



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>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 23, 1993

The House met at a 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Marlene Antonio, Linda Smith, Frances Spooner and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding of the student social allowance program.

* * *

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Susan Comeau, Doran Reid, Diane Reid and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding for friendship centres in Manitoba.

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Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand and present the petition for Fiona Muldrew, Carol Popiel, Lorraine Moore and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring the funding for the student social allowance program.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Darla Tenold, Susan Banks, Allison Dewar and others requesting the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding of the student social allowance program.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's

Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* (1005)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today His Excellency Tajeddine Baddou, who is the Ambassador of Morocco to Canada.

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

Also with us this afternoon, we have the Honourable Penny Priddy, Minister of Women's Equality from the government of British Columbia, in the gallery.

I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

Now we have from the St. Adolphe School forty-two Grades 7 and 8 students under the direction of Ms. Lois Quesnel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Also this afternoon from the Applied Linguistics Centre, we have 36 students under the direction of Ms. Ruth Klippenstein and Ms. Greta Gibson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Core Area Agreement Renewal

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

In 1990, the Premier in the election campaign committed himself and his government to renewing a third tripartite agreement, the Core Area Agreement for the city of Winnipeg. When we asked the Premier questions on this issue in 1991 after he had met with the Conservative Prime Minister, he indicated that again this matter was being negotiated between the two governments and that he was hoping to achieve some success. Unfortunately, we have not had a new Core Area Agreement.

In December of this year, we asked the Premier again after the minibudget came out, and the Premier agreed with us that the minibudget from the federal Conservatives was full of holes for Manitoba in terms of commitments.

The Premier again said he would raise it with the Prime Minister. In fact, it was on his public agenda when he met with Prime Minister Mulroney in early December.

My question to the Premier is: In the budget next week, on Monday, can we expect to have the renewal of the Core Area Agreement for the people of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, of course, the member knows full well that if matters of public policy were to be raised prior to the budget, obviously that could create an issue for the budget, and so I would not know whether or not it is in the budget because I would not have knowledge of the contents of that budget. In fact, anybody who would

have knowledge of the contents of that budget could jeopardize its approval process, so I could not give him an answer to that.

What I can say is that we have had some encouraging indications of an interest on the part of the new lead minister for Manitoba, Mr. Mayer, and in my discussions with Mr. Mayer and my meetings since last December, I have encouraged him along those lines. He met as recently as, I believe it was last week or the week before with the mayor and the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) to try and work out some arrangements toward the conclusion of an urban renewal agreement on a tripartite basis for the city of Winnipeg.

* (1010)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier well knows that federal-provincial agreements are announced all the time outside of the federal budget. In fact, the last renewed Core Area Agreement—[interjection] Well, the Premier commented about its lack of inclusion in the minibudget on December 3, 1992, and the Premier then said that he would raise it with the Prime Minister.

I want to ask the Premier: When can we expect a new Core Area Agreement for the city of Winnipeg?

We have been waiting for two years since the Premier promised it. It is an internationally renowned program that has trained thousands of Manitobans in the inner city, has renewed many parts of our physical structure in the inner city. It has received international awards.

When can we expect the Premier to fulfill the promise that he made to the people of Manitoba in the 1990 election campaign?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the member asked if it was going to be in the budget of next Monday. I answered that question specifically, and then he responds that it could be announced even outside of the budget.

That is precisely why we have the three ministers who will be responsible ultimately for the negotiation and the drafting of such agreement working. We have the three levels of government headed by Mayor Susan Thompson, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) and Mr. Charlie Mayer, who is the lead minister for the province of Manitoba in the federal government.

They have been working on it. They met as recently as last week, I believe it was—it might have been the week before—and progress is being made. So I say to him that we are more optimistic today than we were in December, Mr. Speaker.

Training Programs

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): The federal Conservative government has systematically cut back on their training commitments to the province of Manitoba, both inside the last Core Area Agreement and now outside of the Core Area Agreement with its reduction in access programs.

The provincial government has also reduced its commitment to access programs in its own budget this year, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to ask the Premier whether the new Core Agreement will include increased training and development programs for people in the inner city, for people across Manitoba, training and development that is the key to their careers, to their futures, to their dignity. Will we see a training program announced by the federal Conservative government and the provincial Conservative government, or are we going to continue to see the reduction of training opportunities for people who most need it in our province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Given that all of the elements of the agreement are currently under negotiation amongst all three levels of government, I can only say that the Leader of the Opposition will have to wait until the agreement is negotiated and finalized to find the answer to that.

Children's Advocate Minister's Clarification

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier.

Yesterday, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillehammer) is quoted as saying that the Children's Advocate speaks on behalf of individual children. I would like the Minister of Family Services to reread the Children's Advocate bill, which says that the duties of the Children's Advocate are to advise the minister on matters relating to the welfare and interest of children and services relating to children, to review and investigate complaints that he or she receives relating to children and relating to services provided to children, plural.

I would like to ask the Premier to clarify this statement by his minister, that the Children's Advocate investigates complaints regarding individuals in spite of the fact that the act refers to children in general. Would the Premier clarify, please?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that obviously would be a question of clarification that should be addressed to the person who made the statement, and he may want to do that in due course.

But I will say that it is interesting that the members opposite argue that the Child Advocate would somehow not be independent and spent hours and hours and days and months debating a bill saying that the Child Advocate would not be independent, and now that we have the first public action of the Child Advocate demonstrating clearly the independence, that is not recognized or acknowledged by the member opposite.

Recommendations

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Could the Premier explain to me then, please, why he is criticizing our position when the Children's Advocate printed a letter making a recommendation to the minister which the Legislative Assembly was totally unaware of until we obtained a copy of this letter, in spite of the fact that I asked the minister in Estimates if he had made any recommendations, and the minister refused to answer the question?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we do have an opportunity to get advice from people from a wide variety of sources. The Child Advocate obviously did not address the issue as to how it could be that Manitoba has the third highest, even after the decreases that are being spoken of, level of support for its foster children in this entire country; how that could be inadequate compared to Saskatchewan, in which the per diem rate is \$3 a day less than the rate in Manitoba, even after the reduction that is spoken of; how that could be adequate to meet the needs of the children of Saskatchewan.

Perhaps the Child Advocate would want to address some of those issues and would want to look at the policies of New Democrats in government and the lack of support, perhaps, that they provide for their children.

* (1015)

Proclamation of Bill

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell the House when his government plans to proclaim, by Order-in-Council, the Children's Advocate bill?

The Children's Advocate needs the mandated authority to carry out his mandated duties, and he needs to have the act in place to back up his authority to carry out investigations.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the minister.

Taxicab Board Government Confidence

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the taxi industry. What we have seen over the last number of years is a lot of confrontation between the board and the individuals that are working for and representing the taxi industry as a whole. We find that in fact it is exemplified when we see a bill that is going to have such changes to the act that it is going to have an impact on each and every driver in that particular industry.

My question to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger): Does he have confidence in the current board, in particular in Mr. Norquay, when there is an onus, there is a responsibility that the public's interest does have to be best served and you have to see co-operation? How can we see that there is co-operation when we have a bill of this nature that has been introduced—

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

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I had asked the member yesterday to have a little bit of patience. Within the half hour I will be giving second reading to the bill, and I will be giving additional information to the members of the House in terms of what we are trying to accomplish with the bill.

I want to assure members of this House, as well as the people in the taxicab industry, that this legislation that we are proposing, if there are areas that are going to be of concern in terms of how the industry is run, I am prepared to discuss that further. However, the cost-recovery aspect of it is something that I am not prepared to have any give on.

At the present time we recover only 50 percent of the costs of running the taxicab industry. We are going to full cost recovery on that. Part of the legislation will allow that to happen, and that is one area where I am not going to compromise on.

Bill 24 Amendments

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the minister asked me to be patient. What we are trying to point out is the fact that the minister did not consult with anyone with respect to this particular bill.

Can the minister tell me: Will the minister be looking at introducing amendments to Bill 24?

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would indicate to you that I will be calling the bill that the minister referred to in Orders of the Day. Indeed, if there are rules that we are trying to follow, I would say that already asking the minister to indicate whether or not he is going to bring amendments down, when indeed the minister has not even put second reading on the record, I say is highly out of order and I would ask the member to withdraw the question.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable government House leader, he has indeed informed the House now that they will be calling that said bill this afternoon after Question Period, so therefore the honourable member's question is out of order. The honourable member may rephrase his question if he so wishes.

Legal Notice Government Policy

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, maybe I can ask the Minister of Highways if in fact this is policy now from the government that our courts require that actual notice be given to parties in legal proceedings? The Taxicab Board—

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

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I hate to belabour this, but I find it ironic that we are trying to debate the bill before we have even given second reading on the thing. I mean, we went at this yesterday and did the same thing, and that is basically—he is taking

issues out of the bill before I have given second reading.

I have asked him, have a little patience. You know, I have an open mind to some of the issues in here, if there are major concerns. If he will listen and read my first answer, I think that should clarify it for him.

* (1020)

Legislation Consultation Government Policy

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, right to the point and very simple for the minister, is it the policy of this government to introduce legislation without consulting prior and then bring forward legislation and hope that nothing is going to happen? Is that the policy of this government?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I do not know which boards have more meetings and consultations than the Taxicab Board has had over the last three or four years in trying to resolve some difficult issues in there. How the member can stand here and say there has been no consultation—I have great difficulty with that.

Assiniboine River Diversion Government Spending

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the Environment department for its work and recognition today. It should be congratulated on ozone-depleting substances. I have congratulated before and recognized the work in this area, and I would just hope that eliminating the division that deals with this program is not going to disrupt the successful start in this area.

I hope that the same close desire for change and foresight will be applied by this government in dealing with water. We have just learned that this government is subsidizing a huge irrigation zone in southern Manitoba which will drain water from other priority-use areas for water use.

Why, for the Minister of Environment, are we spending \$62 million on the Assiniboine Diversion if there is water available closer to this region that is being used for irrigation?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, if the member knows where that \$62

million is I would like to meet with her. If she knows something I do not know I want to talk to her.

Mr. Speaker, this is indeed serious. The fact is that while there are obviously lots of discussions and proposals in front of the government, there are certainly no decisions that have been made. The fact is that the proposals to become involved in the Pembina Valley diversion are being referred to the Clean Environment Commission.

Discussions, I am sure, will rage long and loud at that juncture, and I would invite the member and others who are concerned to marshal their arguments to be presented in that forum.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, the \$62 million is subsidy, taxpayers' money from various levels of government that is going to the Assiniboine Diversion.

