



First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virden	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Ellice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
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NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
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PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
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STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, September 12, 1988.

The House met at 8 p.m.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE (Cont'd)

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 8 p.m., we will be resuming debate on a matter of urgent public importance on the Rafferty-Alameda Dam.

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Speaker, I and my colleagues on this side are very pleased to join with our other colleagues on this side in bringing forward the need for this important emergency resolution, because this is an absolutely critical issue facing all Manitobans, one that they are entitled to know about, to understand and to have an opportunity to give their input into.

Why the emergency resolution? It is because nothing is happening on the other side. We cannot trust the Minister opposite and we cannot apparently trust this Government. We cannot trust Ottawa to protect Manitoba waters and to do what needs to be done because they are too prepared to accept information that comes from other committees, that comes from other jurisdictions or that comes from studies, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said, after the fact.

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) said today—or he has said on the weekend perhaps, and I think the statements by the Minister in the House and out of the House really concern us—that this is going to be good for Manitoba while he waits for the committee to report. He told us all afternoon that this committee is going to report, and we are anxiously waiting to see what they are going to say.

In the meantime, we are being told by the Premier, by this Minister and by this Government that this is going to be good for Manitoba. Based on what, based on whose say so, based on whose information? Grant Devine? Is that who we are going to accept, Grant Devine's information? While we are waiting for all these people to report and studies that might be done at a later date, the dam will be under construction. The dam is under construction without this study that should have been done in order to comply with the federal Government's guidelines required for approving this project. It is very clear we cannot count on Ottawa; we cannot count on this Minister; we cannot count on this Government when he makes a statement in the House that they told me that there would be no negative effect on the quantity and quality of our water supply as a result of the construction of the dams in the Souris River system.

I ask him, what are we going to do to them if there is a serious effect to our water? Will we ask them to apologize? What will we do? Will we say, would you please apologize to us because you were wrong and the quantity and quality of our water supply is not good? It is this Government, the Government of Manitoba,

that should—and if they will not, then it is the Members on the Opposition side that will bring this issue to the people of Manitoba, call on information being presented to the people, call on studies and information to make the decision that has already been made, based on no adequate information and tell everybody that we are not prepared to have this project proceed until we are fully satisfied that adequate protections are there. We do not want this to proceed. I think this was very clear in a letter that I want to put on the record, portions of it, written by our previous Minister, Mr. Plohman, who on April 22 of 1988 said this:

"I must tell you, however, that the very late hour at which the SBDA and agencies in the United States have recognized the need to provide substantive water quality assessment documentation to Manitoba, gives me cause for concern. I would not want any compromise of the substantive scientific analysis of trans-boundary environmental impacts from this project as a result of the proponent, self-imposed project deadlines. The SBDA planned some initial construction activities in February, with actual dam construction to begin in April. We will bend all our efforts to reasonably ensure that our input does not unnecessarily delay the impact assessment." How reasonable can you be? "However, if there is not enough time to complete a credible assessment, I trust"—I do not know if you should have said this in your letter, but you did—"that Canada will withhold approval until such an assessment has been completed and accepted by the parties."

That was our position and that is still our position, and it should be the position of every Member of this Legislature representing the people of Manitoba.

We were in contact this afternoon with a woman called Elizabeth May, who was the advisor to Tom McMillan for some time and was a major advisor to him on all environmental issues, including and particularly the Rafferty-Alameda project. She resigned her position a week after she found out that the Minister was going to go ahead with the project, although she spent that week trying to talk to him and trying to get him to alter the position to continue with the previous position that had been determined and understood.

She resigned her position after she found out that the Minister would say that he could not even consider the Rafferty-Alameda licence until the grassland park was approved by Saskatchewan. She said that the federal Government gave in on this licence to get Saskatchewan to agree to translate their statutes into French. You have a situation here where Manitoba water, the safety, the standards, the quality and quantity of Manitoba water has been traded off for two political deals. One is a park and the other is the translation of French language services. Who is there protecting Manitoba water?

