

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA  
Monday, 17 March 1980

Time: 8:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY DEBATE (cont'd)

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Rusell): The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

MR. CHERNIACK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Quickly, I'm sorry the Minister for Government Services isn't here. I'll tell the Minister for the Environment during the dinner hour one of our group telephoned Dr. Stellman and confirmed with her that never ever was she paid anything for consultative services by any New Democratic Party anywhere in Canada, and that only on Friday, the day she met him, was she acting as advisor to the NDP. Consultant he can call it, but the Minister for Government Services said she was a paid consultant, and as usual, or as often, he was not reporting the truth.

I want to refer to the fact that the Minister for the Environment said, I'm pretty sure it was he who said today, well the press has to sell newspapers. I think he's the one who made that statement. If it wasn't he, it was one of his colleagues. And, of course, several people talked about political opportunists.

Mr. Speaker, I remember last Tuesday. I remember that the Member for Churchill stood up first during the Question Period and wanted to ask a question of the Minister of Environment. The First Minister stated that the Minister of Environment was away, and asked that the matter stand until the return of the Minister of Environment by 3:30 or 3:45, at which time he would make a statement. The Minister did arrive later on and at 5:30, with our concurrence, he made a statement in which he said - it's a brief statement - he said and I quote, "from my observation on the site today, there are three cars that are entangled. There is still no confirmation of a leak. Some spillage has been noted, and small pockets of gas have been located in the immediate vicinity. I was advised, however, that given existing wind conditions, any potential hazard is minimized through harmless dissipation into the atmosphere." And he speaks of downwind report, no evidence of vapour within 100 feet.

And the Member for Churchill stood then and stated - and again, it's a very short statement - he says he joins him in hoping that the situation will be resolved speedily and safely. "We do await action from his government to ensure that this potentially dangerous environmental accident had not been of any great severity. We expect this government to incorporate the proper tests into the area to make certain that there is no long-term impact or long-term effect from vinyl chloride pollution. We would hope there'll be a full investigation and inquiry that is accessible to the public, so that we can gain by experience, as the Minister for Natural Resources said this afternoon."

The Member for Churchill concluded, I think we can learn from this experience, and hope we use it in that way. That was Tuesday, Mr. Speaker. Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, fortuitously, the Member for Churchill was consulting with Dr. Stellman on lead. He invited her to come to speak to him about lead, and she learned about the situation, and they immediately went to the Minister for Environment. That is not political opportunism, Mr. Speaker. That was the responsible way of dealing with it. And when I privately complimented the Member for Churchill on Tuesday, after we responded to the Minister, I said that was a statesman-like statement. He said I would not want to play politics with the matter of contamination of the environment. And I honour him for it, and I don't think he did.

The problem, as I see it, is that the Minister for Environment took a casual attitude on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, that at the same - and that's where I fault him, as far as I can tell - consulted with the people who were part of the problem: Dow Chemical, CNR, and as far as we know it he has not reported on timing as to when he made more extensive investigations beyond that of the people directly involved in it.

Monday, 17 March 1980

It was, as far as we know, later on that he started making independent investigations, and I think because of Dr. Stellman's intervention, and I'm glad it happened.

But I do feel that the fault of the government was just letting things ride, saying, Oh, well, the CNR will clean it up. It's not our problem, it's not our jurisdiction - we heard that from the Minister of Labour. We spoke to the CNR Vice-President; he assured his workers were being properly equipped with safety equipment, which we've now learned apparently is untrue. And thus, Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where we must . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. Order please. The honourable member's time is up. Orders of the day.

The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to get into the debate, but I think that members opposite made certain statements that I would want to reflect upon, and hope that those members and the government might want to retract some of those statements that were made, given the circumstances of this issue.

I want to, first of all, indicate to members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that the matter is not a political matter. It's one of concern for the environment and how we deal with problems such as this one, from time to time. And the fact that the government was, perhaps, somewhat slow, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the matter, I suppose one could try to interpret that someone wants to make something much of it, and perhaps that is what the members opposite allude to when they talk about the politics of the issue.

I don't think it's politics. I think that if you have a serious problem, that someone has to assume the role of making certain that all the things that should be carried out are carried out with dispatch, and especially when there is life endangered, or when there is health endangered, Mr. Speaker.

I am sad that members opposite chose to take a negative attitude with respect to a neutral person who happened to be visiting in Winnipeg last week, who voluntarily offered her services, and that is in the person of Dr. Stellman, whom I have never met up until Friday, Mr. Speaker, the time that she was involved with our caucus, and indeed with the government side through the Minister's office.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of members opposite, she was addressing the University of Manitoba, on what subject I'm not even fully conversant, Mr. Speaker, and it was only out of the public discussion, the newspaper reports and radio commentary, that this person became aware of our problem. And it was only through that new awareness on her part that she feels somehow obligated to offer a service to the people of Manitoba, to the extent that she had some technical capacity to do so.

The Member for Churchill met her at the University, and of course in the course of that particular meeting, did try to solicit some information from her on the environmental issues.

Dr. Stellman was to leave Winnipeg on Friday. In fact, she had already arrived at the airport, and on her own decision, Mr. Speaker, returned to this building, without solicitation from anyone, on her own decision, her own feeling that she didn't do sufficiently for the people of Manitoba, which she could have done on this particular problem. I think that is a very commendable thing on the part of anyone, Mr. Speaker, and that we in this House should not detract from that kind of help - we should not detract from that - by making nonsensical statements as those made by the Minister of Government Services this afternoon.

I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Government Services really didn't believe the things that he was saying. I'm convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Government Services felt that the government was somewhat embarrassed and he had to somehow throw the ball into the other court, at least momentarily, and made comments that he would not - after some thought - make, Mr. Speaker.

I don't believe that the Member for Lakeside would want to leave it on the record that this particular person had motivations other than the genuine motivations of trying to help the people of Manitoba in their dilemma.

When I met this person, Mr. Speaker, in the caucus room, she was attempting to

Monday, 17 March 1980

reach some technical people at Dow Chemical, and she phoned a Dow Chemical number - it was a 24-hour service number - and she was only successful in reaching the Public Relations Department. She was unable to reach anyone with any technical expertise with respect to the chemical in question and how to deal with it.

And, Mr. Speaker, the person at the other end wanted to know from her, in the course of this conversation, what her particular interest was with respect to the MacGregor situation. And it was at that time that, in order to identify herself so that there would be no doubt on the other end just what she was doing, she told them that she was not a press person, that they need not fear that kind of a call, but that she was merely acting as a consultant trying to help the situation for the benefit of the people of this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Consumer Affairs would interpret that to mean that she was hired by the New Democratic Party as a consultant, simply because she chose to use that terminology in terms of identifying herself with Dow Chemical. Well, I want the record to show, Mr. Speaker, that she was not hired, solicited or introduced to this issue by the New Democratic Party.

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. The Honourable Minister of Government Services on a point of order.

HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside): On a point of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister on a point of privilege.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I have been asked by the Honourable Member for St. Johns - and I'm suggesting that the present speaker is now suggesting the same - that some retraction is in order from myself. I'm prepared to make that retraction, Mr. Speaker, in having suggested that Dr. Stellman was a paid consultant of the New Democratic Party.

She obviously was prepared to consult and provide her services for free, or for nothing. She was not paid. --(Interjection)-- She was not paid, but she was a consultant of the New Democratic Party.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that the Minister of Government Services should make the two points: Yes, she offered her services to a member who was interested in the subject matter. And, Mr. Speaker, she offered her services and appeared at the Minister's office, after which the Minister changed the course of his actions with respect to the situation at MacGregor.

So, Mr. Speaker, she did have impact on how this province was going to, from that point on, deal with this problem. So let's not detract from that, Mr. Speaker.

I suggest to the government, very very earnestly, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the government that it should not be left on the record that there was some question as to her motivation. I suggest to the government that this House, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to the government, so that there not be a misunderstanding, that this House convey a note of appreciation to Dr. Stellman for her voluntary efforts, that were indeed for the benefit of the people of this province. There is nothing less that we can do, Mr. Speaker, than to convey a message that we did appreciate her involvement while she happened to be here in Winnipeg, and that it was to the advantage of the people of Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let's deal with why the government finds itself in this position. Let's now deal with the nub of the problem, Mr. Speaker. The nub of the problem is, that this government doesn't wish to govern. That is the nub of the problem. The Minister of the Environment is the kind of a person who believes that government should actually disappear if it were possible to be done. And so, Mr. Speaker, when it comes down to having to respond to a situation, the mentality is not even there - the mentality is not even there to deal with a problem.