Why are we spending this kind of money and why do we have the Agassiz Irrigation Project being used first for irrigation instead of drinking water as the priority use if we are spending money on the Assiniboine Diversion? Why is this water not being used for drinking water?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, there are always a number of options to any proposal or program that is put forward. I would assume that the member is very cognizant of the fact that the Winkler aquifer, for example, could be force fed or recharged, if you will, to try and enhance its capacity, but one of the concerns we have is that any recharge other than by the natural process that normally occurs is that recharge could contaminate that aquifer through spring runoff that could contain contaminants that would be virtually impossible to remove from an aquifer.

These are the kinds of problems and debates that enter into where a community gets its potable water from, how its future growth will be either possible or restricted.

I would invite the member again to make sure that those arguments are brought forward at the commission.

Agassiz Irrigation Project Government Subsidies

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): It is good to see the minister acknowledging problems with contaminated runoff water, but I would ask the minister: I think it is \$2.8 million for the Agassiz Irrigation Project. How much of this money is

subsidization for Manitoba tax dollars going to subsidize yet another irrigation scheme that is going to benefit private irrigators?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, again, there are programs and proposals that are put forward and requests that government become involved in the process, but any of this has to be recognized as proposals. Definite commitment of dollars is far from being consummated in terms of diversion or in terms of accumulation of dollars in the future.

I can tell you that we are not hiding anything in Clayton's sock, Mr. Speaker. Frankly, these things have to be very carefully reviewed, and environmental concerns are primary.

* (1025)

Clean Environment Commission Hearings Selkirk Involvement

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): My questions are for the Minister of Environment.

Studies have indicated that Selkirk will be negatively affected by the Assiniboine Diversion project, and given the major problem Selkirk has in terms of water quality, my question to the minister is: Why was Selkirk not included in the Clean Environment Commission hearings? Why were we shut out from voicing our concerns on this issue?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, there is no reason in the world why Selkirk cannot be involved in the presentations at the Clean Environment Commission. Every community at one point or another can make an argument that they should be involved in the process.

The Clean Environment Commission chose what they thought were the appropriate areas for discussion, and quite often there may be disagreement over that. It is quite legitimate that if that community feels that an additional site should be chosen for a hearing, they put that request forward. But the commission has reviewed this, and they have decided that the locations which they are using would be the appropriate ones. If the member or the community has other advice, let us hear it.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Speaker, that is small consolation to the community of Selkirk.

Department of Environment Winnipeg Raw Sewage Treatment

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Is the Minister of Environment still committed to ensuring that the City of Winnipeg disinfect and treat raw sewage dumped into the Assiniboine and Red Rivers?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, my hearing device does not work, and I was unable to pick up the first part of that member's question. If I could ask him—

Mr. Speaker: We will ask him to repeat it. The honourable member for Selkirk, kindly repeat your question, please.

Mr. Dewar: On behalf of the citizens of Selkirk, Mr. Speaker, I am just asking the Minister of Environment if his department is still committed to ensuring that the City of Winnipeg disinfect and treat raw sewage that is dumped into the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

Mr. Cummings: Yes, Mr. Speaker, that is an important question and one which we have been dealing with on an ongoing basis for the last three years, including the water quality study that was done and released by the Department of Environment.

I want to tell you, that is the direction in which the city is moving, where they have been asked for proposals on how they will develop the ability to provide that treatment.

Again, we recognize the problem and the severity of the problem. The balance will have to be struck, along with the capability of the taxpayers of the city to put those dollars into infrastructure. We believe that long-range water quality objectives that we have set and the requirements that this puts on the City of Winnipeg will lead to answer the very question the member has put.

Red/Assiniboine Rivers Water Quality Government Improvement Plans

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, that is the same answer he has been giving me for the last couple of years in this House, but what plans does this minister have to improve the water quality of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): First of all, Mr. Speaker, I think the member is ignoring the fact that it requires a little bit of previous

planning to commit several million dollars on behalf of either the City or the Province of Manitoba.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the water quality of the Assiniboine and any potential impacts that has on the city of Winnipeg and the downstream city of Selkirk is very much going to be part of an Environmental Commission review. The fact is that this review, while we are talking about 20 cfs of water, which is a reasonably small amount of water, what is happening is that it is enlarging into a much larger debate that members of the public would like to engage in.

If that is the case, then we are quite prepared to hear those arguments.

* (1030)

Taxicab Industry Government Consultation

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): My question is for the Minister of Highways.

Mr. Speaker, this minister has introduced a bill which will expand the powers of the Taxi Board. This expansion in power was done without consultation with all stakeholders. It appears from this bill that the new Taxi Board will give drivers more uncertainty for their rights and their responsibilities.

Can the Minister of Highways tell this House if he has done any consultation with the taxi owners and drivers board?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I personally have not had the consultation with the industry. I have a Taxicab Board that basically adjudicates the responsibilities of the taxi industry. There has been ongoing discussion with them.

As we move forward with this bill, obviously it is drawing a lot of attention, and there will be a lot of discussion. I am prepared to entertain that kind of discussion.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Highways give assurance to us before he brings in any amendment if he would meet with the taxi industry now and try to have a reasonable solution to this major problem?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the Taxicab Board is to basically administrate the responsibilities of the taxicab industry. I have had the confidence in that board and in the chairman over the last three, four years.

The one assurance I will give the member is that as this bill comes forward, as we debate this bill, if there are areas of major concern, we will take and address them to the best of our ability.

Taxicab Board Removal of Chairperson

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I do not have to tell the Minister of Highways what happened with the Tuxedo Taxi. The issue is very serious.

This chairperson has been a major source of irritation for a large section of my community, and this board chairperson has been causing them problems for the last five years, and he is not sending a good message.

Can the Minister of Highways now remove this chairperson from this board and try to resolve this problem?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, no, I have confidence in the chairman. If I did not, I would have removed him already. I believe that the chairman has been relatively sincere in terms of trying to address all aspects of the problems in the taxicab industry, and I am prepared to debate that further as we go through the bill.

Misericordia Hospital Job Loss Government Action

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, we are advised that another 41 people have been laid off at Misericordia Hospital. Last week, 141 people were laid off at St. Boniface Hospital, and in the month or two before that over 300 were laid off between St. Boniface Hospital and the Health Sciences Centre as the process of the government health reform speeds along.

Can the Premier advise the House what progress has been made to provide for the transition of these people and the services they offer to programs in the community? What programs are being offered as a result of the loss of these jobs and these services in the community?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, because I know a great deal of work is being done by the Urban Hospital Council and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in all of these matters and because I know the member would want me to give a full and complete answer for that question, I will

take that as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health.

Health Community Services Layoffs/Program Cuts

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): My supplementary, Mr. Speaker: Will the Premier review the minister's comments in the House yesterday when he said, all of those reports are coming in three, four, five and six months and then the community services will be in place? Will he also ask the minister, if he takes as notice or he is prepared to answer today, why are they laying off all these people and shutting down programs, presumably, when these agencies have not even reported the results of what they are doing to the minister or to the Health Reform committee?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, you see, the member is putting presumptions which may be beneficial to his attempting to create an issue—for instance, among other things, the reforms that are involved and the opportunities for more efficiency in the use of beds involved; for instance, that preoperative care will be provided on an outpatient basis. So that changes the number of beds allocated for particular purposes as part of what is being done.

So I do not want to get into the detail of it, because it is an issue, obviously, that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) should be charged with the responsibility to talk about publicly and to debate with the member. So, again, I will take his question, the substance of his question, as notice on behalf of the Minister of Health.

Education System School Dropout Rate

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, for the last two days, the Minister of Education has tried to evade any discussion of dropout rates in Manitoba. Statistics Canada study of 1991 shows—it is a study of 20-year-olds who had, quote, dropped out of school at some time during their school career—and it showed Manitoba at the Canadian average of 23.5 percent.

My question to the minister today, as it has been in the past, is: Does the minister accept this number for Manitoba? Is this the basis of the planning in the Department of Education?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the member has

obviously forgotten the answers that I have given her over the past few days. She has referred to studies by Statistics Canada, and I have said to her that there are many studies in the area of dropout rates, some of which attribute a dropout rate of 30 to 33 percent.

Mr. Speaker, in our department we have been looking at the graduation rates of students. The graduation rates, the most recent numbers, indicate 73 percent. I gave her yesterday, therefore, based on the graduation rates, a dropout rate, if you use that statistic, of 27 percent in Manitoba.

However, Mr. Speaker, as I have said to the member, please let us discuss exactly the meaning of dropout, because we know that some young people do leave school for a certain period of time, then they reintegrate into the system and they do successfully complete a high school degree.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I gave the minister the name of the study. Today, I gave her the definition of dropout when I read it out in quotations. I do not know how I can make it any simpler for this minister.

I want to ask the minister, could she explain why that Statistics Canada information, collected on a comparable basis in every province in Canada, shows that Manitoba has the highest dropout rate in western Canada and, in particular, why Alberta at 16 percent and Saskatchewan at 17 percent seem so much further ahead than Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, I have said to the member, she has offered one definition of the issue of dropout. We in Manitoba are attempting very carefully to look at our student retention, and we have, let me remind the member, established the first in Canada Student Support branch.

This government established that branch last year, and this government puts \$10 million into that branch. That branch focuses on the issues of students at risk so that we are doing something very concretely to assist young people to remain in school and complete their high school education.

Social Allowance Cutbacks Impact on School Dropout Rate

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, could the minister then tell the House again, because I really enjoy her explanation of this one, what will be the impact on the dropout rate of forcing 1,200

students on social allowance out of the classroom and onto the streets?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has explained a number of times, there were some very difficult decisions.

We did offer assistance to students on social assistance. It was the only program in Canada. This government has had to make some very difficult decisions, but we continue to work with students, particularly those students who are at risk, to see that they are able to complete their high school education.

Carter Report Government Position

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay).

Barley growers may go to spring seeding not knowing how their export barley will be marketed. They are concerned about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I want to ask the minister if he has finally taken a position on the Carter report. Will he finally stand up with Manitoba farm organizations who feel the Canadian Wheat Board is serving them very well and who do not want to see its mandate changed?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the farmers of Manitoba grow a lot of barley. We export it all over the world; 10 percent of it goes to the United States, 90 percent to the rest of the world. The Wheat Board has done a very good job of marketing over the course of the years.