Elizabeth was pushed out by the new chief of staff and said that a call went into a senior staff in the federal

Environment Department that said he wanted the Rafferty licence issued tomorrow. That is how much time was taken in making this decision. It was a quick political decision. It was a backroom deal and nobody, particularly the Government and the Minister, is out there protecting Manitoba people and Manitoba water.

She says that our position was very defensible and that they knew we had those concerns all along. She knew, Joe Clark knew, and Tom McMillan knew. They all knew what the position was of the Manitoba Government about the protection and the requirement to know that we were protecting our Manitoba water, and the understanding was that Manitoba's concerns were paramount and these concerns would be met prior to issuing a licence. In other words, the understanding was that there would be no licence issued until studies were done that answered all of the questions and concerns that Manitoba had regarding the quantity and quality of their water.

What is it that we want now? I can tell you what we do not want. We do not want the position reiterated by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) just before we broke for dinner. The Premier of the province got up to speak on this critical issue and he talked largely about personal attacks coming from the Liberal Opposition. That was what he concentrated most of his time on. He is the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the First Minister of this Province. He is talking about a critical issue to the people of Manitoba and he spends his time attacking the Opposition for attacking, instead of telling us and explaining what he and his Government were going to do to protect the safety of Manitoba waters. He did say we might have a study. He said we might have a study, if necessary, but first we have to decide what we are doing. Does he not understand that they cannot decide what they are doing until they have the information that tells them what the effect is going to be?

* (2010)

The federal Government caved in. The provincial Government is abrogating their responsibilities and that, I guess, leaves it up to the majority of the Members in this House, the Members of the Opposition, to take up the cause for the people of Manitoba and to take it to Manitobans and to indicate that this is what we want to do and this is what we on this side intend to do. We do not want a study after the fact; we do not want apologies after the fact. We want action now by the Government.

We are going to call on the environmental groups to renew their efforts, environmental groups that have already taken a position in opposition to this project. We will call on the U.S. National Wildlife Association, who are also on record opposing this project, to renew their support. We will support the Environmental Protection Agency in the States to demand that their concerns be dealt with, and we will demand answers to the U.S. Army Corps Environmental Impact Statement which is surprisingly negative. Look at all those groups who have registered already strong opposition to this project, and we are also -Interjection- 15 minutes.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member's time has expired.

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to speak on this issue. I want to make it very clear that I am becoming very annoyed with the concept that, every time that someone on the opposite benches stand up, they wave their finger at this side of the House and say that you are fearmongering. You have no genuine interest in what you are doing. You only have one reason to be there and that is to exploit something for political gain. I want to tell Members opposite that they have no monopoly on moral and ethical issues. They can listen to the rest of us and realize that some of us are here for a purpose which is not strictly one to gain political mileage out of an unimportant issue. To us, this is an important issue, an extremely important issue.

As far as I am concerned, this is an issue that needs to be aired today and I have a great deal of confidence in the Ministers opposite, particularly those in the areas of natural resources and agriculture and environment, in terms of them not agreeing to a deal that is not satisfactory. But I have to become skeptical and perhaps even a little bit cynical when, every day in the news, you see something that you look at and you say this does not make sense, when you find that you have a Government that is paying millions of dollars to buy a seat in Quebec. Then you find two Ministers standing up at Lloydminster and agreeing to a deal which every economist says probably is not a viable deal at the present time. Then you have the Premier of Saskatchewan and the Deputy Minister (sic) happening to be the ones who have the constituencies where these dams are about to be. One has to wonder whether every decision is made on the basis of the true value of it to humanity and to Canadians and to Manitobans and to those in Saskatchewan.

We know that Premier Devine has some IOUs. That \$1 billion did not come to Saskatchewan on the eve of an election by chance. He had some IOUs and, therefore, we have to assume that he is paying off some of those IOUs. Now we are being asked to take a great leap of faith when it comes to something like the Rafferty-Alameda Dam. We can only jump so far over a chasm. We can only have so much faith in this issue. I think it is time that the facts were put before us.