The Minister of the Environment, Consumer Affairs, has, on more than one occasion, indicated to this Assembly that really industry should regulate itself to the extent that - well, in fact, he would completely allow industry to regulate itself. It is not surprising, Mr. Speaker, to me, to find that this Minister relied more on the advice that Dow Chemical were giving him, and the CNR, than he would rely on any other kind of advice, given the fact that that is the philosophy of that government.

Monday, 17 March 1980

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's correct for anyone to assume that because members on this side of the House believe that there ought to be a neutral investigation into this matter, that we are disrespectful of the CNR or Dow Chemical. It simply means, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize that the CNR has a vested interest in protecting their position, and they have a legal position to protect, Mr. Speaker. They have a legal position to protect. They are responsible for the derailment, no one else, and I don't blame them for wanting to protect their position. That is their responsibility. Likewise, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. The honourable member's time is up.  
The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. GEORGE MINAKER (St. James): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I listened very closely with debate today, and I can't tell you, Mr. Speaker, that after listening to the opposition, that I'm sure that the people of MacGregor are very happy that the honourable members on the other side are in the opposition and not in the government responsible for this clean-up.

I would like to compliment my colleagues, the Honourable Minister of the Environment and also the Honourable Minister responsible for EMO, because we can talk political here tonight, and this afternoon, and try and gain political points. But I have to compliment my colleagues for the fact that they recognize the seriousness of the situation, and recognize what it was all about.

One was, firstly, the safety of the people in the area, and the safety of the workers in the area. And secondly, the safety of the environment. And thirdly, what the honourable members from the opposite side seem to have forgotten in this debate, the seriousness of returning this situation to what it was before. And I think if they had recognized the latter, that they would not have tried these scare tactics that they have approached on this particular subject, because with regard to the safety of the people, I might remind the honourable members opposite that the accident occurred on the railway right-of-way, occurred with the railway; and I think all of the debris is on the railway right-of-way; and it is the responsibility of the federal government. And our Honourable Minister here recognized that, but also recognized that there is a responsibility of us, as a government, to protect the people in the immediate vicinity, and it is also to protect the environment. And again, to return the situation back to normal as quickly as possible.

I might advise the honourable members opposite that, is it wrong? Did the Minister not follow through, that an hour-and-a-half after the wreck occurred, that EMO was advised? EMO immediately contacted the Environmental Branch of the province, as well as Environmental Canada, within an hour-and-a-half. Further to that, that the Environment Protection Services was out on the site immediately, as soon as they could get there. The Minister was out at the site by 1:30 in the afternoon. They were monitoring the situation with regard to the parts-per-million of the gas in the air by early afternoon. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, the Minister had arranged for a very important part of trying to get things back to normal, or release the pressures on the people in the immediate area, had the Mayors and Reeves of the immediate area out there with them to look at the situation.

And I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the Environment Protection Services had a gas chromatograph at the site by 2:30 in the afternoon, measuring the pollutants in the air. So, Mr. Speaker, I cannot see how the opposition can try and create a situation that the Minister was not following through with his responsibilities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the opposition might portray the role that the provincial government has the complete control of this situation, which they do not have. They can advise the federal government and their agencies of how they would like things carried out, and have done so, and I might compliment - which the honourable members opposite have not complimented and I was surprised that the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge didn't compliment the federal agency that's carrying out the work.

I can understand, Mr. Speaker, that the new Member for Fort Rouge might not recognize this, but I really can't understand why the new Minister, who used to sit in that chair, didn't recognize when he said that he would call for an enquiry, that it's automatic. When this occurs, by federal law it becomes automatic.

Monday, 17 March 1980

--(Interjection)-- So, Mr. Speaker, I'm not passing the dollar. I'm just trying to show, Mr. Speaker, the politics that's being played in this serious situation. And we, as a government, are doing a logical and responsible job of making sure that the people are being carried out safely . . .

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, I would also like to say that the opposition - I'm quite confused and I'm sure that the people of MacGregor are very happy that they're not government - because the Honourable Member for Rupertsland stands up and says, why don't we clean up the snow right away? Well, Mr. Speaker, our prime responsibility is the safety of the people in the area, and we know that it's best to get rid of all of that material out of there before you start to create another danger. But, if we clean the snow we create a spark and set a fire, it's much better to have all of that gas out of there than having the tanks there; and he knows it.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, our Honourable Minister recognizes, and also the federal agency recognizes, why pick up tanks and rupture them and cause a catastrophe that might not only be just 3,300 gallons, but literally thousands and thousands of gallons spilled in our environment. Yet this former Minister says, why don't you clean up the snow? Then the Honourable Member for Wellington stands up and starts reciting something from, I think I'm correct, from Chemtrec, and this is where - and I know the Honourable Speaker doesn't like this word - "hypocrisy" occurs in this whole debate. Then we have the Honourable Member for Wellington standing up and saying that you should follow this procedure; but if you read the fine print, it says, published by the Manufacturing Chemists Association Incorporated, the Compressed Gas Association, and a number of manufacturing chemists associations - they're multinationalists.

On one hand, the Honourable Member for Wellington is supporting the multinationalists; on the other hand, the Member for Rupertsland condemns Dow Chemical. Mr. Speaker, I don't know about you, but when my boy was two years old, he swallowed a whole bunch of aspirins. Who did I call? I called the pharmacy, and what did the pharmacy say? He went back to the multinationalists who produced the drug to tell you what the antidote is. Now what is wrong with using the manufacturer of the product for some advice? You do it any other time. Now, Mr. Speaker, they play both sides of the line; they're almost becoming Liberals. It's amazing.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable opposition would like to create this into a big issue, but I commend the Ministers on the way they have handled it. I mean, how soon can you monitor something, get things operating, and you can't always clean up as quick as you would like to, if you create another situation or another hazard.

And, Mr. Speaker, the situation has been monitored since something like 2:30 in the afternoon from the first day the wreck occurred, and it has been below five parts-per-million within some 40 to 100 feet of the wreck. And then, Mr. Speaker, dealing with returning the situation back to normal, how do the people of MacGregor feel when the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, the Honourable Member for Church, stand up and talks about fetuses being harmed, pregnant women are being harmed, infants being harmed, when they know that within a hundred feet of that wreck, the parts-per-million is zero at the present time.

How do they answer to the people of MacGregor? They answer by saying, "Why don't you clean it up right away?" What would we do? First off, it's a federal agency that's responsible for cleaning it up, and the CNR, with our advice. Mr. Speaker, would they have us pick up the tank cars and rupture them so we can make it two or three days earlier? Would they have us bring in bulldozers and start to clean the snow and start to cause a spark and burn the snow? No, Mr. Speaker, we won't do that. The federal government won't do it, and I commend them for it. Unfortunately, the Member for Fort Rouge doesn't recognize that, but maybe later on she will.

And, Mr. Speaker, I compliment my colleagues on the way they have handled it, and also the government, and I believe it is the correct way. It is the safe way for the people in Manitoba. It's a safe way for protecting our environment. And not only that, we on this side want that situation to return to normal as quickly as possible, with the least pressures on the people of Manitoba and the people in MacGregor.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

MR. SAUL A. MILLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the impression I'm getting from listening to members opposite is they wish this whole problem would go away; and, frankly, I share their wish. I wish it had never happened, because I have a certain sympathy for anyone in government who is not trained, whose field is not as professionals in that field, and who have to suddenly face or are confronted with an emergency which happens through, in this case, the wreckage of a train. And, having been involved with EMO. for a number of years, I know what it is to try to jump to a fast conclusion; it's very difficult.

The impression the government is trying to make, and the members are trying to make, is this: Why are we talking about this at all? After all, within hours of the wreck, EMO. --(Interjections)-- Just a minute. They're wondering why, and I'm going to tell them why we are concerned. Because they are saying EMO. reacted immediately; they were there within an hour-and-a-half, two hours. And I know EMO. can move very quickly, and they are a coordinating body, that's all they are; they have very little expertise.