Some questions are being raised about whether we are penetrating the American market to the maximum possible extent and getting the maximum return at the farm gate for our farmers, and I want to see our farmers get the maximum return at the farm gate.

I would like to remind the member what is really happening in the barley industry. Over the course of the last 10 years, we have seen the costs at the farm gate go up for such things as freight, elevation, cleaning, transportation to Thunder Bay, transportation on the Great Lakes. They have gone up 100 percent—100 percent, the costs have gone up.

Meanwhile, the value the farmer is getting at the farm gate has gone from less than \$3 down to about \$1.70. So you see our costs doubling at the farm gate and our revenues coming down.

I think it is very fair to ask whoever is marketing our barley that they maximize the return for the farmer. Otherwise, he is going to be driven out of business with this kind of arithmetic that is going on in the overall grain industry.

* (1040)

Plebiscite

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): A lot of farm commodity prices are going down. Is the minister blaming all of that on the Wheat Board?

I want to ask the minister if he is prepared to stand with Manitoba farmers who are asking for a plebiscite before any changes are made. Will he consider holding a plebiscite in Manitoba so Manitoba farmers can have a say on this and they can advise him on what their position is?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the questions I am asking are the ones I have just indicated. I want to know that we are getting the maximum return at the farm gate in terms of value and maximizing our penetration of selling our barley into the closest market.

The closest market for us is now to go south. We have a high-quality product. It is very expensive for us to export across the Pacific or Atlantic Ocean because of the distance. I want to know from the Wheat Board whether we are maximizing our return and maximizing our penetration.

I tend to believe that we are, but I want confirmation of that, and that is what I want to tell our producers out there in Manitoba, that we are getting the very best value and the very best penetration of market in a market that is very important to us today and in the coming years.

Aboriginal Farmers Government Action

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I want to ask the minister about another group of farmers facing difficulty.

What steps has the Minister of Agriculture taken on behalf of aboriginal farmers who, through no fault of their own, will not be able to get operating loans this spring? Is there any way, or has he taken any steps to ensure that emergency funding is put in

place so aboriginal farmers in Manitoba can operate this year?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I imagine the member is referring to a program that has been in place totally federally operated, totally federally funded. I would ask the member to direct that question to the federal government. They have made decisions.

In Manitoba, aboriginal farmers have the same access to programs as all other farmers in the province of Manitoba.

Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Dress Code Policy

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, when requested for a recent copy of the dress code policy of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation, an employee replied that they do not make their dress code available to the public when, clearly, Manitoba Lotteries is a public corporation financed by the public taxpayer serving the clientele of Manitobans.

My question, Mr. Speaker: Unless the honourable Minister responsible for Manitoba Lotteries Foundation has some skeleton to hide in the corporate closet, could she kindly table before this Assembly the dress code policy of Manitoba Lotteries Foundation?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Act): Mr. Speaker, I did indicate a few days ago that indeed the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation does have a dress code policy both for the Crystal Casino and for the new entertainment centres where they are presently hiring 200 employees. We will have 200 more employees in the workforce as a result of the initiatives of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the dress code, I want to indicate that the policy is exactly the same as the policy that presently exists at the Crystal Casino. We checked with the Human Rights Commission before that policy was put in place, and they have agreed that there can be a dress code policy and a hair length policy for males.

If in fact there is a concern or an issue that anyone has been discriminated against, there is the opportunity to appeal to the Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, can the honourable minister explain to this Assembly and to Manitobans

how this policy, which applies only to males, cannot help but be discriminatory?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated previously, before the policy was introduced by the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation they checked with the Human Rights Commission, and the Human Rights Commission did agree that a policy could be put into place.

There was an instance back in 1991 when someone from the Crystal Casino challenged the policy and went to the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Commission held up the policy of the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation as appropriate.

Mr. Santos: Can the honourable minister clearly state whether or not she is willing to table this policy before this Assembly?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated that there is a policy. It is a policy that is known, and if indeed someone feels that they are being discriminated against because of the policy, which the Human Rights Commission has said could be put into place, they have the ability to appeal.

Stubble Burning Government Policy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I understood from the policy unveiled by the Minister of Environment that stubble burning was not going to be allowed to take place after dusk.

Can the minister explain, therefore, why in a drive back from Dauphin to Winnipeg last night long after dusk, I saw seven fields that were quite frankly in full flame?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, if there were complaints that were registered, we would respond to them. If these fires were not extinguished within two hours of sunset, they were in violation of the regulations.

If the member feels that these were in flagrant violation, then I invite her to provide us with the information.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us whether his policy is going to be proactive or reactive with regard to the fires as a result of stubble burning?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the member's definition of proactive may well mean that we should

have environment officers in every waste disposal ground and patrolling the highways regularly at dusk to make sure that the fires are out. We probably do not have those kinds of resources. The announcement also stated that our increased area of vigilance would be in proximity to heavily populated areas. I suspect the reason that we did not get a complaint was because—or perhaps we did and I have not been notified of it. I suspect the reason, however, that complaints would not roll in from the situation that she describes is as a result of them not impinging on large urban areas. I can tell you that the focus is in the area immediately adjacent to where we are at this moment, and other areas, we obviously recognize that we will need to have assistance from the community in order to identify some of the violations.

Reporting Procedure

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House today what type of reporting procedure will be put into place so that individuals who want to report such clear violations will in fact have a number at ready disposal so that they can make that complaint?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, we have a 24-hour response line at the department, and we will be quite prepared to respond on that line. [interjection]

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) says this was in my own back yard. Perhaps anyone who sees somebody in that area burning would like to identify the problem, and we will act on it.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, Second Readings, would you call Bill 24, and then would you call Debate on Second Readings, adjourned debate, Bill 25, followed by Bill 23, followed by Bill 22.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 24—The Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that Bill

24, The Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les taxis et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, in bringing forward the information related to second reading of Bill 24, at the outset I want to say that the initial Taxicab Act was passed in 1935 and it has been a long time since that time, and a lot of changes should have really taken place.

The proposed legislation is directed in four general areas. Firstly, the bill proposes the repeal of U-drive licensing requirements. U-drive businesses or drive-yourself booking offices are presently required to hold a licence from the Taxicab Board. The license requirement was initially instituted as a regulatory compliance measure to protect the taxicab industry from illegal renting of a vehicle with a driver by a U-drive business. This measure is no longer necessary given the maturity of the U-drive industry. No U-drive operator has ever been subject to regulatory compliance action. Charges can be laid in the courts against any U-drive business that illegally operates as a taxicab business. The plans, in this regard, are proposed to be increased. Further, as the existing licensing requirement only applies to Winnipeg U-drive businesses, the industry views it as discriminatory.

* (1050)

Secondly, the bill provides broader fee powers to the Taxicab Board, and this seems to be creating some concern to some of my colleagues. Overall, government financial imperatives require that the board recover the full cost of the regulatory system it administers from the regulated industry. In addition, taxicab regulatory agencies in most other jurisdictions in North America operate on a full-cost recovery basis. In order to achieve full-cost recovery in an equitable manner, the board's present rather limited fee-making powers must be broadened.

Among the new fees contemplated are fees for applications, for reinspection of vehicles, and the training of taxicab drivers. Without such fees, the present annual fees paid by all licensed holders would have be increased to an unfairly high level. The board presently recovers about 50 percent of its cost in fees. Fees have already been increased

in two stages. A further one or two stages will allow full-cost recovery by the end of the fiscal year 1993-1994.

An increase in the board-prescribed fare of less than 1 percent will allow the industry to pass on the full cost of fee increases and new fees to taxicab users. I might add as an aside that with that 1 percent increase, and the Taxicab Board would probably be prepared for an increase to take place, this would put us in the middle category in terms of fees across the country.

Thirdly, the bill proposes an improved cost recovery regulatory compliance system. The board presently only has the power to suspend or cancel licences. It is proposed that the board be given the power to impose monetary penalties. I am prepared to discuss why we feel, because of the system the way it is, that if we suspend somebody, the effect is going to be negative either on the owner or the driver. The proposed legislation will result in improved regulatory compliance, a fairer compliance system and recovery of the cost of board disciplinary measures from operators who contravene the regulations, rather than the industry as a whole.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the bill contains a number of amendments to update and improve the legislation. I repeat again, The Taxicab Act was enacted in 1935. The board's procedural and regulation-making powers are inadequate in light of the developments in administrative law and in the industry since that time. The proposed amendments, in this regard, will reduce the likelihood and the costs of court challenges and will allow the board to more effectively fulfill its mandate.

The act presently does not provide for an appeal. The proposed legislation provides for an appeal directly to the Court of Appeal, with leave, on a question of law or jurisdiction. In addition, the fines for violations of the basic requirements of the legislation are proposed to be updated, including the fine for failing to pay a taxicab fare. This is something that I think the taxi drivers have always been concerned about. A number of amendments of a housekeeping nature are proposed, as well, including amendments to make the wording gender-neutral throughout the act.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, this legislation will eliminate an unnecessary regulatory burden, will allow the termination in an equitable manner of the

subsidy of the taxicab regulatory system paid by the taxpayer, and it will improve the effectiveness and fairness of taxicab regulation to the benefit of the citizens of Winnipeg and of the majority of the taxi industry participants who willingly comply with regulatory requirements.

Mr. Speaker, as I have in the past, I will be pleased to provide the honourable members a table prepared by my staff that sets out the existing and proposed provisions and explains each amendment in detail.

As I have done in the past when I have brought forward legislation, I am prepared to have two spreadsheets for the critics that I would like to hand out. I want to again offer the fact that if there are areas of major concern that I am prepared to, through the course of the debate and the hearing process that we will be going through, look at it to see whether there is any way that we are imposing conditions that are not acceptable to the industry.

However, I repeat, as I did in Question Period, that we are on the course of cost recovery and we will be moving in that direction.

Just a few additional comments—I am concerned to some degree by the fact that this will again, I suppose, bring to the fore the concern that the industry has had with the chairman. In my discussions with the chairman over the many years and the many issues that have come forward, I have always felt, in spite of the criticism that comes from the industry, that he has been a very sincere individual in terms of trying to be fair and equitable.

Anybody who knows the chairman, Mr. Don Norquay, if they have ever had anything to do with him, they cannot help but agree that he is a fair individual. That does not mean that everybody necessarily likes him, but his fairness is one thing that I will certainly defend at any given time.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, I am prepared to take and listen to what comments the opposition members have, and I am prepared to take and work with this bill, as I have with others, to try and give as much care and consideration as we move through the process.

Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, speaking to this bill, I want to say that we have watched the government operate with the taxicab industry for the last five, going on six years,

and fairness must be a guiding principle for whoever is in government for the people of Manitoba.

I believe that this government has not operated fairly with the taxi operators of Manitoba. I believe that this bill is a manifestation of a very unfair policy for people that have put their livelihoods on the line and work 16 hours a day and seven days a week on behalf of a very tough, competitive industry.

I have listened, Mr. Speaker, to taxicab drivers and operators and owners that have been put in a very difficult position with policy decisions, some of which are reflected in this bill, that this government has implemented in the taxicab industry.

If it was not for just a "circumstance" of an education and training grant, we may have seen a company named Tuxedo Taxi, supported by this government, come into operation at a differential rate from the regular operators. How can that be called fair in terms of decision making from this government?

If you do not have a level playing field to get in, how is it fair for the other people to compete? Why do we see the government bending over backwards in terms of their decision making to help one group of entrepreneurs over a group of existing people, small operators, depending on their livelihood in the taxicab industry? Why do I have to listen to operators, from whatever company, tell me, and when we investigate it, that this thing has been unfair?

This minister I respect as a fair person, so I do not understand why he is doing it. He must be under instructions from the Premier (Mr. Filmon), who has his own contacts in the business community, because I cannot understand. It is not part of the fabric of what I would consider being fair decision making.

So, Mr. Speaker, over a period of time, the people, the individual operators who have put their livelihood on the line have gone and used our democratic system to deal with the decisions that have been placed before them, the roadblocks that have been placed before them. They have been very unfair roadblocks, but they have used our systems and our democratic processes to try to challenge those systems.

They have gone to court, and Justice Monnin in his last decision quite rightly said the board has no authority to implement a partial decision. The board has no authority. So they won. The individual, the

small person, the small operator, the David beat Goliath and, Mr. Speaker, you are Goliath. Make no doubt about it, the Conservative Party, the Conservative government is Goliath and David is the operator out there trying to make a living with one or two or three cabs under very tough conditions.

* (1100)

I am on the side of David on this one; we are on the side of David. We are not on the side of Goliath, because it is not fair—it is not fair.

I really worry about the motivation that is involved in taking these operators on. I really want to know the subconscious motivation that is going on right now in terms of these operators. I cannot go any further than that in my comments about motivation, but it disturbs me beyond just this bill. It disturbs me greatly when I consider what is going on with these people.

Mr. Speaker, so we were lucky on Tuxedo Taxi, because we had raised this question in the House and our critic had raised it and the Liberals have raised it. We had raised it for four years. Why, when the unemployment rate is going up, why, when the population is going down, why, when bankruptcies are increasing, why, when business activity is going the other way would you increase the number of operators? Why would you do it at an unfair fee?

That is not the way. The minister would not want to see a situation where one sugar beet producer got one fee to get in and another sugar beet operator in another constituency or another area got another fee. Is that the Conservative philosophy? Is that the policy of the Taxicab Board? Tuxedo Taxi gets one deal to get in and the existing operators who work 16 hours a day, seven days a week, have to pay a much larger fee? Is this the free enterprise system that we hear about? Is this the level playing field? Is this fair?

So why are we having this bill after the government lost the court decision? Who is pulling the chain of the Premier to get this preferential treatment for the luxury cab situation to do out of business those owner operators? Who is calling the shots? [interjection]

Well, you know, the Deputy Premier here has one of his usual articulate speeches, a couple of grunts in the middle of the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. It is disgusting. It is always disgusting in this Chamber

when we are participating in an exercise to do somebody in at the benefit of a few others who are being enhanced by government policy.

I am going to tell this minister, we are not going to sit by and let him pass what he considers to be a little technical bill to participate in the exercise of antifree enterprise, antifairness and questionable policies in terms of the taxicab industry. I do not know who is pulling their chains, which business operator is next in line at the trough to get preferential treatment so they can do under the other people, but we are not going to sit by and let it happen. We are not going to sit by.

Mr. Speaker, we will be dealing with parts of this bill, in the principles of the bill, but the government should have left Judge Monnin's decision alone. The government should not have created two abilities to access cab licences. The government should respect the principles that they allegedly articulate—competition, fair competition, I guess would be the operative word. As I said, you would not have one charge to access a sugar beet program for one group of farmers and another policy to access sugar beet farming for another set of farmers, and that is what we believe is behind this bill. Make no mistake about it.

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

We do not think it is improving the quality of taxicab services in Manitoba. We do not believe it is improving the quality of decisions of the Taxicab Board. We do not believe it has anything to do with dealing with technicalities in the act. We believe it is a lobby group that has influenced this government to establish an unfair playing field at a time, Madam Deputy Speaker, when the cab industry by the lack of economic performance in the province is in more serious challenge than less.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me deal with some specifics of the bill. The restriction of the courts is one which concerns me. Why would this government restrict the ability of courts to make legal decisions? If the Taxicab Board is independently appointed and is wrong on their decision, why is the Court of Appeal being restricted on what it can look at? I suggest to the minister it is because Judge Monnin said, on page 24 of his decision: It is only when it becomes obvious that it cannot implement the complete decision did it come back with a severance tack in July '91. To say now

that the issue of compensation is of little importance and is not part of public convenience and necessity, review process leaves me somewhat incredulous.

The compensation fund was clearly a significant component of the complete decision, and it would be unfair to allow the board now to sever its decision and proceed only with the increasing of quotas without having to implement at the same time its compensation recommendation.

So the minister then says in the House today that the board has been, quote, reasonable—relatively reasonable I think were the words he used—yet the judge in an independent decision clearly stated the board has not been reasonable. I think that the minister should be looking at this decision and not changing the goal post, Madam Deputy Speaker, but rather changing the process under which fair decisions are made, changing the way in which those decisions are made instead of changing the rules.

I want to deal with another issue. It is customary in this House for legislation that is going to be proceeded with, there is a consultation with those people directly affected. If you are going to bring in legislation on beekeepers, you talk to beekeepers. If you are going to bring in legislation dealing with fur trappers, you talk to fur trappers. You should talk to them. It does not mean you are going to do everything they say, but you should listen to them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was at a forum with you last week with the Real Estate Board where you indicated that there was a committee of the Conservative Party that reviewed all legislation. In fact the Deputy Speaker is on that committee. The Finance minister (Mr. Manness) is on that committee. The member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) is on that committee. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) is on that committee. I remember you telling the real estate agents that we consult with people before we bring legislation in this House. We consult with those people before we bring any legislation through our internal committee. You know what? That is a good idea. The Minister of Finance is the deputy chair of that committee. The Deputy Speaker is the chair of that committee. The member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) is on that committee. The member for Highways (Mr. Driedger)—I do not know whether you are on the committee or not. The internal committee of the Conservative Party can review legislation.

An Honourable Member: The co-chair is Emerson.

Mr. Doer: Ah, the co-chair is Emerson. Okay, you are the deputy chair, are you not?

An Honourable Member: No, we are both co-chairs.

Mr. Doer: Two co-chairs and a chair. No, you are both co-chairs. The bottom line is, there is a six—

An Honourable Member: We all work together as a team.

Mr. Doer: Well, I am glad we got this on record. There is a six-person committee of the Conservative caucus to look at all legislation. The Deputy Speaker said at that meeting of real estate agents—and we were all there, I was there with John Harvard and Jim McCrae, the Minister of Justice, and the Deputy Speaker was there, and we had a good panel with the real estate agents.

The commitment was made there at that meeting—I am sure this is a commitment that Conservatives make everywhere they go—that people will be consulted before legislation is brought into this Chamber and, furthermore, people most directly affected will be consulted before legislation is brought in this Chamber. Now we talked to taxicab operators yesterday, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they tell us that they were not consulted. So who was consulted—Tuxedo cabs, some other entrepreneur who wants to come in at a lower rate? Who was consulted?

So I suggest to you that whoever is on that committee did not force the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) to follow through in the internal regulations of the Conservative caucus to consult with people who are directly affected, because cab operators were not consulted about this bill and the impact of this bill. Madam Deputy Speaker, there are all kinds of issues of the costs of doing work at the Taxicab Board. There is the whole issue of fairness.

* (1110)

We believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this government has a policy for the last five or six years that has not been fair to cab operators. We believe that the buck stops at the minister's desk on providing fairness. It is up to this government and this minister, not just this minister, this Premier (Mr. Filmon), to have a fair system because we suggest that there are forces beyond the minister.

We would ask the government to withdraw this bill, start all over consulting fairly with the people of Manitoba directly affected, and develop a cab policy that is fair for the operators, fair for the public and enhances our community, not a policy that develops one system for the entrepreneurs that are close to the government and another system for the small-business people who are operating cabs in the province of Manitoba and have to operate them with a very unfair advantage that has been advocated by the Progressive Conservative government and the Progressive Conservative Party.

Pull back this bill. It is not fair. Go back and do your homework and work in consultation with everybody affected, not with just a few. Thank you very much.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wonder if I might have leave to ask the minister a few questions on this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave of the House to permit the honourable member for Transcona to ask questions of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation?

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, that is fine. Are they of a technical nature? I suppose that is the question I have. If they are technical in nature, certainly that is fine.

Madam Deputy Speaker: So it is my understanding then, there is leave of the House to have the honourable member for Transcona pose some questions. Leave has been granted.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank members of the House for leave to ask the questions on this bill. It is very important to the taxicab industry in the province of Manitoba, in particular Winnipeg, because they have related their concerns to us on this legislation.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Reid: I am going to get to the question.

The members of the industry have indicated that this particular piece of legislation will transfer the administrative costs, as the member has indicated in his speech, to the industry itself.

Can the minister indicate why we are now wanting to transfer the administration cost, the full cost, onto the backs of the taxicab drivers in the city of Winnipeg here when other departments under his jurisdiction do not transfer that administrative cost to that particular portion of the industry, trucking, for example. Why is there that transfer of that cost?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Deputy Speaker, the question that the member raises, why we are trying to cost recover, the public has been subsidizing the taxicab industry, the administrative aspect of the board, to the tune of 50 percent for all this time.

What we are trying to accomplish in this bill is the full cost recovery, and there is provision in the bill as well for an increase in the rate so that it will not be a hit on the taxicab drivers themselves. It will be passed right through and, with that increase, we will still be in the middle of the pack in terms of the rates of taxicabs across this country.

