote how they will vote. I will be voting no on this bill, and I will be fighting on behalf of the many working people and the many small businesses in my community who also are saying no.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put on the record a few remarks regarding Bill 4, The Retail Businesses Sunday Shopping (Temporary Amendments) Act.

It really should not be called the Sunday shopping act, because, although it is called that, all it does is change the number of employees that a store can have on a Sunday.

The Sunday shopping act has been in effect since 1983 since the former government brought it in. It really does not change the fact the stores can still be open. [interjection] '77, was it? Okay. All the new amendments really say is that these stores that are presently open or that could be open, they can open on Sunday, and they can have as many employees as they want.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think this is a step in the right direction. Although I do respect the calls and the letters I have had from some of my constituents from the Stonewall area, I really believe that trying to limit the number of employees that an employer has goes against everything we believe in. In no other business do we try to limit the number of employees a business has. Why should we do it in the retail sector?

Also, there are other reasons. By limiting the number to four you are certainly going to encourage shoplifting. I listened to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) there. He did not really say much other than I guess he really encourages shoplifting. I think that is what they really are trying to encourage over there.

How can stores such as Safeway, SuperValu, Canadian Tire operate with four employees? It is just not reasonable. I realize that certainly the large stores do seem to attract customers, but that is what they are there for. They are there to serve the people. If people want to come to their stores on Sunday, they should be able to sell them something and not keep them in line for an hour, or an hour and a half.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think that is one of the reasons why I support this bill, even though some of my constituents are against it. I have had more calls from people in my constituency, from the areas of Highways 8 and 9, from the Petersfield, Clondeboye areas, Winnipeg Beach, Matlock, saying why do they have to go to a Safeway store and stand in line for an hour and a half on a Sunday. I think that is ridiculous in this day and age. That is certainly no way that businesses should be allowed to operate. If they want to have more employees, they should be able to have as many employees as they want to.

Just think of the number of jobs it is going to create—even in Dauphin. Safeway has a store in Dauphin. I bet they have more than four employees on Sunday—[interjection] Because the business is there. People want to spend their money. They want to shop on a Sunday. [interjection] Well, that is fine. That is good, whatever.

I think there are some benefits, certainly the fact that the larger stores will be hiring more employees for this part-time help or whatever. It will give university students an opportunity to earn some extra money, to work on Sundays, to work on holidays and things of that nature. This has been the case for many years. It is not something new. I think it is probably a step in the right direction.

I did have a number of calls, Mr. Acting Speaker, and some letters from some of the businesses in my communities closest to Winnipeg, such as Stony Mountain and Stonewall. I certainly respect their views. I think the business people in Stonewall have handled this very, very well.

In fact, a week after this came in they had a meeting. They had 20 retailers there. Out of those 20 retailers, 18 agreed that rather than opening their own stores such as the hardware stores and things of that nature on Sunday, they would open on a Thursday and a Friday evening until nine o'clock.

* (1530)

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think this certainly makes sense. It makes sense to me, and it makes sense to a lot of people who commute back and forth to work in Winnipeg and other communities. This would give those people who get home by six o'clock or seven o'clock in the evening an opportunity to do their shopping locally. This makes more sense than opening their stores even on a Sunday. Even in Stonewall, there are two major grocery stores that have been open on a Sunday for many years actually. It is not something new. So as a convenience they are available for people who want to do their grocery shopping on Sunday.

I think the Stonewall Chamber of Commerce and the Stonewall merchants have acted very responsibly by opening on Thursday and Friday evenings. I think that was a positive move on their part, and I want to commend them for their actions.

Just one experience I had, my wife and I, a week last Sunday, had company coming for supper. We were, after church, on our way home and we stopped at the local grocery store to buy some

things, even though I do not necessarily go shopping on a Sunday, but oftentimes we take advantage of the convenience of the store if it is open, that we can do that. [interjection] Well, at least you can go in and get out; you do not have to stand in line for an hour. They can have as many employees as they want to.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Oh, come on, you are taking the business away from them. You are going to end up closing those convenience stores that you are talking about. Those are the ones that are going to close.

Mr. Helwer: The member for Dauphin is saying it is going to affect the small convenience stores. I do not believe so. The convenience stores are open probably from seven in the morning until 11 at night seven days a week, and they are there for people who want to buy things, bread, milk, cigarettes or whatever at any time, so those are there.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think there are many businesses and many service industries—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. Could I have the honourable members wanting to carry on a conversation across the floor move into the loge and continue there, so that we can hear the honourable member for Gimli.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Acting Speaker, I was going to mention that there are many other businesses and many other services that have to be open on a Sunday and people who have to work on Sunday. The airports are an example. There are planes flying seven days a week, 24 hours a day, the trucking industry, many industries that have to be open seven days a week, 24 hours a day to offer the services that people require.

I have been in business for about 29 years actually in Manitoba and I know that when people want to buy something, you had better have your doors open and be prepared to sell it and offer people a service and—[interjection] That is right. They do not want to stand in line an hour and a half at Safeway stores or SuperValu or whatever the case may be.

Even though I have some reservations, I certainly support this and support the business community at Stonewall which has acted very responsibly. I think the hours of between noon and five on a Sunday of the bigger stores are not going to affect the smaller stores surrounding Winnipeg. Also, I should mention that I realize the malls are now opening on

Sunday also. That gives those stores an opportunity to make their businesses available, the people there, the stores in those malls, to make them available to their customers. If their customers want to come in on a Sunday, they should be there and open if they want to. If they do not want to, that is their privilege. They do not have to open on a Sunday. They are not being forced to open, but if—

An Honourable Member: This is a very temporary measure, a trial period.

Mr. Helwer: It is a trial period, and we will see.

Many of the calls that I received from my constituents in the areas of Clondeboye and Petersfield who do their shopping in Selkirk and also in some of the large stores along McPhillips, the Highway No. 8 people who drive back and forth every day, some of them do their shopping, they appreciate the fact that they can now go into their place of business on a Sunday afternoon and do not have to stand in line to wait for an hour and a half or more. That was really a deterrent that people were very unhappy with.

I think this government has taken a common-sense approach to this, Mr. Acting Speaker. I think our Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson) has acted responsibly by bringing in the bill, that is a retail businesses amendments act, to give the hour business an opportunity to see whether the Sunday shopping is an option which they want to continue. After the five-month period we should be able to tell whether we will continue with this or not.

Mr. Acting Speaker, those are my remarks, and I appreciate the opportunity to put them on the record.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am delighted to rise at this particular moment and speak on Bill 4.

First of all, I would like to begin by saying what this bill is not, and then I will deal with what the bill is. First of all, Sunday shopping is not going to do, with the greatest respect to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), some of the things that he and his colleagues would like to say it is going to do.

First of all, it is not going to stop cross-border shopping. I think we have to recognize that cross-border shopping is a phenomena that we will live with each time the dollar value gets to such a

level that it becomes a means by which families can stretch their incomes. If they feel that they are getting bargains south of the border because our dollar is higher or very high in comparison to the American dollar, then they will go south of the border. They will also use it as a form of recreation. This is a trip for a weekend purpose or perhaps longer, and they will shop when they are off on this weekend excursion. So it is not going to stop cross-border shopping.

The only way you are going to stop cross-border shopping is for Canadians to make a commitment to buy Canadian or for Canadians to feel that the bargains are better here at home. Certainly, we have seen that happen as the dollar has reduced in value from some 87 cents U.S. to some 78 cents U.S. This has resulted in fewer people crossing the border and, therefore, a reduction in the amount of cross-border shopping.

There are also more and more Canadians, I think, who are becoming concerned about the whole concept of buying Canadian. I hope so. I hope they are recognizing that there is a need for Canadians to stimulate their own economy and to shop here at home. The closer you are, of course, to the border, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) pointed out, the more likely you are to engage in cross-border shopping. If you get far enough away that the travel becomes ludicrous in terms of saving any money, then you will not engage in cross-border shopping.

If the minister wants to be truly honest with the people of this province, I do not think that he should sell the whole concept of Sunday shopping as a means by which he is going to prevent cross-border shopping.

The second argument which I think is a fallacy about this particular piece of legislation is that it is somehow or other going to stimulate the economy, that it is going to get people to spend more money than they would spend in the stores at the present time. I think it is not a very realistic scenario, Mr. Acting Speaker. Families have so many dollars to spend and leaving the stores opened on a Sunday, I would suggest to you, will mean that they will choose not to shop on the Wednesday night or not to shop on the Monday morning or not to shop on the Saturday afternoon, but they will not spend any more dollars, because they do not have any more dollars to spend. So there is another argument that

I do not consider valid for the purposes of changing the Sunday shopping legislation.

* (1540)

There is only one reason, in my opinion, to change the legislation and that is because of lifestyle. The reality is that lifestyles of Manitobans are changing. I do not shop on Sundays. I do not make any great deliberate choice because the stores are open or not open, not to shop on Sundays. I do not shop on Sundays because Sundays are one of the few days that, if I am not attending an event, I actually can spend with my husband. The last thing that my husband wants to do is to go shopping and I must admit I share that—about the last thing I want to do is go shopping.

When my housekeeper worked full time as the children were small, I must admit that that was one of the things I was delighted that she would do for me. So she went off every Thursday and brought groceries. I thought that was heaven, that somebody else would actually do the grocery shopping. One of the disadvantages of my announcing my retirement, I have to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that my husband has been doing some of that grocery shopping lately and I think that when I have more time, the finger is going to point at somebody else to do some of that shopping every now and then. Damn it all, I just about had it made in terms of not having to do this grocery shopping.

The reality is that if I never had to enter a store, I would be delighted, but I also recognize that I am not at a stage of life where I am any longer a typical family. My daughters are in their twenties. If they want anything, not only are they capable of getting it for themselves, but they are probably more interested in getting it for themselves because their tastes are different from my taste.

I think of the small young family, the single-parent mother or the family with young children who may choose to shop on a Sunday because it is a valid time for them. It is also an opportunity for them to spend time together, because some families do choose to spend time together in this particular way. I do not understand that, but I can accept the fact that they choose to spend their family time that way.

Now there are those who will argue, look the stores are open late at night. They are open all day Saturday. There are plenty of hours in the week in which people can shop. Well, that is easier said than done. I spoke with a few single-parent moms

over the last few weeks, and I asked them about their days and why they found Sunday shopping appealing.