The Minister, we are told, was out there within five hours. What the Minister is going to do there, I don't know, because I'm sure he knows as little about it as I do. --(Interjection)-- Get a big shovel. But, Mr. Speaker, I was in this House when the Minister reported back and he said, you know, we've had a wreck; we don't think it's very serious. We don't know what is involved but we're monitoring it. And they say that they're monitoring every day. But I was here when he did announce that they were going to spread this stuff around in the snow so that it could evaporate and simply be carried off by the wind. He was very clear about that. When he made that statement, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't judge him, I couldn't say, "He's wrong," because I don't know. But by a sheer fluke - and it is a fluke - someone happened to be in Winnipeg to speak to the University of Manitoba at their invitation, at what is a series of seminars that they have called "Distinguished Visiting Professors." This person was invited to Winnipeg to speak on another subject. She happened to hear, and she couldn't avoid hearing what was going on, because it was in the radio and it was in the newspapers.

The Member for Churchill, who has an interest in lead, as we all know, having read that she was in town, and having read articles by her, contacted her and said, "Can I see you about the impact of lead in the workplace?" They got together, and by then she had heard what was happening in Manitoba. She said, "By the way, what are they doing about this spill?" Oh, they're going to spread it around; it's going to evaporate. And that's when she really took off. She literally boiled. I happened to walk into the caucus room when she came in there. She said the last thing you do it spread this stuff around; it's the most dangerous stuff there is. She said - I was talking to her later on and she said - "I can understand that you don't have the expertise; I can understand that." But what got her was the fact that there was no attempt, other than, "What is CNR going to do and what is Dow going to do," to really seek out other expertise, people who are knowledgeable in this field, whether in the United States or in Canada. And that is what upset her. And the proof of the pudding is this, Mr. Speaker, that when the Minister said, "We're going to spread it around so as to dissipate it," it was only after Dr. Stellman saw him that on Friday we got the reversal and he said, "Stop. We are stopping the dispersal of this material."

So obviously, her presence here made one darned large difference to the way the thing it was handled. It was after her speaking with the Minister, and expressing her concerns that the Minister stop the spreading, that the Minister really got down to it and started to ask beyond the confines of Winnipeg, and beyond the confines of the Dow Chemical Company itself and CNR, to try to get other influences involved, that we then heard at Sunday night's press conference how dangerous this stuff is, and they're going to pump it out, and they still don't know how they are going to get rid of what's on the ground, but obviously they're not going to be spreading it out, they're not going to dissipate it, because they realized that they couldn't.

But what I heard from the government side all the time was, we did the right thing. You can't fault our Ministers; you can't fault our government. We were on the job. Sure he was on the job. He went out to MacGregor and he looked, so he saw. And if I had been there, I'd have probably done the same thing; I'd have looked and I would have seen. But, frankly, what we said was that isn't good

Monday, 17 March 1980

enough. And the proof of it was that on Friday, suddenly everything that was good on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, all the positive things that are being done, the answers were readily available, suddenly on Friday we get a reversal. So don't tell me that the government was on top of this all the time. It was only because of the presence of this person in Manitoba, fortuitously, totally unrelated to the New Democratic Party, that this matter came to a head and the direction that the government had decided to take was reversed.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you this. They feel - and that's their problem and they can't understand why we brought this up - because they feel, I think even today, that the whole thing was somehow a political manoeuvre. I can tell you it was not. Our concern was, when we heard the stories, we've got to get her in to see the Minister, we've got to. Because if we were playing politics, Mr. Speaker, she would not have seen the Minister. We would have kept her in caucus; we'd have got her to the press; we would have bypassed the government if we had wanted to play politics. We didn't. Our Leader and the Member for Churchill took her to the Minister to get to see him, talk to her. He implied that he would prefer that our Leader and the Member for Churchill not be present, even though they were the ones who brought her to the Minister. They left so the Minister could talk to her personally; he didn't want to talk in the presence of the others. And they co-operated. They didn't say, look, after all, we're the ones who brought her to you, can't we sit in? They didn't. They said, you want to be with her alone, fine, we'll withdraw; we'll leave her entirely to you. And it's only after her intervention, it's only after she pointed out to him what she pointed out to us, that a change in the direction that the government has undertaken took place.

What bothers me is, even now, at this late moment, members opposite who are saying, well, maybe she wasn't a paid political consultant, but she was a consultant, that somehow there was some little manoeuvre worked out here. I can tell you, we didn't have anything to do with her coming here. She stayed over on her own account; it cost her more money because she had to pay extra on her airline ticket; she had to find accommodation. She paid for it herself because she couldn't bring herself, as she put it, to leave Manitoba when she felt there was a problem that was important to Manitoba, not the New Democratic Party. She didn't know us from Adam. I wish members opposite would believe that, once and for all.

Our concern was that this was not being handled properly. Our concern was that the Minister, for all his good intentions, was not doing the right thing, that whoever was advising him had made maybe an honest error, but an error nonetheless, and therefore it had to be corrected.

Mr. Speaker, I feel, frankly, that we did the right thing on Friday. We spoke, we made sure that this was conveyed to the Minister, so that he in turn could take the necessary actions, and I think it worked. The decision to spread the stuff around was cancelled; it was called off. Other people were called in. There were discussions then with Michigan, with other American departments involved, with Environment Canada, with now somebody from Montreal who may be coming into Manitoba to oversee and to check on the whole matter. That would not have happened if this person had not come to Manitoba and fortuitously had not been thought of by the Member for Churchill, on another subject perhaps, but because he was interested in this particular subject and it brought them together. And it was the bringing together of this person to acquaint herself of the problem, that made it possible for that government now to be able to say, now we have it under control. We're not going to spread it around because it's a toxic material and it's dangerous, so you just can't let it lie there and you can't just spread it from a small 100-square feet area or 100-square yard area to 500, or 6,000 or 1,000 square yards. We can't do that. We've put a stop to that.

Now, CNR is being asked to pump out what's in there. Now they know that the people who were working on the site have to have proper protection. It was interesting. I didn't know too much about this, but on Sunday night I happened to be watching T.V., and on the one hand we had the Deputy Minister - I think it was the Deputy Minister - saying the people on the site were adequately protected, and somebody there saying, the only person I saw with a respiratory mask was the person from Dow Chemical. He obviously knew what he had to do. But he was the only one who had a mask of any kind.

The others apparently didn't, and I only hope that nothing has happened to them. I really and honestly hope that is so, that the extent to which . . .

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

Before I recognize the Honourable Member for Inkster, I would like to draw to the honourable members' attention - all our honourable members - Rule 39 of our Rules, with respect to repetition. I have allowed a great deal of laxity today. There has been quite a bit of repetition in this debate, and I would hope that if any member has something new to add to the debate, that he would bring it forward.

The Honourable Member for Inkster.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe, with respect, that the rule with regard to repetition, applies to a member who is repeating himself. I do not believe that one member can be asked to sit down because he is saying what another member said. In any event, Mr. Speaker, I may be able to qualify under both rules, I'm not certain.

I don't think that I have a great deal to add to what has been said in this debate. But I was impelled to rise, Mr. Speaker, because I felt very much that I would like to come to the defence of a very noble profession and a very noble activity - and that is politics.

I have heard the word "politics" used in this House, both this morning and the afternoon, as if it was some type of villainous conduct. Politics, Mr. Speaker, in which we are all engaged, is the attempt to do things in the public interest, and to commend what we are doing to the public. And if what the New Democratic Party and the members of the opposition, and in particular the Member for Churchill, if the way in which he behaves and the way in which he brings things to the attention of the public, and the way in which he alerts himself to certain activities, as well as the members of the opposition, gains them public support, I consider that, Mr. Speaker, to be in the ultimate interest of all of the people of the province of Manitoba. And, therefore, to members of both sides, who seem to suggest that if one does something to get elected, he is to be condemned, I say, Mr. Speaker, that that's the name of the game, and one should do things in order to get elected, in order to try to get elected.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Seven Oaks, whom I have some mild disagreement with, says that if we were being political - and he didn't use the term, he said if we were playing politics - we would have hid this woman away and brought her in and not have her go to the Minister and then make some type of exposé, that that would be playing politics, Mr. Speaker, that would be stupid. And that would not gain public support for the position that is being put.