Now, we have had one excellent example in this House where all three Parties sat down and looked at the issue of Churchill. I think the opportunity exists again for the Ministers involved to say okay, Members of the Opposition, this is the data that is available. This data has come from the United States; this is the data that has come from studies that have been done in Saskatchewan; this is the information that we have here in Manitoba. Let us take a look at that. Are we satisfied that we do not have an issue that could be problematical to Manitoba in the near term and the long term? If that information is available, then I have no problem with that being tabled and an opportunity to look at that, and have the assurances from the experts who know what that really means and to say, yes, you have adequate information. There is nothing further needed. But surely to goodness, we are not going to take it all

on faith that Manitoba has nothing to suffer. There have been too many studies done on this type of thing that have all shown that Manitoba has to have some concerns.

It is not only a bunch of Liberals and NDP who are upset with this issue, who are bringing this up. The wildlife people have looked at it. We know, for example, that there have been suggestions—and you can say it is fearmongering if you want, but those suggestions have not come from the Liberal side of this House—that there is the distinct possibility of transfer of water from one watershed to another. There has been some suggestion that this could lead in time to export of water to the United States. Now, I am not saying that this is what is intended but, surely to goodness, this is the type of thing where the air has to be cleared, the mists have to be removed, and we have to get down to the facts. Being a scientist for many, many years, I think one has to have the information and interpret it in the best possible light you can do.

I would love to be able to stand up in this House and say that we have looked at the Rafferty-Alameda situation. It appears to have far more pluses than it does minuses, and we should be going forward with the idea, that it has benefits to Manitoba. It certainly is not the case of wanting to stop something that has a lot of benefit, but we have to know that information and we have to be satisfied that we are not, 10 or 20 years from now, having to revert back to a document of 1909 and say you are not meeting your obligations. What do you do? Blow up the dam and start all over again once these things have happened that are detrimental to our cause? -(Interjection)- well, '59, but the original treaty is 1909.

Now we want to see for sure. We are anxious that the Souris River have a reliable flow of water and that the quality of that water is satisfactory, that it can be used for all purposes. These are the things that I think everyone in this House wants to see. But when the Minister is quoted as saying that it is now too late, and he infers at least that the reason it is too late is that the previous regime did not do their job—and that is the inference I have to draw from that—then in my opinion, it is never too late. Surely to goodness, it is time to say, okay, hold on for a little while before we pursue this project and make sure that we know the scenarios that we may have to be faced with in the near future or in the long term on this thing. Get the facts down. If it means that there have to be some studies done in Manitoba to complement what has already been done, for goodness sake, do them. But if in actual fact the reason that we are hurrying with this is because, if it is not signed off by the end of this month, the money coming from the United States is lost, that in my opinion is not a good enough reason to go ahead with something that is suspect.

So I think the onus is on the Government of the Day to make sure that they are not going to be called upon 10 years down the road and say where were you when this thing went forward, and look at the mess we are in. We, as Opposition, I think it has to be on record that we have brought this forward as a concern and that if 10 years from now, because we were in

Opposition, we can at least stand up and say, yes, this was brought to the attention of the Government of the Day. They did nothing. We urged them on many numerous occasions to do something, but they sat on their hands. Then at least I feel that we are vindicated. I take great exception to anyone on the other side, standing up and telling us that this is not of sufficient concern to be addressed today, and it is being done strictly for political posturing because that upsets me very much. I think that it is a genuine cause, and one that deserves the time that was spent on it today. Thank you very much.

* (2020)

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): I too am delighted to be able to enter into this debate today, and I am as anguished as my colleague from Fort Garry (Mr. Evans) is that it was made light of by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province. Is that to say that the environment, which is one of our greatest concerns - (Interjection)- No, I am sorry. The Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) is switching the words around, Mr. Speaker. I have in the past 20 years attended many, many science fairs throughout the province. At each of these science fairs, our young students, our 10-, 11-, 15-year olds, have been entering projects about acid rain, about their concern for the ozone layer, etc. They have very real concerns for the environment, and we on this side of the House obviously have more concerns than some of the other people in the House do.