Mr. Reid: There was also some concern in the industry about the appeal process. Can the minister indicate why the taxicab board is now going to be allowed to have the powers to make decisions, to render their decisions from their board, and that these decisions will not be challengeable. [interjection] This is law. It is on law.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will quote the section for the purpose of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) then if—

Point of Order

Mr. Manness: Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish the NDP House leader were here. He would call his own member to order.

When this House grants leave, particularly the government, for members opposite to put questions, it is specifically to deal with an issue of technicality, nothing more, and the member is trying to introduce debate, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will ask the minister not to answer that question, indeed, if the member does not come to order.

He has plenty of time in his debate to lay any issue he wants of policy and to lay before us the rhetorical questions that he is now but, when it comes to matters of specific questions, he either asks them now, Madam Deputy Speaker, or otherwise we go to debate.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government House leader indeed has a point of order.

It was my understanding that leave was granted by all parties to ask technical questions on the bill. This is not a time for debate, and I would ask the honourable member for Transcona to be very clear and specific with relation to the questions being posed to the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation.

* * *

Mr. Reid: I guess my inexperience in the procedures and rules of the House is showing through by the way I have worded my questions here and, if there is any misinterpretation, I apologize for the way I worded those questions. My intent was not to abuse the rules of the House. I am only looking for clarification, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Can the minister clarify for me then and the people in the industry why the board is going then to have the powers to impose penalties and that those penalties will then not be challengeable? It will only be the jurisdiction or the law that will be challengeable, not the penalties themselves.

Mr. Driedger: I thought I had clarified that in the spreadsheets, and I would encourage the opposition members to go through this in detail, and I have already indicated that I am prepared to have further discussion on the areas that are sensitive.

It is my understanding that at the present time there is no appeal to a decision of the Taxicab Board. We are making a provision so that there is an appeal mechanism in place, that it does not always have to go through a very expensive court situation.

So I ask the members that go through these things, if they have further questions, not necessarily in the House, I am prepared to dialogue on this and find out exactly what their concerns are, but I want them to go through the spreadsheets first. You know, we took a lot of time presenting this information and, once they have further questions on it, we will deal with it. They can raise them either through the debate, through the committee process, which we have after we go through second reading. I am sure there is going to be dialogue in between.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity to speak on the debate. I just want to put a few remarks on this debate because I think it is very crucial in terms of the many individuals who are

involved in the taxi industry and who I have dealt with for many years.

I have many personal stories about their problems and about their aspirations and how they really function and what they are achieving and what the government thinks of the Taxi Board and, to be fair, what the Taxi Board thinks should be achieved.

A major source of problem for the last five years in terms of the Taxi Board functioning has been the whole structure in terms of the Taxi Board chairperson and how the board has been functioning. The Taxi Board industry has been in and out of the courts. They have been in and out of the hearings. They had many problems.

We never said that we should not improve the structure of the taxi industry, but my main concern is, where is the fairness when people who are a part of industry are not being involved, when they are not being consulted? Once you sit down with them, probably some of the issues can be resolved in a very meaningful way.

That is what we are asking the government to do basically, to sit down with the industry and try to talk at each and every issue in a specific way and hear from all sides and see if we can reach a compromise. I think the best compromise will be to see what is going to be the best service for the people of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it has been a major problem in the community because every time they resolve one issue, the Taxi Board brings another one. It has been a major source of irritation and a major source of problem. I have been told many times, why are they being bothered, because they are probably, in some person's mind, they may be supporting one or two political parties.

I am not sure about that issue, but I think that is a fair question, and we are asking the government and the minister to be fair if, for example, they have supported it. I mean, we do not know who is voting for which party. I think they are being unfairly treated by a person who is in charge in that position and that person and the board itself has taken advantage of the situation. They have been unable to express themselves the way they should have.

Ultimately, what has happened for the last five years? The taxi industry has improved dramatically—no question. There have been more clean cabs on the road. There have been luxury cabs on the road. Drivers are more educated.

They are going through each and every part of the training the Taxi Board has put forward. So when they are abiding by all the rules and regulations, at the same time, if they are being bothered—we are not talking about one or two families, we are talking about at least 10,000 people who are directly connected to the taxi industry. There are about 2,000 drivers who are feeding their families.

They are trying very, very hard. We have tough economic times. We know the money is not there, but whatever they can they are doing it. Madam Deputy Speaker, basically, they are buying their jobs. All the families get together. They put in \$50,000 and buy a licence, and three members of the same family work a 24-hour shift. If they are making, say \$50 after an 8-hour shift, big deal. It is \$6 per hour.

* (1120)

I think what has happened is that you do not look at only one point of view. They are not taking the social assistance. They are not on other services. They are trying to have a meaningful job. If there are deficiencies, let us improve on those. But, if the Taxi Board chairperson is going to take advantage of the political situation which is, in my view, a major, major problem, he has made the personal issue that he is the best and he is going to fix people. That is very unfair. That is why I asked in Question Period for the removal of the board chairperson.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are very reasonable. We are not asking something which is not possible. If you look at the record of the whole Taxi Board industry, what the board has been doing, and harassing the drivers who sometimes cannot defend themselves. Somebody is not going to go to a court every second week when they do not have money to feed their families. It is becoming very, very distressing. That is why even though the issue was so important for five years, I thought that I should not be speaking on this because it will seem like I am just helping one part of the community. I cannot keep quiet. It is not right.

I think we are asking for fairness and the fairness is if we do not speak for the rights of people, then where is the fairness. It is very tough for them to understand the whole thing. We are not saying the government is doing it. I want to make it very clear. Directions are coming from a person who is probably biased in his opinion. I am saying probably biased. It will be a good opportunity for us

to examine that person during the committee stage, to ask him where he is getting all the information, who he thinks he is, trying to bother a community for five years.

It has come to a point that people are saying, to hell with it; probably I should sell the licence and do something else. How can you do it when you have taken the second mortgage on the house, when the four male members of the families are working together and they are trying to simply maintain a basic hourly wage. When you are putting so many obstacles, and what happened with the Tuxedo Taxi, every Manitoban knows about that. If, still, the government has confidence in this board's position, then I think I have a serious difficulty with that. I think it is very clear that there is a problem within the board and that is why they have been advising the minister.

To be fair with the minister, the minister did meet with the industry in 1988. But, afterwards, because at that time it was seen that the government was giving in, so they said, we do not want to touch it. That may be right in some circumstances but when the crucial decisions are made, then I think it is incumbent upon the government to meet with the people who are doing the job on a day-to-day basis. We are not asking him to meet with every taxi driver on the Earth. We are simply asking him to meet with a selected group of people who can make their representation so that their views can be heard.

Madam Deputy Speaker, by the end of the day there may be some issues which they think are important to them and they may not be a problem with the government, so that can be worked out. So simply we are asking the government and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) who has been a very, very fair minister, to deal with this issue on a fairness basis and try to make sure that people who cannot defend themselves, the government should defend them. It is a question of fairness, a question that if you are trying to take away from a section of communities something which they have chosen as their profession because of many difficulties—it is not that they have another 24 or 50 jobs lined up.

These are individuals who are very, very qualified. It is just a matter of economy, matter of demand and supply, and they are trying their best. So we are asking the minister to look at the whole issue in a very open fashion, and meet with them on a selective-group basis and try to reach to them. I am sure he will not be disappointed, because when

you sit with them half the problem is resolved then. Some of the animosity is taken away. Some of the misconceptions are taken away, and people feel more comfortable. If you do not do that, then you are making somebody more powerful, more arrogant, and that has been the case for some time now.

The only thing that we hear in some sections of the community is who is going to court now for the Taxi Board. Somebody is having a problem, they have to go here and there and all the time they are busy rather than trying to make their lives more easy. Their lives have become very, very difficult in some circumstances. Madam Deputy Speaker, I will simply request again to the minister and to the government of Manitoba to look at this issue in a very reasonable way.

They have done many positive things, but to have the confidence in terms of the many individuals who work within the taxi industry, for them all this talk about multiculturalism has no meaning if they are not going to get their jobs, if they are not getting the real thing. For them jobs are the most important thing. Getting a dance and all these dinner and dance things in the past is not going to do anything. That is why when we see many of these things happening, they are sending a really wrong message. They have done everything possible, whatever. If there has to be more improvement, so be it. If there has to be more upgrading of the driver's skills, so be it. If any improvement to improve the industry, it should be on a fair basis. If, for example, there is one issue here, that if the hearing—as the minister said, the government has been subsidizing 50 percent of the cost, but the same is being done on the Labour Board and the Workers Compensation Board. Why does there have to be a difference? I think that is the question of unfairness. Probably I am missing some explanation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, they have brought many issues to our attention, and certainly we will go clause by clause. I am not an expert on all those things, but I will be requesting the minister and the government of Manitoba and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to simply try to build their bridges, try to build the confidence, and try to send a message that the government is in charge, not the Taxi Board chairperson is in charge of the Taxi Board industry.

It is an industry for the people of Manitoba, not for a single person or a group of people who are making

decisions. When things are said and done, at the end of the day it is going to be the government who is going to be facing the issue, not the chairperson. If the chairperson has made his personal issue to have a sort of biased opinion about a given community, we cannot fight with him.

We cannot do that because that is not our rule. Our rule is to try to reach our message through the government of Manitoba and through the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) to tell this person that nobody is going to take it lying down because he was put in a position, and I think it is very, very irresponsible because when you keep on irritating a community for a long time, things can get worse.

I simply am asking the minister to meet with the Taxi Board industry and try to resolve this issue.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I was wanting to put a number of words with respect to Bill 24 on the record this morning.

I guess one could start off by saying that this particular bill, in my opinion, does not have any legitimacy in terms of being here today or yesterday. I will base it by saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, that in Question Period, I alluded to the fact that for the past four, five years, there has been a lot of confrontation within the industry, within the taxi industry.

* (1130)

Madam Deputy Speaker, it no doubt has frustrated a good number of people on both sides of the issue. You know, we have a Taxi Board which no doubt has been feeling very frustrated in terms of actions that are being done within the industry which do not necessarily fall in sync with what they believe is necessary.

On the other hand, we have the drivers, the owners, we have our two companies, both Duffy's and Unicity, that are concerned in terms of the direction that the board is taking the industry as a whole, and somewhat frustrated in the sense that we do not see a government that is ensuring that the industry is being given any sort of attention.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would suggest to you that when I received the bill—it was circulated in the Chamber the day before yesterday around three o'clock—one of the things I did is I took the bill and circulated it to a couple of individuals I know within

the industry because I was curious as to what they might have to say about the bill.