They are up at 6:30 in the morning on an average. By the time they have fed breakfast to the children, they have them dressed, they have dropped them at child care centres or they have made sure that they are at a before-school centre, they go off to work. They work all day. They pick the children up at five o'clock, sometimes 5:30. They get the children home. They prepare dinner. They make lunches for the next morning's activities. They get clothes ready for the children to wear. They do not have the time or the energy to go shopping in the evenings. So for them, the Saturday has become the only day of the week where it is realistic for them to shop, but that is also often the day when their child or children are involved in a myriad of activities, be they swimming lessons or perhaps they are taking ballet lessons or perhaps there is a soccer practice or a hockey game, all of which they want to share with their children. So the Sunday becomes that afternoon when they can go and participate and shop.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) raised the argument about the wonderful old legislation. Well, personally I thought the old legislation was asinine. I mean, quite frankly, how can you say that a piece of legislation which tells me that I can go to Safeway on Sunday but I cannot go to SuperValu is a good piece of legislation? How can you tell me that it is perfectly acceptable to go to Shopper's and buy Christmas lights and Christmas balls and tinsel and anything else I could possibly want, but I cannot go and buy my children a pair of running shoes? If that was a good piece of legislation, then, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that I do not understand goodness in that kind of inequality of what people can and cannot do.

Now there are other aspects, however, of Sunday shopping that also have to be dealt with. There are individuals—[interjection] Yes, I do, and I raised some comments about the fact that I thought it was better than what we had but still was very unfair and iniquitous.

The reality of this situation, Mr. Speaker, is that there is a good counter set of arguments to be made. I think it is appropriate to make those counterarguments, because this is really what we

are doing in this case. We are balancing a series of arguments. Certainly, there is the argument of those who believe that Sunday should be a day of worship, that it should be a day of family experiences. They obviously do not include shopping as one of those family activities. They feel passionately about this particular day of rest. It is a valid argument from their perspective. However, I think it is true to say that nobody is forcing those families to go and shop on Sunday, but they have a valid argument.

It also has to be raised, however, that there are many religious groups that, quite frankly, do not celebrate Sunday as their day of rest. They celebrate Friday or they celebrate Saturday. They have had to cope for decades with the fact that stores and businesses function on their so-called Sabbath or their day of rest. We are becoming a far more multireligious society, and I think we have to recognize that. Having said that, it is a valid argument for people on that side of the case to make.

The other argument which, quite frankly, I am much more sensitive to than that one is the issue of people who will be forced to work, thereby putting unfair pressures on the family. There is no question that individuals, despite what this legislation says, will be forced to work on Sunday.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) has already indicated to me that he has had some experiences and has called managers and said, look, this is not what the legislation says, smarten up. Good for him to try and enforce it as best he can; but there are far more subtle ways of insisting, and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) raised some of that with regard to the imposition of people having to work on Sunday. Certainly, managers and assistant managers are all going to succumb to those kinds of pressures.

I also have an issue that I want to talk about today with respect to pressure that I hope the government will seriously evaluate. When I first began teaching almost 30 years ago, one of the things that I noticed was the direct correlation between the number of hours a teenager worked and the marks that teenager got in high school.

Studies have now verified what I had observed as a teacher to say that there is a maximum number of hours at which point there is real suffering that goes on within the academic life of a child. The young

person who works 10 hours a week, quite frankly, is not affected. It is probably good for them, it probably stimulates their outside interests and it gives them some spare cash, which is certainly a reduction in the burden upon the family. When those hours, however, get over 15, there is indeed a correlation. Their marks, unless they are an exceptionally bright child, tend to go down.

I would like the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) and the Ministers of Labour (Mr. Praznik) and Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) to begin to do some evaluation as to whether or not we should be limiting the number of hours that a full-time high school student would be allowed to work in the workplace, because my experience is that employers will go up to the 22.5 hours because that is where they have to start paying benefits. They will push the youngsters into working those kinds of hours even if they have exams, even if it is a tough time in their academic year.

If we are trying to give out a message that staying in school and maximizing the learning potential is of serious nature to this government, then I think we have to in all seriousness look at the downside of these young people being forced to work more hours than is probably in their academic advantage to do. The pressure on young people to work longer hours is there by the employer saying if you do not work these hours, then I will have to find another young person who will work the additional hours of time. That is something I would like the ministers to seriously consider, because it is important for all of us that our youngsters have the best advantage of the academic career that they are participating in.

* (1550)

I have to tell you that when my own teenagers wanted to work, I said to them in no uncertain terms that they had a job during the academic school year. Their job was to get the best possible marks they possibly could get and their father and I would provide them with the spare cash. That is not an option that is open to all parents, but it could well be an option that we could afford to offer children by just limiting the number of hours that they are allowed to work under The Labour Standards Act.

The issue in terms of how I am going to vote in this particular piece of legislation comes down, quite frankly, on the issue of the desires of my constituency and that is why I told the caucus, in fact

before we had even met on the issue, that they were going to have a free vote on this particular issue. I would like the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) to pay particular attention to this.

I want the free vote not because I want to embarrass anybody in the Tory caucus. That is not what I am calling for here. I believe that there is something that we should have learned from the October 26 referendum and that is that the citizens of this province and this nation want us as politicians to listen a little better. They do not want to tell us how they should vote or they do not want us to tell them how to vote. They want us to listen to some degree to what they are saying to us. It appeared to me that this was a perfect example of this kind of legislation. It is not, I do not see, as a matter of Liberal philosophy to vote yes or no. It is not a moral issue. It is not an issue that I feel offends my sense of religious or moral principles. It is an issue upon which I think it is very much a lifestyle choice. It is not a lifestyle choice I particularly want to enjoy, but it is not a lifestyle choice that I think I have the right to deny others to enjoy.

I know that there are Liberal caucus members who are going to vote yes. I know there are Liberal caucus members who are going to vote no. I think they should feel very comfortable in the choice that they are making. I do not think they should have to vote no because they are members of the NDP caucus, and I do not think they should have to vote yes because they are members of the Progressive Conservative caucus. I think they should be able to vote as a matter of conscience.

Unless you think this is some newfound notion, let me tell you, they have been doing this in the House of Commons in Britain for decades. We say that we get our experience from the mother Parliament, but this is one part of that experience we have never accepted. We have all felt that somehow or other a leader has to go in and say, this is the way thou shalt act.

I think if we do not start changing that, then we are going to find even more disillusionment. Consensus—what is this wonderful consensus? Let us talk about consensus in caucuses for a moment. Consensus means, thou shalt vote with the party that thou shalt belong to or thou shalt find oneself disciplined by that party. I mean, that is consensus. For what? On an issue like this, what are we trying to prove? Are we trying to prove that we are doing something that we think is in the best interests of

Manitobans, or are we saying I will do what the majority of my caucus tells me to do because, if I do not do what the majority of my caucus and my Leader tells me to do, I am going to end up no longer having the critic position that I have or the cabinet position I have or the back-bench position I have, or whatever.

Is it not time that we said that there is an opportunity for parliamentarians to listen to their constituents and to their own consciences and a combination of the two and take the guidance of your conscience and of your constituents without feeling the threat of the so-called caucus discipline? What for? Why can we not move on to a new stage in political life and decide that there are some issues upon which the government does not fall, that are not considered nonconfidence motions, that you are not saying to your Premier or to your leader, gee, I do not value your opinion, I do not agree with your opinion? [interjection] If the rest of you want to go trotting off in that fashion it is fine.

I have told my party membership in this caucus that they can vote as they please. I suspect that it may come down pretty half and half, quite frankly, on one side of the bill and on the other side of the bill, and so be it. Let me tell you again the decision was made before we had caucused this particular issue. The decision was made in my office to write them a note and to tell them right up front that they had a free vote on this issue, which was exactly the position I took on the referendum and exactly the position I took on the Meech Lake Accord, because I honestly believe that we have to change the system. This was one way that I could signal that the change was going to take place at least for this caucus because, for the next few months anyway, I am still going to be the Leader.

Finally, I want to talk about the fallacy of this so-called trial period. Now, let us get real, as the kids of today would say—let us get real. A five-month trial period? I mean, if we were serious about a trial period, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that December, which is a good economic month in terms of sales, would be a valid trial; January, which tends to be a low retail sales month, would be the opposite; and at the end of that two-month period, we would have a reasonable trial.

But no, we are going to have a five-month trial—a five-month trial. I mean, realistically, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be awfully hard at the end of five months to tell all of those businesses out there, you have all

geared up now to Sunday shopping, and now, we are going to cut it off, it ain't going to exist any longer. I mean, that is not a very realistic trial.

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

Secondly, I have problems with the whole way that this particular piece of legislation was introduced in this particular short session. The government of the day knew full well that the New Democratic Party was not going to support this legislation. I do not think there is any question about that. They were not going to support this legislation.

So they also knew that with the speech from the throne and an adjournment date on the 16th of December, this legislation was not going to pass this House by the 16th of December. So we are going to be in December and January and February and March, and lo and behold, the trial is going to come to an end before we have, in fact, passed or defeated this particular piece of legislation.

That is not good lawmaking, Mr. Acting Speaker, not good lawmaking at all, and the government of the day knew that it was not good lawmaking. So why are we doing it in this way? Well, because, of course, if the popularity of the legislation grows and swells—and I disagree with the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). All one has to do is drive by shopping centres on Sundays to realize that there is a lot of support, at least in this community, for Sunday shopping, and I think there is, to some degree, a groundswell of support for what the government is doing. So they are leading by polls, and then they are leading by so-called the action of Winnipeggers who are going out in droves and participating in the Sunday shopping.

* (1600)

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, it is my intention to personally vote yes for this legislation, and I will be voting yes because I do not believe that I have a right to impose my value system on other people. I am voting yes because my constituents to date have told me that they want the opportunity to shop on Sundays. I am voting yes because I believe that it recognizes that society in 1992-93 is different from society 10 years ago.

Sixty-seven percent of all women who are of working age are in the work force; only 84 percent of men are in the work force. So we are getting

closer and closer to that day where equal numbers of men and women work.

It is women who consistently tell me they want Sunday shopping, and they want it for a lifestyle reason. If that is what they want and that is how my constituents are telling me they want to vote and because I do not have any strong moral reasons to vote otherwise, I will support this piece of legislation.

I must say, I wish that we had had a little bit more openness about the real reasons for why we are making this change.

I want to reiterate that this is not going to stop cross-border shopping, this is not going to be a stimulation to the economy. This piece of legislation recognizes an evolving and changing lifestyle, and that is what this piece of legislation is about. So let's end this sophistry. Let us talk about what the real issues are.