I believe the Government has to take a stand on this Rafferty-Alameda deal. We cannot allow it to move ahead without some form of greater debate. I think the public has a right to be involved and obviously the public has not had a great deal of opportunity to become involved. I think there has to be an environmental impact study done immediately, and therein lies part of the reason why this is a matter of urgent public importance. Obviously, the Government is not worrying quite as much about it. The number of speakers that they have promoted today have been far fewer than those on this side of the House, so we are more concerned over here with the impact.

Is there really sufficient knowledge? Can the Minister of the Environment tell us that there really is sufficient knowledge to move ahead? -(Interjection)- Do we really know the impact of this project on Manitoba? I do not think we do. I would suggest that we do not really know. Oh yes, Saskatchewan maybe did an albeit inadequate study. North Dakota did a study, and that study showed concerns with the quality of water moving into our province. But what about our own province? What study have we done or what study do we intend to do? Will we wait until after the fact and then we will say oh well, we are sorry, we should have done a study? That is not good enough.

Why is this a matter of urgent public importance? Because of the time constraints. September 30, we have to sign the deal so that the American funding will come through. If we do not sign by September 30, the American funding may be lost. Is there full information? Do we fully understand the possible increased cost to

towns such as Souris and many other areas around Souris, any other water users who might be adversely affected by the decrease in the water? Do we fully understand that? Has anybody actually done a study to look into our concerns?

What about the wildlife and the vegetation? Being a cottage dweller, I am very concerned about the effects of water levels, the effects of quality and quantity of water on our wildlife. Low water flows may result in loss of upstream fish and spawning areas for these fish. The flooding of wildlife habitats could cause loss of the wintering habitat for deer, reduced upland game bird populations. There is all kinds of interference with the vegetation and the animal life.

You know, not too long ago, I walked along the banks of Lake Ontario and I thought to myself at the time, why did somebody not have the foresight to guard against the damage that has occurred in Lake Ontario? I would hope that the Government of Manitoba would have the foresight to guard against the damage that might occur in the Souris Valley area.

Why a matter of urgent public importance? The Premier seemed to think—he scoffed at us. Fearmongering is the term that they use when they cannot think of any other term to use. Why did the federal advisor resign? A highly skilled, a highly paid individual resigned out of principle. I was once attacked because I was a highly principled individual, as though that was a bad thing to be.

I do not apologize for being highly principled and I am sure Elizabeth May does not apologize for being highly principled either. I think she had a concern for the interests of our particular province. I think these concerns underscore the need for a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Rafferty-Alameda project on our water quantity, on our water quality, and what might happen to the wildlife and vegetation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I would like to join in this very critical debate. I too wish that every Member of the House would take this matter very seriously because it is an endangerment to our environment.

I am asking and pleading with the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery), the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) and indeed the Government side to take a sane, rational approach in this matter. In some ways, many people think that the horse is out of the barn because the federal Minister has issued a licence in June. I do not think it is too late. I think there are a lot of things that can be done.

What I am suggesting is that there has to be an adequate study done with evidence provided so that we do know of the consequences. There has been no study done that is worth its salt. There has been no study done that is adequate with regard to Manitoba's water interests. The fact is that we cannot and should not agree to anything until these studies have been completed and then we should consider them and then we should be in a position to negotiate if that is where we are going to end up at. So we study, consider and

then negotiate. Surely, we cannot agree to anything. The Government of Manitoba cannot agree to anything until we have the data.