I was very surprised and shocked to find out that individuals within the industry itself had not been contacted, and when I asked the question yesterday of the minister, the minister's response was, well, you know, there has been consultation over the last number of years and so forth—tried to give the impression that in fact there was some consulting with the industry.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that has not been the case. You know, when you talk to the two major companies—Duffy's and Unicity—legal counsel and the general manager and some of the drivers and owners of the vehicles, and they say, we had absolutely no idea whatsoever that the government was going to be bringing in a piece of legislation.

This is not a housekeeping piece of legislation. This is a piece of legislation that, if passed, is going to have a dramatic impact on each and every individual that is directly or indirectly associated with the taxi industry.

Now, today in Question Period, the minister himself felt confident that the Taxi Board is doing a good job, that they in fact did the consulting. Madam Deputy Speaker, it was the minister who introduced this bill. The minister has a responsibility to ensure, when you bring in legislation, that you have had consultation not just with the board, that you have consulted with groups that are going to have an impact, that you would seek that input.

After all, it is in your best interest to ensure that you are bringing in legislation that is going to reflect what is in the best interests of the province of Manitoba and particularly in the city of Winnipeg in this case, Madam Deputy Speaker, in the talking that I have done.

The minister himself admitted in Question Period that he himself has not done any of that consulting. Why is that? How can the minister stand in the Chamber and say, we have before us a bill that is going to have such a dramatic impact on the industry, but I have not done any consulting, my department has not done any consulting, but not to worry, not to fear, the board, the Taxi Board has done their homework.

Well, I know full well and I am sure that the Minister of Highways knows full well what the relationship has been with the Taxi Board and the

industry as a whole. To say it has been rocky is to underestimate the problems that have been there between those two entities.

My first preference would be with Bill 24 that the minister withdraw it, that the minister hold off any debate, that he go back to the communities, to the industry as a whole and start hearing what they might have to say about Bill 24. I am sure, Madam Deputy Speaker, that if the minister sat down with the industry representatives that we would see some productive amendments coming out as a direct result and that in fact the bill itself is premature in the sense that had the minister done what virtually every other minister, no doubt, or at least I would like to think does, and that is consult with the interest groups and the individuals prior to the introduction of a bill.

I recall when I was the Housing critic when the former Minister of Housing brought in a fairly lengthy bill. He went out of his way to meet with a wide variety of interest groups. I have talked to many different ministers with respect to the formation of legislation and the importance of consulting. When you have interest groups that come before caucuses, both official and third party, they will tell you of the consulting and the lobbying that they are doing in order to ensure that their opinions are in fact being heard.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Highways could not stand up today and give us the assurance that the drivers and the owners and the industry as a whole had the opportunity to fairly express their opinions. He cannot do that. The most important aspect of the industry, the individual drivers and owners and the companies, have said that they do not know anything at all about this bill.

How can he stand up and say that this bill is good for the industry in Manitoba, because what he is basing his decision on is an individual chair of the Taxi Board. That chairperson has been in conflict, constant conflict, within the industry for years. I would argue, as the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) says, that is the major source of problem.

The Minister of Highways has a lot of respect and says he is a wonderful individual and if you sit down and you talk to the man you will find that what he is saying makes a lot of sense.

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you talk to the thousands of individuals who are going to have the

direct impact by this, you will find that what this bill is doing does not make a lot of sense.

So the minister does have a choice. There are a number of things he could do. Instead of standing up time after time and defending the chairperson or the current board, there comes a point in time when you have to make a value judgment saying, the system is just not working. You cannot operate on a confrontational basis for years and expect something productive to be able to come out of the industry.

I would suggest to you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I do not know what the relationship is between this government and the current chairperson and the board as a whole, but I would suggest to you, what is really needed is that that board has to be replaced, that Don Norquay is one individual who has caused a lot of hardship, whether one agrees or disagrees with what it is he is saying, that there is so much conflict there. It is not just one or two or three or four, we are talking about hundreds of individuals who are saying that what he has been doing and the hardships he has been causing are just not worth it. I have seen individuals sell plates just out of frustration because they do not feel there is any consistent policy that is being given, that there is no fair treatment.

What frustrates myself is, I have to ask the question: Why is it that it is this particular industry? I know this is a question that many people ask, and I do not necessarily care for some of the responses that have been there in terms of answering that question, and that is why I believe very much so that we have to change the board, and you have to replace Mr. Norquay as the chairperson of the board.

I would suggest to you that until you see those sorts of actions, we are going to continue to have conflict because the personalities that are there have demonstrated very clearly that they are not able to co-operate and work together in the betterment of the industry as a whole.

* (1140)

So if that means we have to make the changes at the board level and possibly make some changes in terms of representation from the industry, then so be it, but let us see some co-operation, Madam Deputy Speaker. You cannot say there has been co-operation when the board itself—and who knows where this legislation came from. The minister has

not indicated to us that in fact there was any co-operation or any input to the board with respect to this particular legislation.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) talks about conflict of interest. Well, there is a conflict of interest within the board in one sense. There are always going to be conflicts of interest. That is why interest groups are there, to lobby their interest.

If the board itself—and we do not know who came up with this particular bill. We know who is responsible for the bill, but I take it and I assume, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this bill came as an idea from the board. I hope the minister will correct me if in fact I am wrong, that if it was not, that this is not something that the board has come up with.

If it is, as I believe, the board that had the input on this bill, and the board is not co-operating at all with the industry as a whole, then I do not get a sense of feeling that there was any input from one major aspect of the industry.

If the board did not get that input, and today we had the minister responsible for the bill saying that he did not have direct input, well, I would suggest to you that all of the stakeholders in the taxicab industry have not been treated fairly. That is why, if that is the case, this bill should not be here today, the minister should be doing his homework and should have consulted with the different stakeholders in the industry prior to bringing in such legislation that is going to have such a dramatic impact on the industry as a whole.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it was interesting in terms of listening to what the minister had to say about the bill in introducing it for second reading. You know, what we see, in essence, is Bill 24 will broaden the powers of the board in many different ways. The minister tried to justify it by saying that, well, we are looking at trying to recover the full costs.

When the minister made that statement, there were a couple of things that came to mind for myself. You know, we have other boards, whether it is the Labour Board, the Workers Compensation Board, and that principle is not necessarily there. Yet, we are seeing the government taking a specific action that is going to prevent many individuals from being able to express a possible grievance or a complaint because of a fear.

It was interesting in the sense that the minister provided a spreadsheet, and I do give the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) credit. He is one of the

only ministers that actually provides spreadsheets and it is wonderful to be able to have that.

In one of the explanations, it talks with respect to the proceedings and this cost recovery and how we could save money. In terms of an explanation, it says: Proceedings before the board in the past have been unduly prolonged by frivolous and vexatious objections. The power to award costs would deter abuses of the process and thereby reduce the cost of board proceedings. When abuses do occur, the board will be able to recover the additional costs that have been imposed upon it.

What that is going to do, Madam Deputy Speaker, is it will prevent a lot of individuals from lodging complaints. Yes, there is no doubt about that at all. What concerns me is, who is to determine what is frivolous and what is not? This will prevent some individuals from being able to make that complaint. That concerns me because that complaint could be in the public's best interest.

Why would we hear a statement of this nature? I would suggest to you that if the board feels that there are a lot of frivolous complaints, well, why are there frivolous complaints?

Is there a problem, again, with that whole question of personalities that are involved? Is this legislation being brought forward today in order to try to ensure that the board is going to have the additional powers of being able to do whatever it wants and it does not matter what the industry is seeing? Is that the reason why we are having this particular piece of legislation?

Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that the recovery of the full cost justifies what the government is doing in Bill 24, and I believe that if the minister sat down and heard about some of these concerns from the industry or the stakeholders, the many different stakeholders that are out there, then in fact he would concur with that particular point. There are a number of things within the bill.

You know, our courts require that actual notice be given to parties in legal proceedings, that you have to be given an actual notice. In this particular bill it allows that the Taxicab Board can proceed as long as they believe that there has been deemed notice. That could be a rumour that is floating around the industry, it could be a newspaper report or a media report. This bill is going to require to pay all or parts

of the cost in respect to the hearings and investigations by the board, as I say, when similar investigations and costs are not charged by other boards that are out there.

This bill will eliminate the right to appeal decisions of the Taxi Board on the basis of administrative law principles and limits it only to the question of law or jurisdiction which, in essence, eliminates any rights of appeal at all.

That is wrong. What we are saying in other words is, you cannot appeal unless it is a question of process, and the legislation allows for the process for the board to be able to do whatever it is that they want.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill says that at a hearing by the Taxicab Board it is not necessary that a quorum be present when the decision is made. In fact, you do not necessarily even have to be there throughout in order to participate in the decision. Well, I see a lot of problems with that and have to question why it is that this government has gone ahead with accepting this bill without really understanding the impact. You know, yesterday I asked the questions with respect to other aspects of Bill 24.

One of the statements in terms of a request from this board is if you go out and you have to get the taxicab certified or checked by a certified mechanic. There is nothing wrong with requesting a certified mechanic in order to get, you know, the passage of the vehicle, but this piece of legislation goes a step further. It says that you have to get not only a certified mechanic, you have to get one that meets the approval of the board.

* (1150)

Well, what is next? If we apply the same idea and the same principle, are we going to say the same to individual doctors that go through Workers Compensation? Why would they have something of that nature? Why do you need to give the power to the board? Why not just say, a certified mechanic? You go further on in the bill, and it says at any point in time that the board can actually request for a statement of gross and net earnings and expenses from the drivers.

Well, it was just the other day when I was standing up inside the Chamber and I was asking the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to publicize businesses that were negligent in paying the retail sales tax. He stood up and he said, no, how dare the member for

Inkster ask that we do something of that nature. Then we have the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) who, on the other hand, is saying we want to give the board the opportunity to ask at any point in time what you are making, what your expenses are going to be.

Why do they need to know that, Madam Deputy Speaker? If the board wants to find out what demand is, find out how many calls are being placed into the different taxi firms. That is the way you do it. How do they justify asking that? Are they going to ask the same thing of other industries? Why do you put these double standards? Why are you picking on the taxi industry? How do you justify introducing a bill that goes this far? I think that it is unfair.

There are a number of things, if we were to go through this bill, virtually phrase by phrase, you will find that there are areas in here that the taxicab industry as a whole cannot accept. I believe very much so that had the minister done the consultation that we would never have seen a bill of this nature. I am not even convinced that the minister himself knows what it is that is in this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to emphasize the importance of the government ensuring that when it brings in legislation that it brings in legislation that is fair. This legislation, Bill 24, is not fair. If the government was wanting to do the honourable thing, it should withdraw Bill 24, bring it back to the table with other individuals who have just as much right as the Taxi Board to get input on legislation that is going to have such an impact on the industry that you have to have all of the stakeholders or input from all of the stakeholders before you do something of this nature.