If we could get the approval of the New Democratic Party, I would like to see this go into committee by the 16th of December. This would give us the opportunity in January and February to have an open, public process for legislation. I would support province-wide hearings—I think that is a valid suggestion—so that Manitobans can truly speak to us. Unfortunately if we do not do that, if we do not pass it into committee stage, then what we are going to do is end up in late night sessions in May or June of next year for something that is going to be retroactive anyway, and that too would be asinine.

Let us do it in a positive way. Let us let Manitobans speak eloquently. Let us give them the opportunity to address this issue, as I know many of them do want to address the issue, and then let us vote as our conscience and our constituents truly request that we vote. Let us stop the flimflam and sham that goes on so often in this Legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on this bill with mixed feelings, because I have in fact encountered a number of different opinions on Sunday shopping throughout my constituency. I have also listened to many presentations throughout this Assembly. I have seen many different opinions and ideas coming from all parts of our province.

I represent a number of rural communities. I have heard people from in my community and from other areas and from this Assembly saying that if we open

Sunday shopping in Winnipeg or in the province for that matter that the rural communities will lose business to the city businesses.

So being the practical person that I think I am, I tried to look at what business would be lost to the city. Indeed, we could look at things, for example, like clothing possibly. Let us look at this quite closely. Casual clothes, for example—we have a Saan store not too far from Winnipeg here in the rural community. We have a Saan store in Winnipeg. The chances of people travelling from communities in my area to come to Winnipeg to go to a Saan store really does not make a lot of sense. I mean, if you have one in your community, you are not going to drive to Winnipeg to go shopping in another Saan store.

So it is not the casual clothes so much that we are looking at. Perhaps we could look a little closer—suits. Now, if I look in St. Adolphe, which is in my constituency, in lie des Chênes, in Landmark, in Lorette, in Ste. Anne, I can go throughout my whole constituency, we honestly do not have a business that produces suits. However, I could take a drive, which I do, to Steinbach, for example, and that is where I do purchase my suits. It is close to me. It is my neighbouring constituency. In fact, that is where I do purchase suits. However, what I am trying to point out here is what businesses will be affected by this Sunday shopping.

I guess we could look a little closer. Do you think, Mr. Speaker, that because we open Sunday shopping that lawyers' offices would be open? Not likely. Do we think that government offices might be open on Sunday if we open Sunday shopping? Not likely. So what basic changes have we looked at here? Hardware stores, for example, in my communities that I know of, are closed on Sunday and Monday. They look at what days are best to them, and it is very unlikely that they are going to want to open on Sunday. They have their two days that they use during the week. In fact, I have noticed in Winnipeg some hardware stores that do not open on Sunday and Monday either.

What I am trying to say here is that close to Winnipeg, if we are looking at stores or facilities that are going to lose business because of Sunday shopping, I think we have to look a little bit further than just to say it. Yes, when you say it, it makes some sense, but if you look deeper it is like putting something on paper and on paper it works but in reality it does not. It is the same thing here in the

sense, and this is my opinion, I do not think you are going to see much change in the amount of monies that move from rural communities to the city or vice versa. I do not think you are going to see that difference.

After talking to a few businessmen in Grand Forks and in Fargo, hearing them on the radio and taking into consideration the difference in the dollar today as compared to the U.S. dollar, they have said that in fact they believe that the Americans are just as thrifty shoppers as we are. Now I guess that is debatable. However, in saying that is possible, they also said that they would think they would be coming down here, or a good number of people would be coming here to shop. I guess if you looked at the fact that they can get tax back on their goods when they go back across the border, there is a strong reality of the possibility of that.

When we look at this legislation, the fact is that it is a trial period. Although there are many people who say, trial, not likely, once it is in there, it is in there and that is it. Well, I am sorry. I do not agree with that. A trial period is a trial period to gather facts and figures, to in fact give us a strong basis with which to make a decision on. I really think that this trial period will give us that information.

* (1610)

Mr. Speaker, I have other people within my community, or many of the people within my community—and that is looking at the religious background of many of us. I belong to a Roman Catholic church, but we have many different churches, Mennonite communities and many others in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, I have watched over many years now what people have termed as the possible erosion of family life or family setting. There have been many things that I have been concerned about, but I also tried then to look at it again practically and say well, okay, if we are looking at a family setting on Sunday, I can lay out my agenda on Sunday. In the mornings we get up and we go to church. We come home, we have dinner with our family. In the afternoon we might do a little bit of skidooing or a little bit of skiing, possibly watch a movie together or play some kind of games in the house together. It is our day of being together with my family.

Now I do not intend to change that, not a bit. However, do you think perhaps that even I who love

my family and want to see the family setting, as I would say most of us here in this Assembly do want to see the family stay strong, perhaps even I and my family might some Sunday afternoon say, well, why do we not go for a drive into Winnipeg, and let us stroll the mall at the crossroads, and let us have a look at whatever? Perhaps we will take in a little movie, perhaps we will take in a show, and after the show perhaps we will go into one of those areas where they have all those different—it is a place to eat where they have all these different hot dog stands and things like that around, and maybe we will have a foot-long hot dog or something. Is that changing? Is that really changing our family afternoon together? I do not think so.

I think when we say changing our family afternoon or Sunday as a day of rest and so on, I think we have to take it a little step further and look at it a little closer. Are people really going to change their Sunday? I think that the people within my constituency, in a number of the communities in my constituency, although they are strong family people, I think that they will take a closer look. I have talked to many of them. I think they will take a closer look and find that perhaps this is not something that is against family or the family setting. It is something, basically, to give us information by which we can make a very strong decision.

It was said by our member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld), I think very honestly, that this is permissive legislation, not compulsory. I think that is true. I think it is very true. I do not think it is going to hurt any particular group in our labour force. I have been in the labour force, I have been in union and so on; I think I can speak on it honestly. There are many people throughout all of our work forces who in fact would like to have as many hours whenever they can get them as possible. It is not saying that everybody does. It is saying that there are those in our work force who would love to work, literally, every day of the week. Now that might sound hard to believe but, believe me, it is true.

I do not think that any employer—or if there are it would be very few that have to force people, or try to force people to work. It has been said that in fact this could happen. Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess it could, but then there is a saying that anything is possible in this world. I guess it is indeed possible, but not impossible, to straighten it out.

We have also heard the argument that, how could it possibly increase in any way the monies or the

revenue taken in by any businesses? For example, we have got—I will just take a figure—multimillions to spend on food, clothing, et cetera, in this province. That is the dollars that are going to be spent, and whether it is spent in the rural community, in the city, or whether the shops are open on Sunday or whether they are open only six days a week or not, there is not going to be any more dollars spent.

Again, it brings me back to this thing of putting something down on paper. That statement sounds right; however, we will not know until we try it, because what you see on paper, being practical and reasonable and that it might work, it does not always work.

So I think that this trial period is a good thing to try. It was argued, or the idea was put forward, that five months is wrong. We heard four months, we heard six months. I guess you could just about pick any number you wish and probably argue the point. Really, you could go anywhere from three months to six months, as far as I am concerned, because you are going to come up with figures that will give you a general idea of what has happened.

Bringing back the idea of the possible influx of shoppers from the United States—like I said, I have talked to business people from across the border who have said that with the reality of today's dollar—I do not know exactly what it is—

An Honourable Member: Do you do cross-border shopping?

Mr. Sveinson: No, I do not. That is now on the record. I do not do cross-border shopping.

I would like to read a letter that I wrote to a constituent of mine just a short time ago, and I believe that what I have in here will back up most everything that I have said just now. It starts off: Dear Ray and Ann, thank you for your letter dated November 29 with respect to Sunday shopping. Your concerns and opinions are indeed important, and I can assure you that they will be taken into consideration.

As a government and as concerned Manitobans, we must look at ways in which other provinces and jurisdictions south of the border attract our money from this province. One of the ways in which they do it is through Sunday shopping. Therefore, we must put forward legislation on a trial basis to allow Sunday shopping.

Based on the results of the trial period, a decision whether to proceed on a permanent basis, and if so on what terms and conditions, will be made. If you consider the physical challenge that we as Manitobans are facing, I am sure you will agree that solid information is needed on which to base a decision. Family values, quality time with our family members, and a day of worship will continue to be considered when looking at these problems also. These are and will always be a part of my family's reasoning for a day of rest.

Incidentally, as information, no business is forced to open. You may remain closed, and no employee will be forced to work. Employees of firms which normally operate with more than four staff, which intend to open with a full complement on Sundays, will have an absolute right of refusal to work on Sunday if they exercise their right at the outset of the trial period or 14 days prior to a work assignment on a Sunday.

* (1620)

I appreciate your letter and would ask that you feel free to write or phone me if you have further concerns on this or any other matter.

I think that what I have said in this Assembly now on this bill is backed up by that letter. Mr. Speaker, I know the trial period has to be allowed in order that we have as much concrete information as possible with which to make a decision on Sunday shopping continuing or not, but I want my constituents, and I want all Manitobans to know that as government we will consider all facts and reasoning for and against Sunday shopping.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, at this time.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill 4 and add my comments to the record concerning Sunday shopping, or Sunday working, as my colleague for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has referred to it. I too believe that the intent of this bill is to put pressure on employees to work on Sundays. I note that in the press release that the government put out in announcement of this, the new policy direction by this government to allow for full Sunday shopping, is in response to "public demand." As the member for Thompson has indicated, in his informal survey that he has done by members of the House here—and I must indicate too that in my short time in office, I have not received one phone call, not one single phone call nor letter calling for full Sunday shopping.

[interjection] It may not be news to members across the way, but I wish to reinforce that.

Now, I am sure that if they have the opportunity to add their comments to the record, as I am sure they will, that they too will probably come forward with facts similar to that, that they have not had the overwhelming public demand for full Sunday shopping. I find it unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that this government chooses to bring in legislation that is retroactive.

An Honourable Member: It is permissive legislation.

Mr. Reid: The member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) says it is permissive legislation, Mr. Speaker. [interjection] We will get to the other provinces of Canada as we go along in my comments, and I am glad that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) is here to listen to that because some of my comments will relate directly to comments that he has made in this House with respect to this bill, and I am sure he will be interested to hear those.

It may be permissive for the retailers to choose to open on those days, but I can assure him that as I go along in my comments I will indicate to the member for St. Norbert what I have found in my discussions with the retail business community in Transcona and what they have told me about what their concerns are, and the impact that it is going to have on them as they try to eke out a living in the economic climate that this government has created in this province.