The way in which it was responsibly handled is what will gain public support. And if the members of the government think that you mustn't behave so that you will get public support, then I have to tell them that they have another think coming. Because what the members on this side of the House will do, is to behave in a political manner. And by that, I mean to say, Mr. Speaker, that they will behave in such a way as to try to gain as much public support for their actions as they can possibly do. And it has always been my impression, Mr. Speaker, that one gains support by behaving responsibly and not irresponsibly.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the efforts on the part of the members of the government, to suggest that there's something nefarious about getting elected, I invite them to all get out, because they've all been elected and they must have done something, each and every one of them, to gain public support. I didn't hear them running around in their constituencies saying, "Don't vote for me, vote for the New Democrats. I'm not political. I want you to elect the other side". Is that what they did in 1977? Mr. Speaker, I'm astonished, because I didn't think that anybody could get elected doing that.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that most of the things that have been said with regard to bringing the matter to public attention, to making information available to the Minister, to when the Minister acted, to how he acted, to whether or not he should have acted sooner or later, all of those things have been canvassed, and whatever merit the public finds in the conduct of honourable members on both sides of the House, I am fairly satisfied that that will be attributed.

I think, Mr. Speaker, at this stage, and this debate, is not to try to re-inforce condemnations, although that's been done, or to be defensive about what has happened about, although that's been done, that the most important feature is

Monday, 17 March 1980

to make sure that everything that is reasonable to be done is being done at the present time.

And in this respect, Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether these things have been mentioned before, and I'm not trying to suggest that I am the one who thought of them, or that they have not occurred in debate, but there are a few things that I would assume that everybody would want to know. And that is, in view of the fact that between Monday and Friday, different opinions as to ill effects could be given, I would assume that it would be necessary, Mr. Speaker, to see to it that everybody who was in contact - every single individual, every human being, including the Minister, if he was there at the site - who was in contact with this substance, should be tested to make sure that they have had no ill effects, and that includes everyone, Mr. Speaker, and I include the Minister in that.

That secondly, Mr. Speaker, and this is very important, and this I tell the Honourable Minister, that if he does not do this, he will be the incompetent that some people on this side have referred to him as. He should get, Mr. Speaker, from every adviser who has been advising on these questions, in writing - and that's federal, provincial, Dow Chemical, and Stellman, Mr. Speaker - in writing, what their advice to him was, and when it was given.

Because I am certain, Mr. Speaker, that these bureaucrats, if I know them, are now going to say, I didn't say that, he said that, or somebody else said that. It would be important in any future activity, Mr. Speaker, in which the Minister may be having to defend himself, for him to have now what he was told by each and every one of these people, and not verbally, but in writing.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we will also know. Because if somebody says that on Tuesday, I advised the Minister that it's not 500 parts, it's 5 parts or it's 1 part, then that statement will be on the record. It may be that the Minister might want to challenge it, but at least it will be on the record. And I am suggesting, Mr. Speaker, from everybody who gave any advice on this question, that their opinions should be writing. And I include Professor Stellman, because she should go on the record as to what she told the Minister with respect to this topic. I suggest, yes, I think she should and I think she would, I don't think that she would in any way worry about that. I don't think that she would worry about that at all.

I say, Mr. Speaker, that I am confused to some extent, and I don't know whether - who is responsible for dealing with this question? Is it the CNR, is it Dow Chemical, is it the provincial government, is it the federal government? Who is in charge? It would seem to me that it would be the federal government, although I'm not certain, and I'm not suggesting by asking the question, who is in charge, does that absolve other people from responsibility. I merely would like to know who is the responsible agency, because I hear from the Member for Fort Rouge that she would evacuate the town. Well, is that what Environment Canada is saying? I mean, Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member for Fort Rouge saying, "evacuate the town".

I heard Lloyd Axworthy say he's going to have an inquiry. Isn't this a federal government activity in any event? So who's Lloyd going to inquire into, the provincial government or the federal government? Well, Mr. Chairman, I want to know. And I'm not saying that I have an answer to it, and nothing that I say absolves or should absolve the provincial government from being fully involved in the concerns as to what is going on. But who is in charge? And if, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is in charge, then they should be doing the very same things that I have referred to the Honourable Minister of the Environment.

So, Mr. Speaker, in brief, and I'm closing, the other members have dealt fully with the history of this matter, and the various sins of omission and commission on the part of the Minister. There has been in the House, I think from both sides, an attack on my profession, Mr. Speaker, and apparently on all our professions, which I would like to defend against. I believe that politics is the highest form of human activity, and I do not wish to hear it degraded as it has been by members, particularly on that side of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a few comments on the emergency debate on the accident that occurred in the MacGregor area in Manitoba. I would like to, first of all, say I think that we, as a government,

should be very thankful as there were no people hurt directly at that time of the accident. I think that we should thank the Almighty Lord that there, to this particular point, has not been a loss of life due to the initial accident that took place.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say that I believe - and I know that the Minister responsible for the Environment, the Environment Department, the Minister of Government Services and the Minister responsible for Manpower have made, what I would consider, very responsible statements to the House, keeping the individuals informed of the true facts of what are taking place. I get, Mr. Speaker, somewhat concerned when I hear the comments coming from members, such as we have heard from Fort Rouge. When we get the Member for Churchill making comments that would somewhat mislead the people of the area of MacGregor to believe that there was some unknown disaster that, in fact, they would have to evacuate, or there was immediate threat upon their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it has been truly indicated here by the Minister responsible, that the situation has been in hand, that it is in hand and that it will be dealt with in a responsible manner. I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that I believe that the first responsibility - and it has been looked after - and that is the responsibility of protecting the welfare and the well-being of those citizens of that particular part of the province. And I, Mr. Speaker, have been waiting all afternoon for the members opposite to provide some new information that was promised to this House by the Member for Churchill on the situation as he says it is at MacGregor, Manitoba. But, Mr. Speaker, I think that the biggest emergency that was created in this House today was when they put the motion on the floor, and we supported the debate on that motion, and we didn't hear a word from the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, they were, in fact, somewhat taken back when we were quite prepared to put the true facts before the public of Manitoba.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have been waiting all afternoon and all evening for that new and that critical information to come forward that the Member for Churchill was talking about. Mr. Speaker, they've had all afternoon, but what have we heard? We've heard the repetition of the scare tactics of the members from opposite. Again, Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that the people of that particular area are being well-protected against the disaster that they're telling us about. I think that the people of MacGregor, Manitoba and that particular area are well-represented by their member, who spoke on their behalf this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I would have to say that the members opposite, again, have been somewhat misleading the people of the province of Manitoba on this particular issue. And I say, we have had no question about debating it before the people of the province of Manitoba, so that it, in fact, can be fully and truly aired for those particular people.

I guess, Mr. Speaker, the other point that we should bring forward at this particular time is the overall concern of environmental affairs that are shown by those members opposite and, in particular, reference to chemical companies that are involved in the manufacture or the process of providing those goods or those kinds of chemicals for the use of the industry of the country, for the use of the people who produce food. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out to the members opposite, if it weren't for companies who provide those kinds of chemicals, if it weren't for companies that provide pesticides, and goods or services that protect the food production system, that allow farmers, that allow people to produce and store food so that, in fact, provides the products for those countries of the world that are unable to grow enough products for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, it is in the best interests of all mankind that development take place in the chemical industry. At no time do I think we have seen a more critical time than we do right now and when it comes to the producing of a food in an efficient manner. With energy shortages, the concern for the best use of them, I think that we have to continue to use chemicals. But I do think that it is in the interests of all mankind that they're handled responsibly, the people transporting them - and on that particular point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the past Minister of Transport, the Honourable Don Mazankowski, in his handling of the Mississauga event, handled it very capably, setting up a commission to, in fact, look into the safe handling and the safe transporting of goods.

But what do we see now, Mr. Speaker, but a new Minister of the Crown, and I have to just think back to the comments I made in my Throne Speech Debate. He now

Monday, 17 March 1980

happens to be a Minister of the federal government, but what does he do? He doesn't really know where he is at. Mr. Speaker, he is in the position of a Cabinet post, who has a responsibility to work with his colleagues in the area of protecting the interests of Canadians under his jurisdiction as a federal Cabinet Minister. But, Mr. Speaker, he calls on the provincial government to carry out the responsibilities that he should be a part of under the federal Ministry of Transport.

Mr. Speaker, I again have to say that the responsibility, I think, is a joint responsibility. It is a responsibility of those individuals who are in the business of producing them, to be sure or to assure the government, whether it be the United States of America, of Canada, or of any province or any state, that they are producing a product, that it is in the best interests of everyone that it is put into a position of transport in a safe manner. That those individuals who are in the business of transporting them, such as, whether it be a trucking firm, or a rail transportation system, that they have qualified people in the business of cleaning up after a disaster, or in fact in the position of being able to make sure that the total population, or all the people involved along those rail lines, whether it be at MacGregor or whether it be in the City of Mississauga or whether it be in the City of any other origin.