There have been studies done, I know, by the Souris Basin Development Authority, but this has been very limited. It was limited to the North Dakota Saskatchewan border only. There has been a study done by the Environmental Protection Agency and that was only from the dam itself, down 200 river kilometers to the City of Minot. That also did not consider Manitoba. I am told on very good authority that the United States Corps of Engineers does not think much of either of those two studies. So we do not have anything that we can use for negotiation. We have nothing to use for consideration and then negotiation.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba has rights under Article IV of the Boundary Waters Treaty, no one shall pollute or damage property and health in any jurisdiction, in this case, in the Province of Manitoba. I understand that the federal Minister, Mr. McMillan, has issued a licence as of June 21 with 13 conditions in it. One of those conditions, I believe it is condition No. 10, says that there shall not be this violation of the Boundary Waters Treaty. I guess there was some reference made to this by the First Minister. The fact is that this is something that may be a consideration. I am not suggesting that is the solution, but this may be a consideration. For goodness sakes, let us not abrogate our responsibility. I think people concerned about the environment in this province were horrified to read the remarks in the newspapers made by the Minister of Environment. Let us not abrogate our responsibility. That is totally irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker, as was referred to by my colleague, the MLA for Logan (Ms. Hemphill), the former NDP Minister did write to the federal Government expressing our concerns very forthrightly. Included in our concerns in this letter was an appendix which outlined what Manitoba has a right to expect as a Party that could be affected by the proposed project. We referred specifically to a thorough, scientifically credible analysis providing the expected values of all water quality parameters at the Saskatchewan-North Dakota border for all anticipated operating regimes of the project; secondly, a thorough scientifically credible analysis which routes all of the Saskatchewan-North Dakota water quality parameter values through North Dakota, applying the expected North Dakota operating regime to produce the expected values of all water quality parameters at the North Dakota-Manitoba border for all anticipated operating regimes in North Dakota; thirdly, a thorough scientifically credible analysis which compares the expected values of all water quality parameters under all operating regimes at the North Dakota-Manitoba border with base-line water quality for the Souris River in Manitoba to determine expected project water quality impacts in Manitoba.

* (2030)

It goes on, in the appendix, that all the necessary work done there could be and probably should be funded by North Dakota and Saskatchewan, because they were the proponents of this particular project.

Whatever time is required to perform the necessary work and consult with the affected public must be built into the project schedule. We are clearly on record as stating that we need this credible scientific analysis. Manitoba, of course, would be prepared to cooperate. We outlined what we could do by preparing detailed guidelines, providing information on the Souris River basin water quality objectives, provide information on base-line water quality in the Souris River basin in Manitoba, and generally assist in the development and execution of a public consultation process.

So it is absolutely essential that we get reliable, scientific studies, that that be made available to the public and that, indeed, there be discussion. We have also suggested, in addition to that, we could use our own Clean Environment Commission to have hearings and to allow for public input in addition to that.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, we understand that the Shand Coal Generating Station which is related to this dam project will be, of course, burning coal or will be causing acid rain. That is another environmental concern that we should have here. What, if any, acid rain will be coming from that particular project? So the study has to be done, if for no one else but for the people, and certainly it should be done for the Government.

I do not often agree with the Member for Arthur or the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) but he did state back in February of 1986, I believe, and this was referred to in The Brandon Sun of that time, that the Tory MLA, as is referred to, said he wants the International Joint Commission, which regulates Canada-United States water movement, to assess the project. That is an excellent suggestion. He is now a Minister of this Government. Surely he should have some influence in the discussions in the Cabinet, in his caucus, and that the Government should go ahead and press Ottawa for this IJC (International Joint Commission) Assessment. Nothing should happen certainly before this.

Time goes very fast, I do not know how much time I have left. I have two minutes left? I have eight minutes left? Two minutes left?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member has two minutes remaining.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Regrettably there is an emergency about this on the part of the Saskatchewan Government. They seem to have made a deal with the federal Government. Premier Devine wants this project badly. It is in his constituency. It is being opposed incidentally by the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan and they are on record as not proceeding with this if they are elected in the next election, or they would stop it, if at all possible, upon being elected in the next election.