It is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the government chose not to go to full public debate on this. If there had been that overwhelming public demand for full Sunday shopping, that we would have given the public the opportunity to come forward to have some input into the process, some consultation about what is taking place—the government has not given any indication.

The Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Stefanson) has not given any indication, neither has his Premier (Mr. Filmon), that we are going to move into that process and that the only way the public will have the opportunity, for the rural areas of our province, including the northern part of the province, to have any input into this public process is if they come and make presentation to the committee after second reading of this bill.

I do not see how the people in northern Manitoba are going to drive those several hundred miles to

Winnipeg on a specific day, and who knows what time, what month that it is going to be held, that the public will not have that opportunity because, quite often, as we saw in the last session, there was very short notice for the public to come and make representation.

The government arbitrarily started this full Sunday shopping on November 29 with their decree or their press release without public consultation, nor public debate. Now they say, it is only for five months, a short time period to allow it to include the Christmas shopping period and to move toward this next spring. I think that this is a very arrogant government. It is a unilateral action of an arrogant government in moving in this direction.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) says that it is going to create an economic stimulus for the province. He says there are economic studies. In reading his comments in Hansard, he talks about several economic studies and opinion research. I have never known a government—I do not think it is proper for a government to run its operations by opinion polls. They should have public consultation instead of going in this process.

The minister has not tabled these economic studies, nor has he tabled the opinion research that will support the government's direction on Sunday shopping. [interjection] It is interesting that the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is encouraging me to conclude my remarks now and to sit down to allow a vote in the House.

Is the minister telling me that he wants to have closure on this bill, that he wants to terminate debate? Is that what he is attempting to do, so that I am not allowed the opportunity to represent the wishes of my constituents? Is he trying to stymie that debate? I am sure that if he was that concerned about moving this to committee, he would have done the public consultation process before his government introduced this bill to the House.

Going back to my comments about the Minister of Industry and Trade, he indicated in his comments that the opinion research he had done or his department had done, 54 percent favoured Sunday shopping and 41 percent opposed Sunday shopping.

We have not seen the questions that were asked by those research surveys. Now one has to assume, I suppose, that the questions were not

worded in the fashion that said that if you are in favour of Sunday shopping, would you also be in favour of working on Sunday? Did the research surveys that the government had done for them by Prairie Research ask that question? I doubt that would have been done.

The minister also states that this is to give greater flexibility when deciding to shop. I have never known where we have not had a great amount of flexibility in when we decide to shop in this province. Looking at the number of hours that the malls and the shopping establishments of our city and our province are open now, there seems to be a sufficient degree of flexibility. I have not received any complaints from my constituents in that regard. We always seem to see a great number of people visiting and making their purchases at these businesses.

The minister also indicated, Mr. Speaker, and I will quote from Hansard: that support is the highest among single parents and working women.

Now, I find it unusual that this government would be so concerned about single parents and working women—in other words, the working poor as we have seen from statistics that have been introduced in this House, coming from reliable sources including Statistics Canada—that this government is now concerned about these people and worrying about them and their right to be able to spend their money, but will not go that extra step, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that they will have sufficient incomes to live on, to purchase the products that they need, by ensuring that this government does not deduct the Child Tax Credit from the social assistance in our province. So they say they are worried about the working poor in the province, which includes single parents and women, but they will not go that one step further to ensure that they have the disposable income that they need to sustain them and to allow them to purchase their products.

It is also interesting to read, Mr. Speaker—and I refer to the government's fact sheet, and it talks about the rights of retailers and the rights of employees. I will quote from the document: Employees will have the absolute right of refusal to work on the Sunday if they exercise their right at the onset of the trial period or 14 days prior to their work assignment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have talked with people in my constituency. I have talked to them in an informal

fashion. I have talked to people who came to visit me here during the open house this past weekend, and I asked them their thoughts, as well, on Sunday shopping. There is not one person whom I have encountered to this point who thinks that this government and its policies will protect the working people of this province if they decide to opt out of the Sunday shopping program, the Sunday working program. Not one person whom I have encountered said that they would trust the government to protect them. That is a sad commentary to make about a government that is supposed to be elected to protect all of the people of the province.

* (1630)

That was not a question that I posed to them. That was information that they had volunteered to me. Now, why would they say that if they thought that the government was going to fulfill that promise, that legislation that is supposed to be there? The question I did ask the employers—and I did take the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to visit the business community of my constituency last week once again and to talk to them about this specific issue of Sunday shopping, because I wanted to see what impact it was going to have on them specifically in their day-to-day operations. There were very interesting things that I found out from them.

First off, if they have employees working for them, which many of them do, not a large number of employees—[interjection] For the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) information, I did my own survey, Mr. Speaker.

I do not rely on a firm to go out. I trust my nose and I trust my judgment when I talk to the people because they have the opportunity to have face-to-face discussions with me and to ask questions of me, as I do of them. I find that this is a better way to communicate with the people of your community, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: No preconceived notions at all.

Mr. Reid: No preconceived notions, not one, because if they had any doubts they were free to ask me those questions right on the spot, and there is no way that I can manipulate that process, not that I would in the first place.

What the employers of these small businesses told me, that if they were forced to open their businesses for competitive reasons and their

employees decided, for whatever reasons, that they did not want to work on Sunday, that those employers would find some way to reduce the hours of work for those employees to the point where it was no longer feasible for those employees to be employed there. Those are not my words, those are the words of the employers themselves, Mr. Speaker.

I would not go to the point of causing embarrassment or hardship for the business establishments in my community. They are having a difficult enough time right now trying to eke out a living, living under the policies of this government, Tory mismanagement in this province, taxed to the hilt by this government as they offload onto the municipalities every cost imaginable. [interjection]

No, I would not do that. I would not create more hardship than this government has already created for the small businesses of my community. They create the jobs for this province. They are the economic stimulus of this province, something that you failed to realize when you introduced this legislation in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, I find it difficult to understand how this government is going to protect the employees when they decide to opt out. Now, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) has said that there is legislation on the books to protect these employees, but it will be interesting to see that when they do have these complaints coming forward, and we will be watching very closely to see what action this government is going to take and what sanctions they are willing to impose upon the employers that unjustly penalize their employees who have opted out of working on Sundays.

I hope the Minister of Labour takes and makes those comments seriously when he said he is going to look after the employees who have opted out of this program, but I can tell the minister right now it is going to be very difficult for him and his department to prove that the employer has, by reason of the employee opting out of the Sunday working program, decreased the hours for these employees, to force them out of that work site.

The Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Stefanson) has said in his comments on this bill that the retailers may elect to open or not to open. Well, in my discussions with the retailers of my community, I have found, and they have indicated to me that if their competitors in the larger facilities—

am talking about the shopping malls of the community or in the downtown business section of the community here, and I am sure the same would apply to the rural areas as well—that if those competitors open their doors that these businesses in my community would be forced to open their doors for Sunday shopping as well.

They do not want to do that. They would prefer to remain closed on Sundays to give themselves the chance to rest and also to give their employees that day off as well. They do it for several reasons, not only for the humanitarian aspect, but also for the pure business sense, because there is increased cost from the business sense. These retailers are then, if they are forced to open, if they have employees who decide they do not want to work and they exercise their option, these retailers are then going to have to hire new staff to work on Sunday. That means they are going to have to pay for that training period that is involved. [interjection] He says there is going to be job creation, part-time jobs.

I suppose there will be some job creation out of it, that they will have jobs for some high school students who want to work. But the rural areas will be impacted. There is definitely no doubt of that.

An Honourable Member: Are you opposed to part-time jobs?

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): If they are taking them out of rural Manitoba and putting them in Winnipeg, yes.

Mr. Reid: Good point. My colleague for Flin Flon mentions that if it is taking out of rural areas, but at the same time, I want to indicate to the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) that all jobs are important in this province, whether they be part time or full time.

What we do not want to do, Mr. Speaker, is we do not want to have someone profit in the larger centres like Winnipeg at the expense of the rural areas, because I think it is important that we give equal opportunities to the businesses in all parts of our province, which is not the climate that this is going to create. [interjection]

I cannot understand the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) when he is speaking from the loge, but I think it is important that if he wanted to have his opportunity to stand up and speak on this, I would be willing, Mr. Speaker, to give him the opportunity to make his comments for the record. If he wants, he should have that opportunity to comment.

I am interested to see how the people of Portage la Prairie are reacting to this legislation. I am sure the member for Portage would be interested to have this opportunity. I hope the member for Portage has taken the opportunity to consult with the members of his constituency and also his business community, much the same way that I have over the last few weeks.

We are very concerned, Mr. Speaker. I know that the previous member for Portage la Prairie gave good representation to his community. He did an excellent job, and he was very outspoken in his comments. It was constructive criticism in most cases. It is too bad that honest Ed was not here today to give us a running commentary on the effect that this is going to have on his community, when probably the members of his community come into Winnipeg to do their shopping. I am sure he would have spoken out against this legislation because of the dramatic impact it is going to have on Portage la Prairie. I am sure the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) will have his opportunity. I do not want to waste my time in idle chitchat or dialogue with this member. His opportunity will come.

The members of the retail business community also tell me, Mr. Speaker, that their concern is staff safety, whether it be for themselves as people who would have to work on Sunday or for the safety of any staff who would come in. It would not be just one person who would come in. There would be extra costs involved by having to bring in a second staff person.

So if there is a reduced volume of shopping by members of the community to these businesses that would only warrant having one person in attendance to operate the store, then there are some concerns that through whatever unfortunate circumstance, whether it be robbery or injury or any other circumstance, the staff of these facilities could be put at risk.

* (1640)

So it is not just one person that should be there. It should be taken into consideration, as I am sure these small businesses have already thought about, the extra cost that it is going to be for them to have at least two members of their staff in attendance for safety reasons. [interjection] In my discussions with the retail industry.

The Ma and Pa businesses of my community have expressed concern to me, because what the

current legislation allows, Mr. Speaker, is for the larger business establishments to have up to four employees working. What they are afraid of now—and these are businesses like your florist or your deli shop that provide services now to the community—are now going to have to openly compete on another day of the week when these larger businesses are now going to open forcing the small business to open to compete against them. So these florists that used to be open on a six-day-a-week schedule are now going to have to consider whether they are going to forgo opening on Sunday and potentially losing whatever revenue that could be generated by those people who would now go to the larger facilities, be it your Safeway or other. It is going to put added pressure on them in an economic climate that is not favourable at this time.

