

4-9-88
The
Per diem too high

I made up my mind not to be critical of my good friends in the Legislature this session, but two things are stuck in my craw. First, what were they thinking about when they raised their per diem \$9 a day? It was already too high. The intent of per diem is to pay the additional costs of living during the session — not all of them. Let's take a good look at it, \$1,080 a month. About the only additional cost of living is for lodging. Most rent a room or share an apartment — \$150 to \$200 a month should cover that. Food is reasonable at any of the coffee shops or restaurants close to the Capitol, about as cheap as at home. But let's stretch it a little and allow \$400 a month. That means the remainder to put in their pockets (tax free).

Second, they've wasted so much time already on the workers' compensation problem that it's ridiculous. We appointed a bipartisan committee last session to study the problem. Three amendments that it recommended and that would have saved many millions were all defeated (I-R for; DFL against). What kind of nonsense is that? Are there no Democrats who have the courage to do what their own members recommended? — Ben Omann, St. Joseph, Minn., former state senator.