I want to urge some sanity on the part of the Government, stand up for Manitobans. I say that, if the Government is not going to take action, then you can see a Bill or some action coming from this side which will have the effect of law in this entire matter. That is not beyond the realm of possibility. So live up to your challenges and get on with the job.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I found this most interesting, the comments that I have heard here today, and I think it is appropriate to some degree that we have this kind of a discussion. It brings out a real variety of views. Many people may not really understand the situation, but everybody has their own philosophical view as to what is happening and they put it on the record.

One comment I found from the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans), an interesting statement that he puts on the record, that if the NDP Government would be elected in Saskatchewan, they would not proceed with this program. Over the period of years, in my history before politics and in politics, I have been observing what has happened. One of the things I think, when we look back over the years, the building years—I would like to call them the building years, the Duff Roblin years—when we had things like the diversion, the floodway around Winnipeg, can any of you recall the flack and the criticism about what happened about that diversion, the terrible things that happened with that, the static that happened? Until years later, all of a sudden, we realized it was a positive project. The static that was gone through in terms of the anti-floodway feelings that were there—the building years I call them.

What has happened in the last years is that we have so many regulations that nothing develops anymore. I want to bring forward a case like the St. Malo Dam. At that time it was under PFRA. It was for specific purposes. It was not for recreation. It was supposed to be a water reservoir that was going to help the farmers, to provide some water. I am talking of projects at that time that were undertaken. There were many others under consideration, some qualified, some did not.

The difficulty I have is that we are in a stage where all of a sudden whatever happens environmentally—and we have to protect these things, we have to be concerned, but I will tell you something. The assurance that I have been given today—even prior to the fact in Question Period—the environmental impact, all these things would be addressed properly and we blow it up with smoke and mirrors and stuff like that. Why do we not get to be positive in terms of making some of these things happen. You have the assurances and I said hey, trust us. That was may be facetious. Do not trust us, but I will tell you something, the assurances are on record that we will look at every aspect of the things that would affect Manitoba negatively. We have spent all day, everybody expounding their views and that is fine, that is fine. Everybody has a view and should maybe put it forward.

I will tell you something. My concern is that we get so caught up with this kind of thing that we miss the main point which is progress somewhere along the line. If I could roll the clock back and go back to the point when we were promoting in our little community of Grunthal on the Rat River a project, a dam, that would take and give us the reservoir of water to use for the farmers in case of emergency. I think all of us should look back to the fact that right now, this year, in a drought year like this, we should be looking at these

kinds of projects and endorsing them, not ad hoc, but we should be endorsing these kind of programs in terms of conservation of water.

The fact that this project in Saskatchewan, which is a benefit to Saskatchewan—I hope they never can stop any project that we have in our province. I think their concerns should be addressed as we are trying to address ours, but I think we should be very cognizant of the fact that we have to move in these directions. I would like to see a total change of attitude in terms of what happens, how we deal with the water situation. If you think that it is not serious right now, this drought, this year, has finally brought something home to all of us, that we have to start looking at how do we conserve our water, how do we conserve our watersheds. I think the fact that Saskatchewan has got a project going there—so we play a little politics here and say, address all our concerns. The concerns are being addressed. Saskatchewan is addressing the concerns, environmental concerns, North Dakota is. I will tell you something, I am not going to throw too many barbs, but I was the critic of the Department of Natural Resources for years. I attended some of the functions, meetings in North Dakota regarding this project, already a few years ago. Our administration at that time, the Premier had been invited to either come or send representation but he saw fit not to do that at that time.

That shows a lack of cooperation. Regardless of our politics, let us get on with some of these meaningful projects. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was critical of the project in Saskatchewan, but we are looking at doing a project under the Dauphin Lake. We have to start looking at some of these projects, let us move them forward. Let us address the concerns, but we get overly concerned about the things, we are throwing up roadblocks. We are not asking, is it good or positive?