I had the good fortune, Mr. Speaker, of visiting one of the local barber shops in the community to talk with the owners of the establishment last week and also to talk to some of their patrons. Their patrons do not trust the government—[interjection] I hope the glare is not affecting the members opposite, a condition of the environment we work in with the stress of everyday living.

In the barber shop I encountered a half dozen people, Mr. Speaker, including the two proprietors of that establishment. The owners of that business were opposed to Sunday shopping. They did not think that it was fair for them to have to go out and provide a service to the community, because they would have to open because their competitors in the larger shopping malls were open. They wanted to take the time to spend with their families, so they saw it affecting their quality of life.

The customers of this business came from different countries, they immigrated to Canada. I found it quite interesting that I should encounter these people because they brought with them a view of what was taking place in other countries of the world for which I did not have any knowledge with respect to Sunday shopping and shopping opportunities for other people. So I asked them what it was like in their home country. One individual was from Switzerland and told me that they do not have Sunday shopping. There is nothing open on Sundays. They spend their time with their families. I encountered another individual from Germany who told me that the bars are open on Sundays, but everything else is closed. There

were members from other countries who told me as well—Holland was another one—stores are not open on Sunday. They respect a common day of rest, a family day.

So we saw people of different nationalities telling me what it was like in other parts of the world where they too have to compete on a global scale, but through decisions of their collective representatives, their governments, they chose not to have the opportunity for business establishments to open on Sunday.

Now, I have to ask myself, why are we doing that here in this province? Why are we looking at going to that if we are supposed to be competing with these other countries? It is advantageous for them to remain closed on Sunday. Why could it not be advantageous for us as well? [interjection] No, I have not had the opportunity to talk to President Clinton yet, president-elect.

Yes, that is one of the things that—the member opposite says that President Clinton is having an all-party conference on ways to address the problems of the economy in the U.S., and that is something we on this side of the House have said for many, many months now, that you should bring an all-party conference together to discuss how you get out of the economic doldrums that you find your country in. That is the consultation process, and I am glad to see that President Clinton is undertaking that initiative. [interjection]

Well, I am sure that the member opposite will recognize that there are people from labour who are involved in that, too, who could be Republicans or Democrats. There are business people going in there who could be Republicans or Democrats. So I am sure President Clinton will do what is best for his country; at least I hope he will.

The Ma and Pa businesses of the community have told me, the mom-and-dad businesses have told me that they are opposed to Sunday shopping because of the impact it is going to have on them. They want to give their employees whom they have the Sunday off which means that they, in turn, would have to work to be open on that day, which will put increased pressure upon their family units because many of them are family people.

I note that the government says that they have had a public demand for this, and as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has indicated earlier, obviously the public demand is coming from the

Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. When I asked the retailers in my community, well, you have an organizational body, the Winnipeg Chamber, that is supposed to represent you, what they told me was that it is very apparent that the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is not representing their interests in this matter, that it seems to be listening to the larger business interests of the community. [interjection] As the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says, it is obvious that the bigger squeaking wheel gets the grease in this case, and that is probably what the government has done. They have listened to the representatives of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, because it is obvious they have not listened to the representatives of the Manitoba chamber, the Manitoba chamber, of course, from our understanding, being opposed to Sunday shopping.

We have, Mr. Speaker, received correspondence from several people. Some of them are religious organizations, and I will quote from some of the correspondence that I have received. From one particular organization, one church of my community, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, they question the government's decision to move toward full Sunday shopping.

They know, Mr. Speaker, that it is going to put pressure on the family unit, but they are concerned about what it will mean to the family unit itself, what extra pressures this will bring to the family. They feel that Sunday, being a common day of rest, will be the preservation of a sacred time to teach enduring human values.

They are worried about family breakups, of increased levels of divorce that will most likely occur. When I talked to residents of my community, one individual told me last week that his wife will now be forced to decide whether she is going to work on Sunday and that if she is forced to work on Sunday that he will most likely not see her more than a few hours of each week. He will not have that day to spend with his wife and with his children. His wife will be off working on Sunday, the day that he has off, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that that will lead to increased pressures on the family unit.

The business costs from the letter that was sent to me by the church talks about increased cost to the businesses for shoplifting. We know that this will occur when businesses are open. There is going to be shoplifting that occurs, but they are more concerned about the impact upon the family. I will

quote from the letter: Family living is fragile enough these days without one more element of increased pressure tearing at the few strands holding the families together.

* (1650)

I think that is what this is all about, Mr. Speaker, increased pressures on the family unit by members being forced to work. A further quote from the letter: As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we support every measure that would keep Sunday free for uninterrupted family life and for spiritual education so that we can go back the other six days and make an honest effort to improve our businesses, our schools, our communities and every other element of our society. We pray for our lawmakers and our places of business and urge them not to be penny-wise and pound-foolish on a matter of such grave consequence.

I support Sunday closing. I believe that it is important to have a common day of rest. I had a question that was put to me a short time ago by members opposite, whether or not I have ever worked on Sunday. I must admit I worked on Sunday, but I worked in an essential service where I was obliged to work. I did not have an option in that situation.

An Honourable Member: Where was that?

Mr. Reid: The railway. The railway is an essential service. You were forced to work by requirements of law to provide that service to members of the public.

An Honourable Member: It used to be the railway.

Mr. Reid: Yes, it used to be the railway, because it is being drastically cut back now. I am not sure how much longer that the two railways of Canada are going to remain looking at the policies of the country that have had such a detrimental impact upon them.

Another piece of correspondence I received, Mr. Speaker, was—and I am sure that the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) would be interested in this—it is from a business establishment in his community. I hope that every member of the Legislature got this piece of correspondence, because I found it was interesting and very applicable to the situation that we are facing here by way of this bill.

It talks about Sunday shopping as an effort to combat cross-border shopping relating to the

government's comments on this bill. This business establishment feels that there is going to be a drastic impact upon the thousands of independent businesses of our province and that the large urban shopping centres may be the only ones who benefit by this legislation. This business opposes Sunday shopping for two main reasons. Economically, it is splitting six days of business into seven while increasing the costs of the operation—which many of the retailers of my community have already told me—and, also, that there will be higher cost to the consumer as a result of this. As the overhead increases for these businesses, they are not going to eat that cost, they are going to pass it on to the consumers, which will further force people to look for other shopping alternatives, which may include cross-border shopping. It will also add social costs by way of deterioration of family life, something about which I have spoken, Mr. Speaker.

So that, Mr. Speaker, is why I am personally opposed to Sunday shopping. I believe it is important to have a common day of family rest, as many others have indicated to me in my own community. This government likes to pretend that it represents family values, but this legislation does not leave me with that impression. They allow wide-open gambling to take place in our province. Now they are allowing wide-open Sunday shopping, hardly a sign of trying to represent the family unit.

The government talks about revisiting this issue in five months after the public has been trained to go shopping on Sundays, to give them that opportunity, and for the few people who may take advantage of that on a regular basis, then you will—[interjection] We are not talking about Tories here as trained seals. We are talking about the public here. We are talking about the public having the opportunity to go shopping. [interjection]

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite think that the public are trained seals. I do not know why the . . . benches would think that the public at large are trained seals. They are very intelligent people. I am sure if they want the opportunity to add their comments, they will have that opportunity. [interjection] Oh, get a new line.

It is going to be very difficult for this government, Mr. Speaker. It is going to be very difficult indeed for this government to roll back the clock to November if the public decides that there is not the will out there to support Sunday shopping. I do not

know how this government is going to be able to do that.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity now to put my comments on the record, and I will indicate to the House that I do not support full, open Sunday shopping. I will be voting no on this legislation because I think that it is important for the family unit to have that quality time together, that if we take that away from them, it will put added pressure on them. We have enough difficulties in our communities that we represent by way of single-parent families and divorce situations, and we do not want any more of that to occur.

So I think it is important to give the families in the communities that we represent the opportunity to spend that quality time together. I hope the government will listen when this legislation goes to committee. I hope, too, that they will undertake a full public consultation process before we resume our sittings, because I think it is important that the public have some input into this process before this legislation gets passed, that you do not do it on a unilateral basis. The public should be consulted on this.

I have represented my constituents here, and I have expressed the concerns of the members of my community, including the retail sector and the concerns they have. Not one of them did I visit last week who was in support of the government's action of Sunday shopping—not one. Now, myself, I found that unusual. I thought I would have encountered a few, but I did not encounter one who was in support of that.

I think it is important for the government to go out and consult with the public, not just the friends who support them, the larger interests who are controlling obviously the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, because the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is obviously not representing the small retailers of my community, otherwise they would have been listening to them and the concerns they had and would have put pressure on this government to move away from this Sunday-shopping legislation. [interjection]

I am sure if the member opposite was interested in Mr. Christophe's comments he would pick up the phone and call Mr. Christophe. Mr. Christophe, I am sure, will be pleased to provide the member opposite with his comments with regard to Sunday shopping.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker, those are my comments. I thank you for the opportunity to—I just have a couple of last comments I would like to make with regard to Sunday shopping.

This is important, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Christophe, I am sure has communicated with members of this House. The member opposite is interested that Sunday shopping will obviously have an effect on not only the people who are employed in industry that is unionized but will also have an impact on industry that is nonunionized. Of course the ones who are in the nonunionized situation will be much more hard-pressed to defend their own interests and the wishes for them to spend time, quality time, with their families.

With that, I thank you very much for the time to put my comments on the record.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I see that the time has almost run out, that it is almost five o'clock. I believe there is a minute left on the clock. I am wondering whether it would be consideration to call it five, and I will continue my remarks tomorrow when the House sits again—or tonight. However—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am interrupting the member according to the rules. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Emerson will have 39 minutes remaining.

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, okay.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 2—University Education Review Commission

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer),

WHEREAS the social, cultural and economic landscape of society has changed dramatically placing new and challenging demands on our university system; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba realizes that aspects of post-secondary education must be examined; and

WHEREAS these aspects included the governance structure for post-secondary education, the review of university management systems, public accountability for universities, general accessibility to university education, and review on co-operation, allocation of functions and institutional linkages between universities; and

WHEREAS the government has announced the formation of the University Education Review Commission to examine these issues in university education; and

WHEREAS the public has been invited to participate fully in the review process so that together with the government, a dynamic environment for evolution of the university system can be created.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the government of Manitoba in its commitment to this review process and to its commitment to Manitobans.