I think that it is important that the total community, whether it be the producers and the processors of dangerous chemicals, the transporting of those particular chemicals, the federal government, the provincial governments, all have a responsibility.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would again like to say that I have, in my estimation, and the estimation of the people that I represent, I am sure that they are confident that the Minister responsible for the Environment, or the Environmental Department, have acted in a responsible manner, Mr. Speaker. And again. I would like to say that I believe that it has been a severe attempt by the members opposite to once again mislead the people of the province of Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has already spoken.

MR. CHERNIACK: I am well aware of that, Mr. Speaker. I believe there is sufficient time for the Honourable Minister to answer a question, if he will consent to do so. And if he does, Mr. Speaker, I would like to have him answer the question posed by the Member for Inkster. Whom does he, as a Cabinet Minister, perceive as being the person ultimately responsible for the activities being carried on in MacGregor?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. A.R. (PETE) ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't intend to be repetitive and go over the ground that many of the members here today have spoken on, but I do at the outset want to commend the Member for Churchill for his dedication in looking into these matters. He has demonstrated over the past two or three years of his concern in matters of environment, and last year that was clearly demonstrated with his involvement in the lead levels in the workplaces in this province. And I can't understand why members of the government would now condemn the Member for Churchill for bringing these matters up. He has demonstrated over the past, since he was elected here in 1977, how conscientiously he has been involved in these particular matters where it affects the environment, and where it affects the safety in the workplace. So nobody can take that away from the Member for Churchill, and I want to commend him for that.

Now, as far as commending the Minister involved, perhaps we can say, yes, they have done all they could. But unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have demonstrated over this incident here in Manitoba that we are very very vulnerable, and the best is not good enough because we are not prepared. We are entirely unprepared for such an emergency as has happened here. The Minister, for the first three or four days, really was going around in a circle and didn't know where to go, and that is what was happening.

We are fortunate that the accident that happened here in Manitoba was by far not as serious as happened in Mississauga, and we are fortunate, although we still don't know, and perhaps it may be years before we know if there have been any

Monday, 17 March 1980

serious damages here in Manitoba. And that is the problem that we face as a people, as a society, here. We've had a parallel, I would say, when the Russian satellite fell down and came down in northern Manitoba, where the government had to immediately get involved and spend millions of dollars for a clean-up. And perhaps we are not prepared for these kind of eventualities. I believe that we have --(Interjection)-- Yes, the Minister of Agriculture obviously didn't hear his House Leader, because he got up and said, "Yes, we supported this debate; we wanted this debate today." Obviously he didn't hear his House Leader get up and say there was no sense of urgency, that we shouldn't have this debate today, when the Member for Churchill arose in his place to request that the business of the House be suspended.

So at least we have accomplished something here today. The Member for Churchill has accomplished something, because he got up and the Minister for Agriculture said, "Yes, we agree that there should be a debate today." And we heard the ayes, because I'll tell you what happened, Mr. Speaker. When the government saw that you had a dilemma on your hands, that you recognized in all clear conscience that you could not just ignore this not as being a very fundamental problem to address ourselves with, that they had to make a quick switch, because you had a problem. And fortunately, under those circumstances, we were able to get a discussion. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, order please. It is highly improper for any member of the Chamber to reflect on any actions of the Speaker. The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

MR. ADAM: Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we have been allowed to discuss this here today and if the government saw their way clear to support our position, or your position, whatever it was, I am very happy for that. But I think that it's a problem that's much bigger than just a little accident - and maybe not a little accident, it's a big accident. But I think the problem is much more serious than what we have seen on the surface, and I think it goes back to all the chemicals that are being manufactured, some which we feel we need very much in production of food, and so on.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are on a rampage of manufacturing of all kinds of chemicals without proper research, without long-term implications of what these chemicals will do to our environment. We have had that in many other of the sciences, such as in the medical field. We've had chemicals and medications that have been put on the market without proper research, and that have caused damages. And you know, one only has to mention one - thalidomide - what that has caused to people who have used it. And we don't even know, at the present time there is the "pill" that's being sold by the millions. We have no indication of the long-term effects of that kind of a pill, or how that will affect people. . .--(Interjection)-- Well, the birth control pill; you should know. If you haven't got enough. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. Would the honourable member try and get his remarks back to the subject matter at hand?

MR. ADAM: Mr. Speaker, I am talking about the handling and the distribution of chemicals, and all kinds of chemicals that are on the market today that we know nothing of, and we have no long-term protection with, in regard to these chemicals. That is why I think that, before we allow these things widespread distribution, there should be far more research insofar as their distributions are concerned. And that is what I want to point out tonight in this debate. I don't intend to speak at length on this, or even the full time that I am allotted. But I think there are far too many of these chemicals that are on the market that we don't know enough about, and we don't know how to handle them well. There is not enough education on how they should be handled, and we saw a classic example during the last week.

What we should be doing today is seeing how we can prevent this from happening in the future, or should it be allowed to continue? Should we allow this to continue? Take chances again? Or should we be making sure that there is not going to be a repeat of this? Those are the comments that I want to make, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rock Lake.

Monday, 17 March 1980

MR. HENRY J. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, having sat here pretty well all afternoon and this evening listening to this particular debate that seems to be of urgency to all members of this Chamber, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that if it happened in my constituency, or any other constituency, I would consider it a very serious matter.

But having listened to all the debates, I want to say, Mr. Speaker, for the record, is somewhat a repetition. But I listened to the Member for Inkster tonight, and I've said in past years, I respect the member who was then a Minister of the Crown for what he is and what he says, because I respect him for his honesty and his integrity.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I also indicated that I would fight him as long as God gave me breath to fight him. But you know, Mr. Speaker, I have to somewhat change my text tonight. Having listened very carefully to the Member for Inkster tonight, I couldn't help but admire the words in which he chose as the text he used in the matter of this urgent debate. You know, Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Official Opposition should have some concern for the Member for Inkster in what he said tonight, and put all the other members across there together, wouldn't have met up with the ability of what the Member for Inkster said and what other members had to say this afternoon and this evening.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, with the utmost of sincerity. And you know, Sir, having listened to the debate, how they have chastised my colleagues on this side of the House, the Minister of the Environment, who, after the accident happening last Monday night, I looked to the Member for Portage la Prairie in whose this constituency this serious accident took place. The next morning I was given to understand - I was in my office - and the Member for Portage la Prairie said he was on his way out to his constituency with the Minister of the Environment to look into this very serious tragedy. And we talk about the responsibilities. And we, Mr. Speaker, stand up in this House this afternoon and this evening as politicians and, as the Member for Inkster had indicated, have a responsibility to the people of this province.

I am a layman, Mr. Speaker. I would think that honourable members opposite are laymen. But who is this Dr. Stellman, is it, from the United States of America, who came to Canada last Friday and spoke to whom, Mr. Speaker? A union group, or was it a university group at the University of Manitoba? But why, Mr. Speaker, I can't for the life of me understand why just about all members, with the exception of the Member for Inkster, seemed to use that as a clutch to derive their debates on Dr. Stellman, to try to create a situation for themselves. --(Interjection)-- Pardon? I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Stellman, I apologize if I pronounced the name incorrectly, Dr. Stellman. I wouldn't want that to get across the line as being improperly pronounced.

But, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Member for Fort Rouge this afternoon in espousing her comments as she did, and the question that the Member for Inkster posed, whose responsibility is this? Is it the provincial government, Mr. Speaker? Is it the federal government? I would have thought that the Member for Fort Rouge would have done a little more homework before she rose to speak in her place and make the comments that she made. And I heard, Mr. Speaker, when I came into Winnipeg this morning, on the news, that the famous Lloyd Axworthy - I should have said Lloyd Taxworthy, I'm sorry - who sat in the same seat as the Member for Fort Rouge is now sitting and, Mr. Speaker, he said, "I'm prepared to do whatever I can to help," a week after the accident happens.