I would hope that if the government does plan to continue on with Bill 24 and, unfortunately, I believe that it will, that it will be receptive to amendments, that it still is not too late to meet with the different stakeholders. I would encourage the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), as the minister responsible for this bill, that he does have an obligation to meet with the stakeholders. I would encourage him to do just that, to meet with them, to talk with them before we stop debate in second reading on this bill and to be prepared himself to introduce the amendments once we go into second reading if he decides not to withdraw this bill, because I am sure we will see a number of people coming for the public hearings. I am convinced that

if the government does not bring in amendments, there will be a number of amendments brought forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government could prevent a lot of fear that is out there in the industry by just sitting down, by talking to the stakeholders and coming up with some sort of a compromise which would make the legislation that much more acceptable. I do not think it is too late. I would have preferred to have seen the minister talk to the groups and consult with the groups prior to introducing the bill, but it is still not too late for the minister to sit down with the group and make the amendments that are going to be necessary, because the bill itself does have to be amended.

I will do what I can as a member of the Legislature to ensure that this particular bill does not pass as it is. There will be amendments I will be bringing forward—or if our critic brings forward, that I will be no doubt supporting or encouraging him to bring forward—because I feel very strongly on this bill for a number of reasons which I have earlier pointed out.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would conclude my remarks by saying to the government that they revisit what is inside Bill 24, consult with the people who are going to be impacted by this bill and come up with the necessary amendments to make it a better piece of legislation and seriously look at changing the individuals who are on the board itself because, obviously, over the last number of years, we have seen that the personalities that are there are not working together.

We need to ensure to some degree that there is a sense of co-operation, that you can sit down and get things done. That is very, very important and I personally do not see that with the current chairperson. I do not believe, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we are going to see that. A couple of years ago, we were in a different crisis within the taxi industry, when they wanted to increase the number of taxicabs within Winnipeg—and the fear that was put in the minds of individuals who had investments. I had individuals give me a call, who owned taxis, who said, you know, I have a \$50,000 investment in my taxi and if in fact the government materializes and comes through, or the board brings in and introduces these new taxis, it will bring down the price of my plate. This is more than one individual. This, again, was being perceived as the

chairperson's wishes and nothing more than that. It was widespread throughout the industry.

So I have to emphasize time and time again that the personalities, the problems and conflicts that are there right now I do not believe can be resolved, because they have consistently been there, that we have provided ample times and opportunities for those conflicts to resolve themselves and to see more co-operation because, not only does the taxi industry not benefit, nor does the public as a whole benefit. All individuals want to see the different industries throughout Manitoba prosper and for government to do what it can to ensure that there is harmony.

Well, the taxi industry can prosper under certain circumstances. The government has the responsibility to ensure, because they are responsible for the board, that there is some harmony out there, and there is no harmony out there. I would request that the government reflect on that and take the appropriate actions to ensure that we see more co-operation out there.

With those few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

* (1200)

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

Motion agreed to.

Bill 24—The Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

(continued)

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 25—The Public Schools Amendment Act (4)

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 25 (The Public Schools Amendment Act (4); Loi no 4 modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques) standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

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

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

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I had hoped, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I would not have to rise to speak on a further version of The Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment Act and consequential amendment. I had hoped the government would have by now come to its senses and recognized that the vast majority of Manitobans do not wish to have the laws changed, that the compromise that was worked out in 1987 and prior to that actually was a satisfactory compromise that had stood the province in good stead both in terms of service to the public, service to consumers and in terms of I guess practicality when it came to the operation of most businesses in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I had an opportunity some months ago to speak at length on the previous incarnation of this particular piece of legislation, Bill 4. Subsequent to its introduction, I also had the chance to talk to literally hundreds and hundreds of Manitobans about the possible implications, particularly for rural Manitoba and small businesses

in the province of Manitoba, about the consequences and the implications for their economies and their livelihood.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I began today's remarks by reminding members opposite that in 1987 when this debate last was presented in the Chamber there was a consensus that it was not a matter of the government introducing a bill on Sunday closing that was supported only by the majority government. The fact of the matter is that both opposition parties, the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) who was then the lone Liberal in this House and all of the Conservatives, supported the amendments introduced in 1987. I think it is instructive to know what those amendments did. All they did was maintain the status quo and ensure that the legislation which provides that there can be Sunday shopping but only in establishments that provide essential services and in other small businesses where there are no more than four employees.

This had two benefits. Number one, it did allow businesses to open to provide services to consumers, to provide goods to consumers, on a limited basis. Perhaps more importantly, for the business community, it allowed the small businesses to have an advantage over larger businesses. It allowed the individually operated, the individually owned small entrepreneur a chance to compete in the marketplace without the unfair and undue influence of the major chains and the multinationals that competed for the same goods or the same services.

It allowed the small retailer an opportunity to market his wares or her wares without competing against the SuperValus and the Canadian Tires and other multinationals, which already have a substantial advantage in the marketplace, used solely to their fiscal power, their advertising power, their financial position and I guess in many respects their clout as parts of an integrated, large-scale national conglomerate. So we have the small-business person in Winnipeg or the small-business person in Dauphin or Carman or Steinbach having really an advantage on Sunday in marketing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what has changed since that consensus? What has changed since 1987, since we agreed in this Chamber that we wanted to maintain the status quo, that we wanted to protect rural economies, that we wanted to protect small business in the province of Manitoba? What

has changed since the Minister of Health, the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), stood in this House and said no to wide-open Sunday shopping, said, no, we are not going to sacrifice small business, we are not going to sacrifice rural communities, we are not going to sacrifice rural businesses to the likes of SuperValu and other chain stores?

I am not arguing that SuperValu is somehow doing something untoward. Madam Deputy Speaker, they are doing what every large multinational corporation does. They take advantage of their buying power. They take advantage of their volume. They take advantage of their integrated structure from the farm gate to the dairy product shelf. They take advantage of their structure, but we also know in the province of Manitoba that the vast number of jobs are created by small businesses.

I had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers who explained in a very succinct and direct way what the nature of the difference is between, for example, large multinational grocers and independent grocers.

According to the independent grocers, Madam Deputy Speaker, companies like Costco, for example, or SuperValu can produce \$500 and more per hour of employee time. In other words, their sales volume can be \$500 and more per hour. In a small independent grocery store, the merchant is more likely to sell \$50 worth of goods per employee hour. So it is very easy to see why the small business community employs more people in terms of the value of goods sold than the large multinationals.

So this issue which tends to support the interests of the larger retailers that already have a competitive advantage, so to speak, it disadvantages the small business community. It disadvantages those very entrepreneurs, those very business people who supply the majority of jobs in the province of Manitoba.

We need a balance. We need a balance between the interests of the consumer as consumers and the interests of citizens who need employment, the interests of citizens who want their sons and daughters to be employed, the interests of small business which this government and most

Manitobans would argue is the backbone of our provincial economy.

* (1210)

There is a legitimate argument to be made in support of small businesses in opposing this legislation. I am not alone on that. I have letters from virtually every chamber of commerce in the province of Manitoba saying this is not a good idea. I will just quote one example, and it comes from the Morden District Chamber of Commerce. Now, would you not know it, Morden, I believe, is in the member for Pembina's (Mr. Orchard) constituency, the member who in 1987 said under no circumstances would he surrender the issue of Sunday shopping to the multinationals, that he would stand up for jobs in his constituency. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Morden Chamber of Commerce is now calling on the member for Pembina to stand up for his constituency, stand up for the communities in his constituency.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Morden group is saying that they are opposed to the Sunday shopping legislation and they want hearings. They want to have the issue of Sunday shopping raised in rural Manitoba so that they will have a chance to present directly their view to the government and to the standing committee, because to date the government has buried its head on this issue. It has refused to listen to the people that elected them on this issue. They have shown a degree of cowardice that has not been seen in this Legislature for some time.

We have asked repeatedly the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson), the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) to hold public hearings in rural Manitoba so that they will have access to the standing committee members and share their view.

This particular letter suggests that at least one hearing be scheduled in this region of southern Manitoba, and we would be pleased to organize this locally for you.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Morden Chamber of Commerce has now said that they are prepared to work with the government to ensure that local views, the views of small businesses in that community and surrounding communities, could be heard on this issue.

I have another letter from the Town of Carman. It says: The Town of Carman at a regular meeting

held Thursday, January 28, 1993, discussed further the issue of Sunday shopping. Once again, we urge the provincial government to review their position on this issue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Town of Carman recognized that the Sunday shopping legislation, which would in effect impose an obligation on many small businesses in Winnipeg, but also in the surrounding areas, to begin to compete on Sunday, and asked the government to study the issue, to meet and consult, and to gather some facts on the impact of this legislation on rural Manitoba before they proceed.

The government has once again refused to listen to their own constituents, listen to the small business community, and that is unfortunate.

I have similar letters from the mayor of Selkirk, the Town of Selkirk, from individuals across Manitoba. Many, many municipal councillors wrote to me and expressed their concern over the government's intentions. A councillor from Teulon, Manitoba—the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), I believe, represents Teulon—writes to say that he does not want to see Sunday shopping and that he and a number of his councillors are going to be making representation, I guess, to the government to try and bring them to their senses.

Madam Deputy Minister, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) when he spoke on this legislation, talked about a level playing field, the need to create a level playing field for the large retailer. The member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) was not in this Chamber in 1987 when this debate was first addressed. His own colleagues argued that that level playing field was going to be a minefield for small businesses in the communities of Winnipeg, but also in surrounding communities and rural communities. But creating this level playing field for the large retailers was creating a minefield that was going to destroy many jobs in rural Manitoba, many businesses, and in some cases the very viability of some communities.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, let me explain for members, some of whom seem to have forgotten about the life cycle, the economic cycle of a small community. Everyone on that side knows, and if they cared to, they could have listened to a community like Cartwright, Manitoba, which is not very far from where I grew up, as they talked about the

importance of their school, the community school, to the life of that community. Well, of course, in importance the school is probably one of the principal institutions that keeps a community alive. Then, of course, we have health facilities, another government institution, and, of course, we have the small business community.