Motion presented.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, the University Education Review Commission is the first body in over 20 years that will recommend sweeping changes to the post-secondary education system in this province. The commission will hear petitions from students, academic groups, business organizations, taxpayers and others and will address a number of pressing issues: the role and mandate of universities; general accessibility to the university education system; appropriate governance structures for post-secondary education; application of funds and budgeting systems; issues of accountability; relationships among universities, community colleges and high schools.

Mr. Speaker, the commission is also mandated to give consideration to legal and regulatory constraints and make recommendations accordingly, provide advice on organization, management and delivery of university education in Manitoba and encourage the public to participate in the review process.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the public that has to be at these review meetings. We have to have the

students, the student bodies, the educators, the professors coming forward with their ideas. The ideas on where the university is headed to and what direction it takes can only be brought forward by those who are working within the system and who bring forward their ideas.

University education plays a central role in economic performance, vitally important for the continued prosperity of this province. The province spends upwards of \$397 million on university-related expenses. I for one would like to know how those dollars are being spent and see the full review of where they are going into the system. I am really hoping that the commission will recognize the need to consolidate programs and embark on joint ventures and co-operative arrangements between other universities and colleges.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

I implore the faculty members, some of whom appear here in the Chamber, to go forward to the commission and put their thoughts forward, even on their own remunerations. Possibly they might be able to find some cost savings there.

These are both new challenges and new opportunities. The stake—[interjection] The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) says, it is all about money. It is not all about money but, without the money, where is the education process going? Nowhere, because the member for Point Douglas has seen to it with his NDP philosophy that we are taxed and taxed to the limit from the past, and all they ever did when they had a problem within the education system was throw money at it.

No, they did not go forward to the public and say, what can happen within the organization to save those dollars or accurately spend those dollars to see that the education system is moving ahead. No, they just throw more money at it and think that will cure it.

Well, that will not. We have to take the initiative of those who are within the system. The educators know where those dollars are going. Possibly they have to be directed into an angle that we can all understand.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not say that I know where the dollars should be directed at the universities, but we do have the opportunity with this review to see that the dollars are allocated in a proper fashion.

This government will take this review seriously when it comes forward. This government will see that this review, the first one, may I add, in 20 years—it is about time that something was done. We as modern politicians need the expertise that comes from universities and science and technology. We need that new-think from the universities.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when a member holds up a Bible at me like that in this Chamber, I hope he is not making fun of it because then I take offence. Never hold a Bible up to me in any shape or form.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the province is quickly becoming a leader in medical research. We are leading edge in agricultural science and sustainable rural development and in large measure this is due to the university research. I have had the opportunity over the years to meet a number of university professors and I think very highly of all of them. They have come forward with a lot of initiatives that nobody listened to. No one was there to carry through the initiatives that these professors and workers at the university saw necessary for the future.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I congratulate this government and the minister responsible for Education for bringing forward this review.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Honourable Duff Roblin will be chairing this commission as well as Miss Kathleen Richardson, Mr. Kevin Kavanagh and Mr. Sid Gordon. These members are all very talented in their specific fields and I am looking forward to the report, which I believe we are asking to have come back in March or later on next summer, summer of '93.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am hoping that the opposition members can see the positive nature in this resolution and commend the government on their stand. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Acting Speaker, I must admit I had looked forward to a little more discussion from the government side about this particular resolution. I thought there might have been more substance. I thought there might have been some discussion of the social and cultural landscape of Manitoba society which has apparently led to the proposal for this particular review.

I will perhaps make some comments on the small items that the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) did put on the record because some of

them I thought were quite interesting. He suggested first of all that this commission would make sweeping changes to the university system in Manitoba. I certainly think that will be very difficult for any commission which has been given such a short time period as this in which to report. Indeed, as the member for St. Norbert suggested, it was initially to have reported in March; now it is being extended to the rather general summer of '93, but even so it seems to me that four people with a relatively small staff will find it very difficult to provide the substance for the sweeping changes that the member is expecting from this particular review.

* (1710)

I had expected that he might simply do more than read the press release of this government on this particular issue, but then I suppose that was too much to expect. We had an entire throne speech which was based upon recycled press releases, so why should we expect any more from individual back-bench members?

The member spoke of his inability to understand where the millions of dollars on university related activities go in Manitoba. I do suggest to him that there are annual reports, and have been for many, many years, over 20 years in fact of annual reports from the three universities and the Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, that he could find out how his money has been spent. It really does not take very much to look at those.

Every university is an open institution. I am sure that the member would have been welcome at public meetings at the University of Manitoba. He would, I am sure, be welcome to sit in on discussions in some of the faculties and colleges.

It is not difficult to find out how the money is being spent in Manitoba; nor is it difficult to find out what the difficulties are facing universities in Manitoba.

I suppose that one of the great surprises of this particular review is that four people were selected. It is quite a small commission. That has its advantages and its disadvantages, but it is a small commission which is expected to do a very large amount of work in a relatively short period of time, with very little guidance, Mr. Acting Speaker.

One of the great disappointments I think that people who are presenting to the committee are finding is that there is no white paper for this. There is no sense of direction from this government. There is simply a listing of items, many of which

have been studied by commissions across Canada and in other provinces over the last four or five years: issues of governance, for example, which are being addressed by the Canadian Association of University Teachers right now; issues of teaching and research which were addressed by the national Smith Commission over the past year; issues of research which have been dealt with by the Economic Council of Canada.

There are a number of very recent in-depth reports dealing with problems in university education across the country, but this government did not feel that it had the ability, and, I would say, sense of direction to take those reports, many of which have very direct relevance to Manitoba's problems and to produce a white paper, a background paper, saying, look, here are essentially the issues which are facing Manitoba now. What it did instead was to choose a very small committee, which I would argue has a very limited experience of internal university affairs. Each of the four members of the commission has certainly made very large contributions to Manitoba. I have no difficulties with any of the people who are appointed to that commission, but it is limited. There are no students on that commission; there are no people from within the universities; there are no people representing the new Manitoba of aboriginal peoples and of so-called visible minorities, and therein lies the future of Manitoba, Mr. Acting Speaker.

If this was a commission which was truly interested in that broad public base of opinion, one would have expected that would have been represented in some symbolic sense on this particular commission, but that was not the case. This particular government either had an agenda which it already wants to put into effect with the universities, or it simply wanted to have a very limited, a very narrow perspective upon the future of universities in this province.

I am concerned about the nature of the commission that has been established, and the absence of any direction from the government, or a discussion paper in the sense of a white paper which could with some preparation have been put in place.

We have no discussion of goals of education for Manitobans. We have a blanket statement about the social and cultural landscape of society changing, which the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) unfortunately was unable to put any

meat on the bones of that particular context that the government had presented.

We have no sense of the way in which the government is looking at education in this particular commission. Is it looking at training? Is it looking at its industrial applications? Is it looking at its relationship to the Manitoba economy, or is it looking at universities in the traditional classical sense of the enhancement of learning and the advancement of research?

Is it looking, for example, for expansion or contraction of the universities of Manitoba? Does it have any sense of what the demography of Manitoba is going to be 10, 20 years from now, which I assume is the kind of future scale that the government is looking for? Where are the background directions which essentially will say where are the people of Manitoba going to be? Who will the people of Manitoba be 10 years from now, 15 years from now? What will be their level of education and what essentially are our goals for that population in rural areas, in northern areas and in the expanding area of the Winnipeg region?

It is a narrow commission. It has also, I think, been given very narrow directions. I know the minister in particular takes exception to this critique, but I do have the opportunity to enlarge upon it now and, again, I wish the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) perhaps had addressed some of this in his limited remarks.

It is difficult to speak about universities in Manitoba without looking at the larger context. First of all, every university is, in a sense, a national university. Every university has a part to play in the creation of a nation, which we still have, called Canada, and the national role, the specific role of each of our provincial universities be they large, research universities like the University of Manitoba or whether they be smaller universities or colleges such as the college of St. Boniface. There is a national role for every university, and I think the absence of that national perspective is particularly important and particularly, I think, tragic in the creation of this particular university commission.

When we look at the national scene, it is important to notice that the universities' contribution from the federal government has been declining, particularly over the time period of the Tory government in Ottawa. Canada, as a nation, has been deinvesting in post-secondary education since about the late

1970s, the beginning of the 1980s. That has had tremendous consequences for every province in Canada, but it has caused tremendous difficulties for the smaller provinces and increasingly the poorer provinces such as Manitoba. For a university review commission not to be given that specific mandate to look at the role of the universities of Manitoba in the national context and to look at the impact of the decrease of post-secondary funding, I think, again, has limited the kind of benefit that this particular review will have for all of Manitobans.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

At the same time, I think it would have been useful for the commission to have had a mandate to look at the regional and sectoral nature of the universities in Manitoba. We all are familiar with the argument that goes that there are regional co-operations that can be made across the Prairies or perhaps in the shield area of Northern Ontario. We are not an island in Manitoba. We share problems of distance education. We share areas of research with other universities across the country. Again, right now for a university system in Manitoba to be viewed, to be reviewed in a narrow provincial perspective, I think, is inadequate, and it indicates the shortsightedness of this particular government review.

Whenever anybody speaks about universities in the prairie region, one of the examples which is always given of co-operation is of the veterinary school in Saskatoon. Again, across Canada on a national basis, there has been tremendous co-operation in the veterinary profession for the establishment of certain schools across the country, one in Guelph, one in Saskatoon, and I think there is one other in the Maritimes, always held up as an example of the kind of regional co-operation which is possible in the specialization which is necessary in a country such as Canada.

So where is that sense of regional perspective in this particular university review? Where is the sense of the sectoral nature of our interest in medical research or our interest perhaps in mining research or agricultural research that would give us links with other provinces on either side of us or elsewhere in Canada? It is a narrow perspective, Mr. Speaker, and it is not one that will serve the university community very well over the next 20 years.

I think, too, the sense of an international perspective is an important one. Again, the University Education Review Commission, supposed to report in a very short period of time, has been given no context for examining the international role of Manitoba's universities. If there is one area of Manitoba which is constantly in touch with the wider world, whether it is in agricultural research, whether it is in research in transportation or whether it is in research in the social sciences and humanities, it is the university sector.

Students come to the University of Manitoba from all across the world. In fact, this is our gateway to the world. It is our window on the world, both in terms of what we produce and in the people whom we bring here. Again, for a university review commission not to be taking that into account, not to be given that as one of its directions, I think is a misunderstanding of the role of universities in communities such as this.