Where was Lloyd Axworthy five days, six days ago? Is it not - and I ask you, Mr. Speaker - where is the responsibility of the federal government in this whole matter? And the members of the opposition, along with the lone member for the Liberal party from Fort Rouge - and I sat very quietly, Mr. Speaker, listening to the Member for Fort Rouge. I didn't say a word, but I listened. And I think, Mr. Speaker, she would be well-advised to probably seek some information before she speaks. Because whatever she said, Mr. Speaker, was doing nothing more than to create a fear amongst the people of the town of MacGregor and the entire community, along with too many other members on the other side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I don't underestimate the importance of this entire matter and I want to commend my colleague, the Minister of the Environment, for acting promptly, along with the member who represents the constituency of Portage la Prairie,

Monday, 17 March 1980

for going out to the area, to seek information for what he could get. I think he's a layman, as I am, and I don't profess to know the benefits or the dangerous aspects of these chemicals. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, I happened to be in the town of Churchill last November, when we had an historic event - and I didn't see the Member for Churchill there at that time - but the Honourable Don Mazankowski . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order. Order please. Order please. May I suggest that the honourable member refer his remarks to the subject matter at hand.

MR. EINARSON: Mr. Speaker, I respect your admonition, and if I just had one more moment I could explain - because the name, Mississauga, and the tragedy that they had in that area - and I wanted to say that when I arrived in Churchill, the Honourable Don Mazankowski had to go to the telephone to deal with that very problem in Mississauga. Maybe MacGregor wasn't nearly as serious as it was in that particular town because of the area in which the accident was created.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Churchill has created a situation here. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that it won't be nearly as serious for the people of MacGregor and for the people of Manitoba. I hope and pray, Mr. Speaker, that the CNR people, the Dow Chemical people, are going to be able to take care of this problem without any serious effects.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it has been stated through the news media that this has happened, these kind of accidents happened on the railroads before. And you know, Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard anyone say, other than my colleague, the Minister of Corrections, who made any comment on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, about the responsibility of the federal government in this whole matter. It's really strange, Mr. Speaker, because the NDP and the Liberals are in bed together to the extent that they wouldn't dare make any comments or any reprimands to the federal government, Mr. Speaker, on a matter that is their responsibility, by the same token as we carry the responsibility. I want to suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues and this government have shared a far greater responsibility to this serious matter in the town of MacGregor and to the people of MacGregor than the Federal Government ever thought of doing. And I want to reprimand the Member for Fort Rouge for not standing up on her feet, if she was really serious about what she said, and reprimanded her own colleague that she's put on a pedestal, Lloyd Axworthy, for not acting sooner than what he did.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Federal Government should have been addressed to a far greater extent by the members opposite than those of us on this side of the House. I want to say, Mr. Speaker. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member's time has expired. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me say to my colleague, the Member for Churchill, that I commend him for the actions that he has taken this past week. I wish I could say the same for the Minister, and for the Progressive Conservative Government over on that side of the House. I can't, unfortunately.

We have heard much in the last while of whose responsibility is it. I think it's the responsibility of the citizens of Manitoba, the citizens of Canada, and the citizens of this town of MacGregor. It's all our problem. But I never heard once, until today, suddenly within the last hour or so, whose responsibility is it: Federal, provincial, municipal? We never heard the Minister once say that he was in conference with the Board of Transport Commissioners, or the Minister in charge of Transportation, or Environment in Ottawa. Never once did we hear that. We never did hear that in this House. We never heard it in any of the statements when I've been in the House when the Minister has made those statements. If I am wrong, then I will stand corrected, but I never heard that the Minister had been in touch with his counterpart in Ottawa.

I know that the train accidents that take place on railway lines come under the Board of Transport Commissioners. There may be an inquiry, there may or may not. I imagine that the publicity that has been generated by this accident that took place in the western part of our province, I imagine that there will be an

Monday, 17 March 1980

inquiry. But for not every train wreck is a public inquiry held; there is an inquiry held by the Board of Transport Commissioners which may or may not be made public.

The transportation of hazardous materials is on the increase and it's not just on rail lines, I can assure you, Mr. Speaker. There are - and the Minister of Transportation may be faced with a problem, God forbid, but it can happen on a major highway, in a town. There are trucks that are also hauling hazardous inflammables, potentially dangerous materials. The bulk of these chemicals and hazardous materials are at the present time being hauled by rail. But as we see more and more rail line abandonment and into areas, into the parts where rail lines are being abandoned, the hauling and the transportation of these materials will, in these cases. . . Unfortunately, there have been cases in Europe, and I think just a few short years back in Spain, right near a tourist resort, a potentially hazardous material, gasoline, and that's potentially hazardous - it is very potentially hazardous. A spark, overturning of trucks - how many people were killed in that thing?

We have been fortunate here in Canada. We've have two potentially tragic accidents; I say potentially tragic. The tragedy that has been involved is that people have been - in the city of Mississauga - have been forced out of their homes. I think that was the right decision. I think it was a decision that was taken by all levels of government, and it was taken on short-term notice. And I can tell you as one who has relatives - my daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren live in the city of Mississauga - and I was damned excited when I sat watching television and it came on the news. I got on the telephone right away and phoned. Luckily they were in a part of Mississauga, in the northern part, which was not affected.

But, I think that we want to - and instead of the members on the other side casting, or praising with damned faint praise the efforts of the Member for Churchill, and the person who was here in the City of Winnipeg - it wasn't arranged by the Member for Churchill. He didn't arrange the wreck; he didn't arrange Dr. Stellman being in the city. And who Dr. Stellman was speaking to, where and when, is of no consequence in this case. The fact that Dr. Stellman was here was a lucky, lucky chance for the people of Manitoba, and it was a lucky chance for that government over there that that person felt it incumbent upon herself - her conscience would not permit her to leave this city before she had come back here and tried to impress upon the members of the opposition, and in turn the Minister and the Government, of a potentially hazardous situation.

I think she is to be commended. But all we've heard today is that Dr. Stellman is a paid consultant of the New Democratic Party. Well, so what if she was paid? You accepted her advice, and if anybody should be getting a bill, it should be this government over here for the consultative services that she rendered to this government. But I'm sure that Dr. Stellman will not submit a bill. --(Interjection)-- Well, you know, we have the Minister of - what is he now? Oh, Government Services - who comes up with these pearls of wisdom once in a while, but it's been a pretty lean crop of pearls that he has been dropping in the past while. And whether Dr. Stellman - whether I refer to her as a person or a lady - that's immaterial. I have no great hangups; if it offends the Honourable Member for Lakeside, tough, tough, that's all I can say. But I would say that we have not and the Member for Churchill, and the members on this side - you are embarrassed. Any government would be embarrassed, especially after the way that you have acted. For four days, you were assuring this House and the people of Manitoba - no problem, no problem. Well, I hope that the Member for Portage la Prairie is right, that there is no problem. I absolutely hope and I wish that this thing never would have happened, and I guess, so does the Minister and so does his government over here. And so does everybody. I don't think anybody wishes a tragedy. You seem to think that we have delighted in putting you on the grille. I think a lot of good has come out the Emergency Debate today. It has pointed out something, that this House is going to have to sit down.

You will be meeting with your federal counterparts, the Ministers, and I talked to the Ministers in the Treasury Benches. The hauling of hazardous, inflammable, and potentially hazardous material is something that's going to have to be dealt with. Not something that was dealt with by the Board of Transport Commissioners 10 years ago, when they said, "Cut the speed of trains down." But then because

Monday, 17 March 1980

of the producers of these chemicals, whether it be liquid petroleum, gasoline, anhydrous ammonia, vinyl chloride and God knows what, so they said, well, the speed limits would be reduced within city limits. The pressure was put on and the Board of Transport commissioners reversed those decisions. I think that the decisions that are going have to be made for the hauling of hazardous material and the size of the tank cars that are being hauled on the trackage today - do you know what one of those things are? I'll tell you what they are. They're an aerosol can on wheels, that's what they are. And you know what happens with an aerosol can when you throw it in the fire. That's what you're dealing with.

So I think that the debate that has been going on today has been well worth its while. It's pointed out to the people - I'm not trying to put blame on the Minister - but I think that the Minister should have not come along at this last date as his backbench and his other members of the Treasury Bench say, whose fault is it, who's responsible? He accepted the responsibility in the first place, but he has never said, to my knowledge, that the feds have a responsibility, too. And I'm not in any way absolving them. I think that they should be here as well, and they should have been here from the time that that train - that it was brought to their attention. These people should have been here, and if they weren't here, then it was the responsibility of the Minister to make damn sure that they were here.