Those three things determine the health and the viability of small communities and undermining the business community has a detrimental impact almost immediately on the small community. As soon as you can no longer access services in your community, whether it is a local hardware, a small-town hardware—and many of you, most of you, hopefully all of you at one time or another have been in a small town and seen what a small-town hardware looks like and know that when that service is gone the likelihood of individual citizens, community members travelling elsewhere to pick up hardware, to pick up the things they need to paint their garage or fix their lawnmower or whatever it is, it increases the likelihood that the grocery store down the street is going to be the next victim. It increases the likelihood that the small restaurant, the small service sector business down the street is going to be the next victim. It is a domino effect that occurs in small towns all the time.

What the chambers of commerce across rural Manitoba, what the Union of Manitoba Municipalities is saying across Manitoba, what many individual councillors are saying and community leaders are saying is that this is the beginning of a domino effect on their communities which is going to be devastating.

I do not sense from the government any concern over this particular point of view. I do not sense any concern that this is likely to happen over the next two, three, four, five years as a result of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the government, not wanting to further offend rural communities and rural small businesses, has now abdicated total responsibility for the implications of Sunday shopping. The government announced that they were going to do Sunday shopping on a trial period. Certainly if you read the minister's remarks you would believe that the government was committed in principle to wide-open Sunday shopping. Maybe all the representations from the chambers of commerce and the communities that I have referenced, Morden and Selkirk and Carman and the many others that

have sent in submissions to the government asking them to reconsider, just maybe this has had an impact.

Unfortunately, although it may have weakened the government's resolve to promote this as a position of the government, it did not lead them to the logical conclusion that rural Manitobans in the small-business community in this province were not prepared to accept this as a compromise, as an alternative to the existing compromise in terms of retail closings on Sundays.

* (1220)

So, Mr. Speaker, what did the government do? Again, in a rather spineless way, the government has said, well, we can absolve ourselves of all responsibility of the consequences. In other words, we do not have to care whether small businesses close in Beausejour or Lac du Bonnet or Portage la Prairie or Teulon or Gimli or the other communities, very small communities surrounding large urban centres like Winnipeg. We can give the responsibility to the municipality and say, well, it was not us; we did not do it.

Everyone knows that the primary push for this particular initiative came from the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. We had a chance to meet, our caucus met with the Winnipeg Chamber not too long ago, at which time they reiterated their strong support for wide-open Sunday shopping and the government's legislation.

Of course, that ignores the fact that allowing the City of Winnipeg to determine its own agenda with respect to Sunday shopping essentially ties the rest of rural Manitoba to that agenda. I cannot believe that the minister responsible for this legislation, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) or the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), does not understand that if the City of Winnipeg says yes to wide-open Sunday shopping, the small towns around Winnipeg have virtually no choice.

If their merchants out of necessity want to try and maintain market share they are going to have to open Sunday. If the small hardware in Beausejour, in the member for Lac du Bonnet's (Mr. Praznik) community, believes that it wants to compete, that it has to compete to survive, it is going to open Sunday. The same is true for the member for Morris (Mr. Manness), whether it is the community of Winkler or one of the other small communities in his

area. If the City of Winnipeg decides, because it is the economic magnet, that it is a tremendous engine for the provincial economy, but it also works to the detriment many times of the rural economy. It is a draw that encourages and attracts people from rural and northern Manitoba to spend their dollars here rather than the local economy.

That is what the Chamber is worried about. That is what the Union of Manitoba Municipalities is worried about, the government's abdicated responsibilities. Somehow they want us to believe, and they want people in rural Manitoba to believe, that when Winnipeg decides it is going to allow it, that they had no part in it, there was nothing they could do.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they could do something. They could show some leadership. They could show some economic leadership. They could start discussing alternatives to wide-open Sunday shopping to improve the business climate in the city of Winnipeg, to improve the circumstances of retailers in Winnipeg, to improve the circumstances of small businesses in Winnipeg as well.

Instead, they believe they have chosen the simple solution, a solution that will undermine small business in Winnipeg and, perhaps, destroy communities in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this is not creating a level playing field. This is simply caving in to the interests of the multinationals who already have many advantages in terms of the operations of their businesses, marketing advantages and integration advantages that no small business could every hope to compete with, that no small business would ever want to pretend that they could be on a level playing field with these companies.

There are many other elements of unfairness in what is being proposed. I do not remember the last time I saw the president of SuperValu at the checkout stands on Sunday. I do not remember the last time I saw the president of Eaton's or members of the board of Eaton's at the checkout stand. I remember the last time I saw the small-business owner in little stores in Winnipeg at the counter on Sunday. Every small-business owner in this province is now going through that dilemma, as are members of their family, who tend to support these businesses. They are saying, we have no choice; we now have to give up our Sundays.

I can tell you that the guys who run Canadian Tire, the family that owns Canadian Tire is seldom in Canadian Tire on Sunday working, but the small business community is, and now we are going to say to the city of Winnipeg, okay, you decide. Because of the strength of your muscle in Manitoba's economy, we are going to say, let you decide. To heck with what the people in Portage want or the people in Oakville, or the people in The Pas or Flin Flon or anywhere else, we are going to make it difficult for you to choose to do other than open.

Mr. Speaker, it is not enough just to be open. When I met with the chambers of commerce and representatives of small business over the last several months, and I was in places like Russell and Dauphin and Gimli and Steinbach and Lac du Bonnet, in Carman and Portage, I can tell you that opening is not enough.

Most of the small businesses in rural Manitoba will tell you what we told the government, when they announced this legislation, that the opening on Sunday is not going to create any additional economic activity. All it is going to do is redistribute the retail dollars that are already being spent in their establishment, and it is going to create additional overhead costs which are going to make it less profitable to operate in rural Manitoba than it ever has been before.

That is what businesses told us. I was in Carman approximately two months ago and met with 14 business representatives, small-business representatives, community representatives, and we talked about the likelihood of opening on Sunday being of any benefit to the small business community in that centre.

Mr. Speaker, the general consensus was that the majority of businesses are not going to see any benefit from Sunday opening, that it will simply represent additional overhead costs, additional business costs that are going to make it more difficult to survive and less profitable. I cannot believe for a minute that was the intention of the government.

So it leads me to ask the final question which virtually every letter that I received on this issue raised. Why is the government not prepared to do the kind of economic analysis, the independent analysis that will give them some answers to the questions—what is going to happen to jobs in rural Manitoba; what is going to happen to rural

businesses; what is going to happen to rural communities if we proceed along this course?

Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada reported only a few days ago, yesterday or the day before, that retail sales in the province of Manitoba dropped in February. That does not indicate any kind of surge in retail spending as a result of Sunday shopping. It indicates quite the reverse. It indicates that the concern being expressed by those who are more cautious when it comes to Sunday shopping is correct. So why the haste?

The government cannot claim in any legitimate sense that it did any kind of analysis, that it can show that there is going to be a net economic benefit to the province with this legislation. So the question is why do it? The question is if there does not appear to be any net economic gain, if it is not going to increase retail sales, if it is not going to promote the spending of disposable income on the part of individual consumers, why do it?

We know, on the other hand, that there are many who are legitimately concerned about the impact on jobs and business in rural Manitoba. Certainly, there are many more people concerned about the possible negative effects of this legislation than believe that there is a possible net economic benefit. Why do it? They have on balance we believe—and I think that most municipal and business leaders believe that on balance there is going to be negative consequences to this legislation. My question is very simple. Why do it?

Mr. Speaker, finally, I would like to see the government screw up its courage finally and agree to hold a series of five or six standing committee hearings in rural Manitoba. The government continues to push on with this. They have transferred the responsibility now for making the decision ultimately to the municipalities by giving them power in this legislation to amend their by-laws

to allow Sunday shopping under the conditions detailed in the legislation.

Are they now going to have the intestinal fortitude to go and ask those people what they think, to allow them to give the government constructive advice on what the implications are going to be and their views on the impact of this legislation, or are they going to continue on their secretive self-serving approach to this legislation by allowing one group in the main, the City of Winnipeg, to dictate the economic fortune of rural Manitoba, because that is what we are talking about. We are talking about the single largest municipality in effect dictating the future, the economic future, of many individual businesses, many individual communities across rural Manitoba and even stretching, Mr. Speaker, I should think, into northern Manitoba.

We all know—and groups like the Flin Flon Chamber of Commerce have recognized for a long time—that much of the disposable income in communities like Flin Flon and Thompson and The Pas are spent in the city of Winnipeg and large urban centres. To the extent this induces them to spend more, it even impacts on communities quite remote from Winnipeg. I am concerned about the impact of that on many of the communities in my constituency and my colleagues' constituencies across rural and northern Manitoba, even if this government is afraid to stand up for its rural constituents.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Flin Flon will have 13 minutes remaining.

As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, April 23, 1993

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Student Social Allowances Program	
Martindale	2009
Cerilli	2009
Friesen	2009
Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding	
Dewar	2009

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding	
Hickes	2009
Wowchuk	2009
Martindale	2010

Oral Questions

Core Area Agreement	
Doer; Filmon	2010
Children's Advocate	
Martindale; Filmon	2011
Taxicab Board	
Lamoureux; Driedger	2012
Bill 24	
(Ruled Out of Order)	2013
Legal Notice	
Lamoureux; Driedger	2013
Legislation Consultation	
Lamoureux; Driedger	2013
Assiniboine River Diversion	
Cerilli; Cummings	2013
Agassiz Irrigation Project	
Cerilli; Cummings	2014
Clean Environment Commission Hearings	
Dewar; Cummings	2014
Department of Environment	
Dewar; Cummings	2015
Red/Assiniboine Rivers Water Quality	
Dewar; Cummings	2015

Taxicab Industry	
Cheema; Driedger	2015
Taxicab Board	
Cheema; Driedger	2016
Misericordia Hospital Job Loss	
Chomiak; Filmon	2016
Health Community Services	
Chomiak; Filmon	2016
Education System	
Friesen; Vodrey	2016
Social Allowance Cutbacks	
Friesen; Vodrey	2017
Carter Report	
Wowchuk; Findlay	2017
Aboriginal Farmers	
Wowchuk; Findlay	2018
Manitoba Lotteries Foundation	
Santos; Mitchelson	2018
Stubble Burning	
Carstairs; Cummings	2019

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Second Readings

Bill 24, Taxicab Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act	
Driedger	2019
Doer	2021
Cheema	2025
Lamoureux	2027

Debate on Second Readings

Bill 23, Retail Businesses Holiday Closing Amendment, Employment Standards Amendment and Payment of Wages Amendment Act	
Storie	2032