* (1720)

What we have then is a narrow review, a narrow perspective by a relatively narrow group of people who are to report in a matter of a few months, and yet the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) expects that they will be recommending sweeping changes to the university system. What we have, in fact, in this university review is an example of the drift in Tory policy since the 1980s, a drift that we see in so many other areas of their activities across Manitoba. This is not a government that knows where it is going. This government has no direction.

What we have seen since 1988 is year after year of lost policy initiatives, of absence of direction in health care, in agriculture, in rural development. Review and delay, review and delay, that is all that this government has done. We are seeing it again in the universities review, a review which is I think perhaps—and it is a government which refuses to confront the federal government with the results of its actions upon the everyday life of Manitobans.

Instead of confrontation over the absence of post-secondary funding, of the decline in health care support for provinces such as Manitoba, in the removal of federal jobs from Manitoba, in the removal of the federal infrastructure in airlines and transport and railways, we see simply a capitulation to Ottawa. Well, perhaps it is worse than capitulation. It is crocodile tears. It is the staged management of news. It is the attempt to

manipulate the headlines of Winnipeg newspapers with walking out of particular meetings with the Prime Minister of Canada.

I will not believe it until I see every Tory in this House tear up his membership card for the Tory party. I will not believe it until I see them stop attending those \$500-a-day dinners. I will not believe it until I see them stop sending their money to the Conservative Party of Canada and to Brian Mulroney. That is when we will believe that there is any opposition in this Tory party to the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to speak about the role of the universities in the community in Manitoba. There is a great deal more to say about the universities. I hope that I will have the chance at a later date. I think it is important to recognize that universities affect everybody in Manitoba, that there is widespread public support for them, and if this particular government is concerned about the level of taxation, it should read the Winnipeg area study and look at the support for university education and look for the support of the taxation system in favour of university education that is registered there.

There is widespread public support for the community service of the university. It is the universities to which Manitobans across the province turn for scientific assistance and for community service, and I regret the narrow framework that this government has placed upon the review commission.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) indicated earlier that he liked my speech, but I do not think he is going to like this particular one, because I find it extremely difficult to accept a resolution which is so self-congratulatory in nature and which does not deal with the reality facing university students and indeed university education in the province of Manitoba.

I want to begin, Mr. Speaker, with some of the WHEREASes in this particular resolution. Whereas the social, cultural and economic landscape of society has changed. Well, that is true. There is no question that the landscape has changed. When I went to university in the '60s, 8 percent in some of the undergraduate faculties were made up of women. Now some 53 percent of the population in universities are women, so if that is what he is

making reference to in his resolution, then obviously I cannot find fault with that.

His next WHEREAS—the government of Manitoba realizes that aspects of post-secondary education must be examined. Then I would question why there have been policies that have been directed by the budget of this government year after year after year which would not show that they have examined them in any way, shape or form, that they have, in fact, systematically gone about causing our universities to be seriously eroded, because there simply has not been adequate funding from this government to make access to our universities a part and parcel of university life.

Let me just give you some very simple examples. The tuition fees charged by our universities have increased under this administration by 82 percent—82 percent. As a result, there are many young people out there who find it impossible to access our universities, and the government certainly has a responsibility to ensure that young people do not find themselves unable to go to university simply because of financial restrictions, and yet they have made no attempt to balance the tuition fee increases with additional student aid, additional student bursaries, additional funding. In fact, they have cut them. There has been the inability on the part of students to get that kind of access dollar which they so desperately require.

* (1730)

The Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) now and the previous Education minister have said they keep making representations to the federal government in order to improve and embellish the Student Aid Program. Have they done that? No. [interjection] Well, you know, the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) seems to forget that student loans are paid back for the most part, not everybody, but for the most part, student loans are paid back. We are not talking about, for the most part, monies that just go into the well never to be seen again. Most students upon graduation legitimately pay back the monies that they have borrowed. All the more reason for improving the access to universities by making student loans more generous, which make it possible for them to attend those university educations.

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The next one goes on and talks about the governance structure that has been imposed upon

our post-secondary institutions, known in this province as community colleges, as if this has been some wonderful achievement. Well, I would like to remind the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) that many of the problems with the governance model that have been identified are exactly the problems that have been identified because of the lack of co-operation at our universities. Yet this government, having looked at the university model and recognized that it does not always work, that it does not provide the accountability, that it does not provide the accessibility, has taken exactly that model and imposed it upon the community colleges.

Now I have long recognized the need for our community colleges to have some independence and some removal from the day-to-day administration of the Department of Education, but we do not need to have three governing bodies in conflict with one another. Yet that is the model your government has established, that we are going to have a community college for ACC, we are going to have a community college for KCC, and we are going to have a community college governance board for Red River Community College. Instead of these three boards working together so that we do not duplicate, that we do not have them competing like our universities do day after day after day, we have in this province moved to a model which is going to encourage that lack of accountability, that lack of working together. So if he is taking great pride in a government that has included a governance structure which is going to bring about clear management, I would suggest to him he has done and supported just the opposite by his support of the previous Minister of Education's government's governance model.

Then he has talked about the need for the Education Review Commission. Let us talk about that review commission for just a few moments. I have, as the previous speaker indicated, no difficulty with any of the four people who have been appointed. But let us be realistic for a moment. We have appointed Duff Roblin who has just retired from the Senate because he reached the age of 75. We have appointed Kathleen Richardson who does not give out her birthday, but I know she is considerably older than I am and I am 50. I know that Kevin Kavanagh is in his sixties. I do not know the age of the other individual, but the reality is, that is not even a good demographic in age basis of the representation of the Manitoba population.

For the most part, if they went to university, they went to university, I would suggest, in the heyday of university experiences. This was the days of university in which, quite frankly, we were in classes with very small numbers of students. The largest class I was ever in at university had 200 people and that was a first-year biology class, and we thought it was enormous. All of my sophomore, junior and senior classes had less than 25 students in them. Now it is a miracle if a student in first or second year gets into a course with less than a 100 people and often far more than that.

I went to university in the day where you chose whatever course you wanted from the calendar, and you were guaranteed admission to that particular course. So I was able to do things like take Russian history and Russian government, American history and American government, Canadian history and Canadian government. It was a wonderful way to blend the two, lock step, all the way through my university career.

I talked to friends of my daughters this year who did not get into a single course they wanted to take, not one. A second-year student did not get into one course they wanted to take. That is why so many of our young people are not finishing their degrees in three or four years but are taking five and six and seven years because they cannot get the courses they want.

Yet have we put anyone on this review commission who has any understanding of what the today experience is like at our universities? No, not a single person on that board, with the greatest respect to all of them who are first-class individuals. But if you are genuinely interested in hearing about the problems, then it seems to me appropriate that you would have some background knowledge and some information and that you could build on work that has already been done. But, unfortunately, they have been given this massive task. They have been given a limited time frame upon which to do it, and I have to think that unfortunately and tragically, the report that they are going to come up with is going to reflect their lack of time, their lack of expertise and their lack of ability to study and evolve the issues as they need to be addressed.

The problems facing our universities are not unique to the province of Manitoba. They are problems which are facing universities across the land, but I would suggest to you that university experiences in other provinces are, in some cases,

quite different than what our young people are facing today. I want to give you an example.

My oldest daughter did not go to university in this province as, quite frankly, does not my youngest daughter. Their reasons for choosing to go outside the province are different, but essentially has somewhat to do with the fact that I am in this Chamber, and they want to have some individuality and some separateness apart from me.

My oldest daughter went to Harvard, a wonderful university. I think we all recognize that. She graduated from a high school in Winnipeg, Kelvin High School, in the International Baccalaureate program. She got all sixes and sevens in her higher level courses.

When she arrived at this, I think we would agree, prestigious university, they said they would take her into second year, that she could skip all of the courses in first year and go into second year because of her wonderful record of academic performance from a high school in Manitoba, and I think we should congratulate ourselves for doing that. As a family, we chose not to let her do that. She was 17, and we felt she needed the benefit of four full years, but she had that option. They then picked her courses for her so she would not repeat anything which she had already done in her high school program.

Well, let me compare that to a young man who graduated this spring from Kelvin High School. He has a seven in physics, the most difficult course of all in the International Baccalaureate program. There is no question about that. Cathi did not take physics, but it is the most difficult program.

At the University of Manitoba he was forced to take freshman physics. This is a youngster who probably has already a second- or third-year knowledge of physics. They insisted he take first-year physics. Students who go to Queen's get put into second-year physics; students who go to McGill get put into second-year physics; but at the University of Manitoba, for some reason known only to the University of Manitoba, they insist that he take first-year physics.

If we want to turn off academically bright and talented kids, that is one way to do it.

An Honourable Member: Who makes that decision?

Mrs. Carstairs: The decision is made by the university.

Those are the kinds of problems, though, that are faced by young people that should have been addressed by this review committee. I would suggest to you they are not going to be because young people are not sitting on that review committee that could alert them to the problems of their friends and their associates that they are going through and the struggles they are going through.

That, Mr. Acting Speaker, is really a most unfortunate circumstance because, if we are going to challenge and welcome these young people to remain in our province, then they must do so by making them feel comfortable academically, socially and financially within our community, and we are not doing that.

So I wish this university grants committee well, but I cannot participate in congratulating a government that has failed our young people and failed them miserably, failed them at the community college level, failed them at the university level and, unfortunately, will continue to fail them until they accept that they as a government have a responsibility to education in the province of Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move to participate in the debate on this resolution for several reasons. I have watched with growing wonder and amazement at how members opposite, both of the official opposition and of the Liberal Party, in effect have become the reactionary, small "c" conservative, afraid of change of the status quo, certainly afraid of sweeping changes, certainly afraid of even reviewing or doing anything that has to happen from time to time under the normal business of providing responsible government.

I of course also take some considerable pride in relating a little bit of history. I appreciate the fact that neither spokesperson for the opposition has in any way taken issue with the individuals who are involved in this committee, because I would hope not. Most in this House would not realize this. There have been fundamental changes that occurred way back when.

The honourable Leader of the Liberal Party suggested a little while ago that this government, after all, has been somehow negligent in passing

budget after budget after budget for the universities and now finding it necessary to put in a review team to look at what is going on that could perhaps be changed.