And I think another thing that has to be brought out, and I think that the Member for Churchill tried to bring it out today. It was his concern for those people who were working at that job site.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order please, the honourable member's time is up.  
The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID BLAKE: I don't want to take but a moment or two, because I think everything that should be said has probably been said in this debate, but the member that has just spoken, I think, brought it out probably - I'm sorry that I missed some of the earlier debates this evening - but brought it out probably clearer than anyone that we're talking about responsibility, and I don't think anybody has mentioned that the accident on CNR property, CNR line and CNR right-of-way, which is CNR property - actually a Crown corporation. It's a federal matter. It's great to pick up the paper today and see the headline, "Axworthy demands probe." Well, as he should well know, Mr. Speaker, that in a serious derailment of this kind, there is an automatic investigation by the Railroad Transport Commission into every train derailment and every wreck and he should have well known that.

But we talked about headline hunters and we all know very well what a headline hunter he's been in the short time that he spent in this House, and apparently he's passed it on to his successor in the House. Mr. Speaker, there is no question of the concern of every member in this House, not only on that side of the House, on this side of the House. We're well aware of the dangers that we are exposed in our environment today, in our country today and carrying dangerous liquids, whether they be inflammable or whether they be otherwise. There's a situation today, we happen to be concerned because there's been a train derailment in our immediate locale, so we're concerned. Mr. Speaker, there are far more hazardous vehicles on the road today than those railway cars that pass through once in a while. It's happening every day, the anhydrous ammonia trailers and what-not that are being towed around the country. There's been nothing said about that. All of a sudden we've got a situation where it becomes very very popular to jump on it and make the maximum out of it on a daily basis. I think, Mr. Speaker, that the members opposite have overkilled.

Last year, they almost won an emergency debate on anhydrous ammonia; there were members on that side, Mr. Speaker, that thought anhydrous ammonia was a constituent. They had no idea what it was. All of a sudden they got into the debate, all of a sudden they realized there was something catchy. They might get a headline. So members were jumping in that had no idea what it was. They had never handled it, they had never used it, they had no idea what it was. And I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that's been the case here, that everyone has felt, well, we might as well have a go at it because here's a popular topic and everyone is into it.

Mr. Speaker, what has amazed me - and I might say has disturbed me somewhat, because MacGregor is not that far from my constituency, and I'm well aware of what

Monday, 17 March 1980

a disaster can do to a small rural community, and I think there have been adequate measures taken. The Emergency Measure people were on site, they were doing the things that had to be done. But, Mr. Speaker, it alarms me when people get up on a public forum, such as we have here, and make statements about pregnant women being in danger, and unborn babies, and my God, if that isn't enough to panic some people in this community, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what is. I think those statements can be couched, in better terms, or best left not said.

We all share the concern that the Member for Fort Rouge shares, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's irresponsible to make statements like that and panic the people in a community, where there are adequate measures taken for the evacuation of that community, should the need arise on a moment's notice. There is no foundation, whatsoever, for what she says and I think those remarks did no good in this House today, Mr. Speaker, because we don't know what the situation is going to be in MacGregor, when people start running back home and saying, "You know what I heard on the news today?" or "Do you know what I heard the Member for Fort Rouge say?"

I think that's a bad sign, Mr. Speaker. We can have more responsible statements in the House. I think that members on this side have taken every precaution that could have been taken, dealing with a situation that was volatile, it was changing from day to day as they found - there could have been more leaks in those cars. Our concern now is let's hope that nothing more serious happens than has already happened, as many members on that side and on this side have said.

The workers - there's a great concern on all sides of the House for the workers. Mr. Speaker, I ask you, if you were employed by the CNR or Dow Chemical, and you were told to go into that area, and you had any concern or thought that there was danger to your health, what would you tell your employer? You would say, "I'm sorry, Mr. Employer, I'm not going to work in there, you'll have to get someone else." And they can stand up and yell over there all they want about masks, and respirators and everything else. Those people know the danger - that's monitored within 40 feet and they can't find a trace of dangerous material there. So, Mr. Chairman, I think the debate was fine, it got everything out into the open. But they've overkilled it, and they've lost any advantage that they thought they might have had on this particular subject.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

MR. J.R. (Bud) BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I guess the record can stand one more perspective. It seems that about a year ago, that the First Minister of the province stood up in the House and said we have an emergency, and the Leader of the Opposition stood up and said, "We accept the fact that there are emergencies and being the opposition will do everything we can in our power to co-operate with the government to solve this emergency on behalf of the citizens in the province of Manitoba. But, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that as a preface to my brief remarks, because what we're involved in today has been as a result of the attitude of the government over the past two-and-a-half years, generally, and specifically in this instance.

The Member for Churchill was most responsible in the manner in which he approached this subject, because the Minister responsible for the Environment - I'm sorry, the correct title - the Member for Morris, because it's really it's more to the Member for Morris to whom I'm speaking. For a man of his political experience, I cannot for the life of me, understand him squirming on his own petard. I really can't. --(Interjection)-- Well, my friend from Rock Lake made illusion to it, passing a reference to it, that primarily it is a federal government responsibility, and it should be the federal government who reacted not on Saturday, but on Tuesday. If it's in Mississauga, Mr. Speaker, if it's in the East, the full forces of the federal government are deployed. If it's in the West, by Saturday, they get around to, "Oh, there's a wreck out there somewhere in the boon docks somewhere around." --(Interjections)-- I'm making a speech to all of us.

MR. SPEAKER: I would hope the honourable members would give the member a chance to make his remarks.

MR. BOYCE: Because, Mr. Speaker, it is after having shared with most of you, some 12 years, that I come to my perspective of things. But the Minister,

Monday, 17 March 1980

a politician, seeing the situation arise, responded to it. And I think he got himself in a jackpot, because he stood up in this House and made an announcement, as if he was accepting responsibility on behalf of the citizens of this province. Mr. Speaker, he should not have done that, in my judgment. He should not have done that. Now, he may have been ill-advised up until the time that Dr. Stellman came and advised him differently, and he should have it in writing. I agree with the Member for Inkster, he should have it in writing because, doubtless, the people in the federal government, who are reorganizing their Cabinet after the recent election - the only thing - I'm jumping around, I know, because I want to make my remarks brief. The only thing that exists in the West is oil. The only thing that exists out here is oil. And my friend, Lloyd Axworthy, comes by and he will investigate. Investigate whom? The federal government for not immediately responding to an emergency situation for which they're responsible? Because that's where the investigation should lie.

But for the past week, Mr. Speaker, we have learned - we have heard from the Minister squirming on this petard he should have never been on in the first place. I've talked to the CNR - they are not a government body, they are a Crown agency. He talked to Dow Chemical - they're not responsible. We're shareholders --(Interjection)-- Right, I love it, PetroCan and all the rest of it, I love it. But, nevertheless, there are people who are elected to take the responsibility. And under The Railway Act it is the federal government that is - there is no disputing it, there's no argument about it. --(Interjection)-- Why didn't they? Why didn't they? Because the Minister stood up in this House and made the statement, "Read Hansard, read Hansard, read Hansard". Now I'm no lawyer, Mr. Speaker, but I don't know if a person usurping authority which is not rightfully theirs, makes them culpable in the law. I don't know if it does. But nevertheless, in political terms, the Minister himself has tied the political can to his own tail, and he'll wear it.

MR. SPEAKER: Orders of the day. The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

#### POINT OF ORDER

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have reached Oral Questions on the Orders of the Day and not Orders of the Day yet.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister without Portfolio on a point of order.

HON. EDWARD MCGILL (Brandon West): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by the Member for St. Vital, the House Rules 27(4) say that when all members who wish to take part in the discussion, meaning the debate on the urgent public issue, have spoken in the House, the House shall proceed to the Orders of the Day. Mr. Speaker, the Orders of the Day are. . .--(Interjection)-- No, Mr. Speaker, the Orders of the Day do not include Oral Questions. The Oral Questions are contained in Routine Proceedings. The Orders of the Day are now reached.

I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the. . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order please. The Honourable Member for St. Vital on a point of order.

MR. WALDING: To the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak to the argument that the Acting House Leader has just raised, and in reading of the rules, he is quite correct. However, if we go to the very beginning of Rule 27(1), it says, before the Orders of the Day. It doesn't say immediately before the Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker. And it would seem, if we go back to the ordinary daily routine of the House, that it would have been possible for my colleague to raise his matter of urgency under the very first item, which is, Presenting Petitions. If we were then to follow through with the argument that my honourable friend opposite is making, that would preclude Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees, and Ministerial Statements, Notices of Motion, including Introduction of Bills, and his two colleagues would then have been pre-empted from introducing their bills this afternoon.

Can I further, Mr. Speaker, quote Beauchesne, which is quite precise and explicit. On page 86, Citation 254 says, "The proceedings of the House must be taken up in accordance with the order of the business given in the Order Paper".

Monday, 17 March 1980

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that the last regular item on Orders of the Day was the Introduction of Bills. The next item is Oral Questions.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster on the same point of order.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, to the same point of order. The Member for Brandon West, the Minister without Portfolio, is asking you to look at the Order Sheet which is headed Orders of the Day, and then contains Routine Proceedings, followed by Orders of the Day. Those are not part of the rules, Mr. Speaker. That is some printer's layout. If one goes to Rule 18 and 19, the ordinary daily routine of business in the House shall be as follows: Presenting Petitions, Reading and Receiving Petitions, etc., down to Oral Questions. The order of business for the consideration of the House day by day after the daily routine shall be as follows.

And I submit that when we are looking at the rule 27, and talking about Orders of the Day, we are talking about the regular Orders of the Day which follow the routine business. And the routine business, Mr. Speaker, a matter of urgent importance could have been presented at any time and the order of business following that, shall be the ordinary daily routine of business in the House shall be as follows, and that normal rule will follow.

So when we go to rule 27 and it says that "You shall revert to Orders of the Day", the people who drew the rules do not have cognizance of this document which is not part of the rules. They have cognizance of Rule 19 which refers to the order of business, day by day, after daily routine, shall be as follows. But that doesn't eliminate the daily routine. And if one looks at the title to the document, even if we want to deal with that, it's all entitled Orders of the Day. There is to be no exclusion.

Mr. Speaker. I realize that you are going Oral Questions and then Orders of the Day. But the Orders of the Day, Mr. Speaker, do not eliminate the Oral Questions just because a motion has been made. The Orders of the Day are the entire proceedings that take place.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister without Portfolio.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. We always listen with interest, and of course are impressed with the observations and the arguments of the former opposition House Leader. However, Mr. Speaker, when he brings this document to your attention, he is not reading it in its entirety. The document says Routine Business and Orders of the Day. And, Mr. Speaker, this debate arose during the Routine Business and our House Rules are quite clear in respect to matters of urgent public importance. After that debate has been completed, when all members have spoken, the rule says quite clearly that we go to Orders of the Day. And this document is Routine Business and Orders of the Day. We have passed now to Orders of the Day, I submit, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns on the same point of order.

MR. CHERNIACK: Yes, Mr. Speaker, if I may. I have been listening with great interest to all members who have spoken. And probably because the Member for Inkster led us to it, I am looking at the rule and I don't see the words "Orders of the Day" anywhere in Business of the House, Routine Business, 18, 19, 20; all of these. The 18 and 19 do not refer to Orders of the Day and therefore clearly, to my way of thinking - and I hope you will become persuaded that way - Orders of the Day are the business of the House. And you were interrupted before Oral Questions with the presentation of the emergency motion.

Now since I don't find Orders of the Day in 18 or 19 - and if I did I might find that I was arguing the wrong way - then I would have to say that we have yet to proceed with the Question Period.

MR. SPEAKER: I have listened very carefully to the argument put forward by several members in this Chamber, and I would like to take this matter under advisement and seek legal advice and perhaps bring it up for clarification at the

Monday, 17 March 1980

next meeting of the Rules Committee. If I could ask the indulgence of the House, or with the indulgence of the House, to proceed at this present time without considering it to be a precedent, to move into Orders of the Day.

MR. CHERNIACK: You ask for consent to stand it over and, without precedent, move to Orders of the Day. May I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it would suit the sense of justice that, without prejudice, and giving you time to study it, that we move to the Question Period now, it being a matter that you would want to consider, but without prejudice. Because I think it is important that we have a precedent established, and without prejudice we could move to the Question Period and proceed.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister without Portfolio on the point of order.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, you suggested that you wished to take this matter under advisement and I think, pending your final decision on it, we must adhere very closely to the Rules of our House which say, "We shall proceed to the Orders of the Day". We are not in Routine Business at this moment. We have completed the emergency debate. And, if we are to subscribe to the wording which, in my view, applies most closely to that stage at which we have now arrived, we have passed the Question Period, since it is part of the routine business of the House. We are now at Orders of the Day.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think if you are to take it under advisement, we should proceed to Orders of the Day at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Inkster on that point of order.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I believe that if we are going to take something under advisement and not create a precedent, then the better, the better part of wisdom, the better part of wisdom would be . . . the better part of wisdom, the better part of wisdom, Mr. Speaker, I think I've said that for the fourth time, thinking that there is a lot of wisdom in it, would be for the Speaker to proceed so that no part of the daily business is eliminated. That if you proceed with the order of business which my honourable friends are translating into Orders of the Day, one part of the daily business of the House will be eliminated.

I don't think that it was the intention of the Rules Committee that any part of the ordinary daily routine of business should be eliminated. And the only way of not eliminating it is to have the Oral Question period, followed by the regular business.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs on the point of order.

HON. WARNER H. JORGENSEN (Morris): It would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, that the opposition now long to have it both ways. It was their choice that they introduced the motion to adjourn the House at the stage of our proceedings that they did. They could have gone on to the Question Period and then introduced it. It would seem to me that if, by their own choice, they chose to eliminate the Question Period, they can't now come back to this House and say, well, you know, we made a mistake and we want the House now to get us out of the difficulty that we placed ourselves in. And I suggest, Sir, that if my honourable friends have outsmarted themselves on this particular question, that they should then pay the penalty for it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George on the point of order.

MR. BILLIE URUSKI: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, I would like to direct your attention to Rule 20 in our own Rules, which indicate that all items standing on the Orders of the Day, except government orders, shall be taken up according to the precedence assigned to each on the Order Paper. Now, Mr. Speaker, if you look back to our Rule 19, which indicates that the ordinary daily routine of business in the House shall be as follows: Presenting Petitions,

Monday, 17 March 1980

Reading and Receiving Petitions, Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees, Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports, Notices of Motion, Introduction of Bills, Oral Questions.

Mr. Speaker, that is the routine business of the House. Mr. Speaker, we went through every item of the Routine Business on the daily routine with the exception of done item; Oral Questions, Sir. The motion that was put by the Member for Churchill, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, was made prior to the Oral Question period, Sir. And being that the Oral Question period was not held, we would be violating our own Rule 19. And I ask you, Sir, to rule on that motion.

MR. SPEAKER: I would like to take the matter under advisement. I realize there is an anomaly in the Rules. I did, earlier in the day, call Oral Questions, and then we proceeded into an urgent debate. Can I . . . I would find it somewhat difficult. . .

The Honourable Member for St. Johns on a point of order.

MR. CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, it seems to me that you, as you usually do, called the next order of business; you called Oral Questions. I saw the Member for Inkster rise, and then the Member for Churchill stood and said, "I move", and he moved it. Now, no one asked a question, Mr. Speaker, because although you called for it, there was an interruption.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest to you that you do take this matter under advisement. Obviously there is disagreement. We only have about ten or eleven minutes left. I should think, Mr. Speaker, that it would be the best judgment on your part to call it 10:00 o'clock, and that way you would not have resolved a situation either way and left it completely open to you to review it, to make your own adjudication, which you could then present to the House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rupertsland on the point of order.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, I recall earlier in this Session that, when a question of urgent debate was placed before the Chamber, that was precisely the point on the Order Paper in which it was placed, and that was simply before Oral Questions. And in each case, Mr. Speaker --(Interjections)-- No. Mr. Speaker, at that point on the Order Paper that you called Oral Questions, the person who wanted to move the urgent debate made his motion at that point in time. That matter was decided on by the House. In more than one case this Session, the matter for urgent debate was not proceeded with, and then we went into Oral Questions.

So, Mr. Speaker, the precedent has been set that when a matter of urgent debate comes before the House, it is placed before the House preceding Oral Questions. And when that matter has been decided, whether it is defeated or, as in the case we have before us today, where we actually proceeded into an emergency debate, an urgent debate, the question of the Oral Questions must follow that period of time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister without Portfolio.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, nothing that has been said by speakers on the opposition side has persuaded me that the Rules of the House are not clear in this respect. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate your position in this matter and your desire to take it under advisement, and if there is a disposition on your part, and on the House's part, to call it 10:00 o'clock, that might be a suitable resolution.

MR. SPEAKER: Is there a disposition on the part of all members to call it 10:00 o'clock? (Agreed)

The hour being 10:00 o'clock, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 p.m. tomorrow. (Tuesday)