* (1740)

Mr. Acting Speaker, that of course is not the case. The truth of the matter is, for at least some 20-odd years this government, nor any other government, has looked at university budgets. There was a time—and I suspect I am the only one in the House who remembers that time—when university presidents with their administration walked annually into the Treasury Board of the day, that I was a member of, to have their budgets approved.

The University of Manitoba—well, there was only one university at that time. It was of course the current chairperson who is chairing this review who created the other two universities in Manitoba, the University of Brandon and the University of Winnipeg. There was no Universities Grants Commission at that time. The university presidents came into Treasury Board, appeared before Treasury Board for several days while they had their budgets reviewed by the politicians of the day, by Treasury Board of the day.

Now that has not happened, Mr. Acting Speaker, for these last 20 years because a Universities Grants Commission was established, because we were certainly always concerned that academic freedom be not in any way impinged upon. It was the same Duff Roblin who established the Universities Grants Commission.

I can remember the first chairman of the Universities Grants Commission, a former deputy minister of Education, by the name of Mr. Scott Bateman, who was the president of the Universities Grants Commission. It is that body, that government, whether it is this government or the governments of Ed Schreyer or Howard Pawley have ever since given humongous chunks of money in the millions of dollars for them then to disburse among the university community.

If the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) wants to take issue about how that money is being spent in a very specific and detailed way, as she explained in her comments just a few moments ago, about the necessity of having a bright physics student having to repeat a course at the University of Manitoba which, in her view, should not be necessary, that is not the purview of this

government or any government, but it reflects very directly on the management of the university in question.

The honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) talked about the importance of the regional question of status of the universities, the national and the international. All of that is true. Mr. Acting Speaker, this government has to come to grips with what the situation is in Manitoba at this particular time, as we have had the courage to do, and will do in virtually all major services provided through tax revenues.

My colleague in the Health portfolio explains that every day in this Chamber. There will be and there are occurring right now as I speak sweeping changes taking place in the delivery of health care in this province, ones that I am quite satisfied will not in any way impinge on the delivery of health to the people of this province of Manitoba but ones that will utilize, maximize the resources available to us in this province and in this country.

My colleague the minister responsible for Autopac (Mr. Cummings), I have every confidence, will review, will look at another program that has been in operation for 20 years, namely the Public Insurance Corporation of Manitoba. We will make a consideration, and we will make a decision as to whether or not some fundamental changes ought not to or should be brought into play with respect to that corporation's activities.

I just come back to my original open comments. Some would say, it should not be possible for a Conservative government to be that group within our society that makes these fundamental changes to the status quo. Some would say that that is at odds with our name. Some would like to say that even our own name, Progressive Conservative, is a contradiction of terms, that we cannot be progressive and cannot be conservative at the same time.

History in this province records that every fundamental major social programming in this province has been brought in and put into place by a Conservative government.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is no question. Even Mr. Roblin's most vociferous political foes will acknowledge that his government was the government that brought education into the 20th Century in this province.

After 10 and 20 years or 30 years of Liberal and coalition governments, by the mid-1960s we still dotted our landscape with one-room schools that we could not find teachers for.

My first job as an adult was what is now hanged and framed somewhere as an extinct species, the permit teacher. We used to churn 500, 600 kids out of high school with barely six weeks education at what was then called normal school and send them out to teach our youngsters. That was the education system in the '60s that Duff Roblin and a Conservative government had to come to grips with and he did.

Consolidation in the city, consolidation throughout rural Manitoba—that was not easy to decide, which community gets the high school and which community does not get the high school. It was not easy to introduce massive transportation and busing of school children 30, 40, 50 miles in rural Manitoba. That was progressive, that was visionary, responsible attitudes of the government of the day.

This is a man that today we have asked after having served a full and exemplary career in public service, the former Senator Duff Roblin, former Premier of this province, my first boss, that is now being asked, because he refuses to quit, because he still has much to contribute, to review the system.

The honourable members, both the member from the Liberal Party and the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), say, well, this is too narrow a group; it does not include the whole community. Look, this is not a great debating society that we want to talk about. We do not want to fill that up with all the vested interests in this system. The faculty should be on there, the students should be on there, aboriginal people should be on there, the scientists should be on there—well, that is producing a report that is guaranteed to gather dust. What this government is prepared to do, and we have the model; the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) provided us a model. [interjection] Opposition were not listening. He put together a very unique team of experts that are guiding him and guiding this province in the very health reforms that are so necessary. We are taking those findings and putting them into action.

I congratulate, I commend the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey). I hope that this government has the fortitude. I believe we have to

look seriously at how we expend those some 400 millions of dollars on secondary education. I can tell you in advance that honourable members opposite will be among the first to rise on their feet if it should perhaps mean some dislocation of the status quo, if a professor finds himself maybe out of a job, or if the suggestion has been made that perhaps we ought not to be doing everything at each university but specializing and concentrating some of our needed resources.

Perhaps we should be doing what the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) says and looking at the regional question. Should we be offering something here that is being offered in Saskatoon or in Waterloo? We cannot repeat Cambridge and Oxford and Princeton and Harvard in every university here in Manitoba, nor ought we or should we.

* (1750)

I expect, Mr. Acting Speaker, that by keeping this review committee small, of very responsible Manitobans that do not have to prove their worth to anybody in government or in the private sector, that they can provide within that relatively short time frame—again, the honourable members opposite argue, they do not want results too quickly. Oh, no, they do not want a report that maybe this government will act on. They want a nice long exercise in public relations where we travel the province, where we involve every segment of the society, everybody will tell us. When you do that—we have had so many of them—it all comes back to more funding, more funding, more funding, more funding, but the bigger question has to be asked, and we face that every day in this House: What are appropriate levels of funding?

Perhaps an even more pressing and compelling question is, not politicians of the day and not this government of the day imposing its will or intruding on the academic freedom of the universities. That is not the purpose of this review, but it may well focus progressive educators within the system, as my colleague from St. Norbert indicated, to come out, just as when pressed and when given the opportunity they have done in the health field, to come up with solutions that are professionally supportable, workable and doable. Then we have a government that is prepared to carry them out. That is what is going to happen.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in this debate about our educational institution.

I have no hesitation at all to express my admiration to the Honourable Duff Roblin, but this Progressive Conservative government at present, they are all sizzle, there is no steak—all sizzle, no steak. Where is the beef? What is the substance of this review? Is this just a delaying tactic because the government cannot cope with the pressure and the demand for higher education in this province?

It is a fact—of all the federations that I know across the globe, it is only in Canada that I know that there is no national ministry of education. It is granted by reason of accident of history as provincial jurisdiction.

What are the implications of this? If you happen to be in a rich province like Ontario or B.C., you get a good quality education, because the province can sustain and support the educational system in those provinces. What if you are in Prince Edward Island or you are in Manitoba, where there is a scarcity of resources available for higher education? That means you have to satisfy yourself with an inferior kind of education compared to the well-endowed provinces.

I think if there is any reform that is to be made, regardless of the fact that it has been traditionally provincial jurisdiction, the more rational direction is to make education a federal responsibility. Why? Because only the federal government can make a standard that is uniform all across these provinces giving every Canadian the equal opportunity and access to a good quality education, but we will not do that because we will not willingly give up a jurisdiction that is ours by reason of the British North America Act. This is selfishness, irrationality. Who can argue with that position?

There was a long time ago a Greek philosopher. His name was Diogenes. He was carrying a lamp in the noonday looking for someone. When he was asked what are you looking for, he said I am looking for an honest man. If we have to be honest about the policy in this country, we have to admit the fact that education is the very foundation of the present and the future of this country and, therefore, the opportunity should be given to everyone equally. Is that being given equally? I will give you information.

The elite of this country are not sending their children in the educational institutions of this

country. The son of Galen Weston Junior, 18 years old, he is now enrolled in Harvard University. The daughter of the Prime Minister named Caroline, 18 years old, she is enrolled in Harvard University. The 24-year-old son of the Governor-General of this province is enrolled in Harvard University. The elites are there in the educational institution of another foreign country. Why? Because they can afford it.

Tuition alone in the Ivy League colleges costs \$25,000 per year, just the tuition. Who can afford such a kind of education only available to those with money? This is what we talk about accessibility, accessible to those who have the resources, but never to those who have the intelligence or the talent but not the money.

So I think that if there is any fundamental reform that is to be made in this country, that the function of education should be a national responsibility so that wherever you are born, whatever province you came from or you may come from, whether rich or poor, you will have equal access and equal opportunity to the same high standard and quality education wherever you may be in the country. That is the only way. That is the rational way.

To persist in the tradition that this is a provincial responsibility is to create inequality, because the poor provinces cannot, in any stretch of the imagination, sustain a good quality education because they lack the necessary resources. Year after year you have noticed what the federal government has been doing. The federal government has been cutting all these grants to the provinces in order that equality opportunity may be enhanced. This federal government by rationalizing on the deficit has been consistently cutting grants on health and education given to the provinces. Yes, it is true. That is the fact.

It does not mean that because you go through the formal process of learning, you are necessarily an educated person. Not so. There is a difference between getting information and getting an education.

You may have a head filled with facts and formulas and all the technicalities of things of the world, and yet if you do not have that basic integrity and honesty built in you, you are more dangerous than if you were not educated. Only the educated person is the honest person, because he knows how to apply the kind of knowledge that he gets, that he

achieved out of working in the university structure, in the institution of learning of the university.

Of course, not all people who get an education are necessarily the only ones who get success in life. You can get an education informally in the sense that you take it directly from experience. The present Premier-designate, for example, of Alberta, Mr. Klein, had gone through all kinds of jobs and all kinds of challenges, and he had gone through all of these through experience. This is education itself, but it is a longer process because you learn by the trial and error method. You have to first commit the mistake, and then if you have enough brains in you, out of the mistake you find out the truth, but you have already suffered the pain and the penalty of those mistakes.

It is only through formal schooling that we try to avoid the pains of trial and error method because we learn through the experiences of others, through studying and learning the skills and calculating, and

all the skills that we can acquire without going through the process of pain ourselves.

That is why education is more expensive, but if we think that education is expensive, try ignorance. It is more expensive than anything you can imagine in your life, because you do not know what you are after, you do not know what you are doing, you do not know how to get what you want. You will suffer the rest of your life because you have no skill, no opportunity, no knowledge known to you, because you are not educated in the sense that you know what you want and how to get it, and once you get it you know how to use it. That, Mr. Acting Speaker, is what education is all about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) will have six minutes and 35 seconds left in the debate.

The hour now being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that this House will again reconvene at 8 p.m.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, December 14, 1992

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