The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has been a promoter of this project for a long time, indicating that if these concerns are met, and I think we have to address them, that it will supply better quality water and an ongoing supply of water. Let us get our head out of the sand and let us start being positive about the things that are going to be positive for Manitoba. I personally feel, and I am not an engineer, but we can talk about environmental impact, wildlife impact, all kinds of impacts, and generally it is not going to change that much. If we want to talk about these kind of things, then let us look at what has happened on our hydro development, impacts there, maybe there were mistakes made. Some positive things are happening, you are building. We are not building any more, we are concerned about keeping everything under wraps. We throw up so many roadblocks that no Government can move any more.

Let us start from the politics of saying a back room deal was made between Devine and the federal Government. This project has been on the burner for so long already, I think it is a positive thing. I think it is a positive thing for Saskatchewan. They have addressed the environmental concerns; North Dakota is addressing our concerns. We have the International Joint Commission.

I just want to go back to the Roseau River Project that was on the dockets when the NDP was Government, and Sid Green was the Minister of Natural Resources at that time. There were positive things that would come forward. I will tell you something, we swamped it with meetings and objections of every kind. It was not a positive thing in my mind to go through with that because the municipality of the R.M. of Frankiin at this stage of the game, where the Seine River comes through, not the Seine River, the Roseau River comes through, they have all kinds of crossings, their bridges are all dilapidated, they do not qualify any more, we are closing those bridges. These were all part of a general program that would have been a positive program. But I will tell you something, we had hearings, and meetings till H would not have it. And, finally, the darn thing got stopped. You know what has happened? The water came out of the States, and we raised all the concerns, all these things that the Americans were going to do. You know what we did? We stopped and swamped the project, and you know what? To this day, it has not happened, and they have done all their drainage work. They have done it subtly, in their own way. Their engineers are not stupid.

So, they got blocked on a major project and we lost a major benefit with that. We lost a major benefit with that, and that is what I am suggesting to Members here. Let us raise our concerns, legitimately so, and I think we have the right to do that. We should do that, we have a responsibility to Manitoba, but let us not stomp on all these positive things. If I could roll the clock back and get involved in that fight with the Roseau River at that time, and the then Minister, Sid Green, a very capable individual in my mind, though we had different philosophical views, but I will tell you something, we should have gone through with that project. The southeast area would have gained by that. I am speaking in defense of this project here, for the southwest area. It does not affect me in my constituency, but I feel that when we look back at the mistakes that have been made, let us use common sense a little bit. That is all I am asking.

We play the political game in here, but by doing that sometimes, we scramble many of these projects that are positive things. I would like to see us be a building province again and we have not been a building province under the NDP, in spite of what you say, the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans). We have to be more positive and look at some of the benefits that we can get, and the onus should be—the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) indicated he is going to come forward with a water conservation program—that we have to start looking at things differently, that we have to conserve our water.

* (2040)

I will tell you something, the Minister of Natural Resources—I do not know whether he mentioned it in his comments—but some of the areas that have run into water problems. You take away food, you can scramble a little bit; you take away water and you have yourself a fight on your hands, regardless of what? Now people in the city, maybe because you turn on your taps, you turn off your tap for a day and you are going

to get awful panicky, and I will tell you something, the same thing is happening in the rural area right now.

So let us look at these things in a positive sense in terms of so it happens to be in Saskatchewan, I think the benefits will accrue to Manitoba in terms of maybe better quality of water, and we have to make sure . . .

Mr. Leonard Evans: You do not know, why did you not do the study?

Mr. Albert Driedger: The Member for Brandon East has been here so long he cannot get his head out of that kind of a rut.

Mr. Leonard Evans: You do not even know what the hell you are talking about.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Well, go and talk to the people who are going to be effected by it. I ask the Member for Brandon East, go and talk to the people effected by it in the area. But we are making decisions here that is going to take that opportunity away from them and I think we should be cognizant of the fact, and let all of us work together, let us work together.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister's time has expired.

Mr. Albert Driedger: After 11 years, we will get the Member for Brandon East, and I will tell you something, I know he has had his head in the sand all the time.

Mr. Speaker, one final plea. Let us use some common sense. I ask everybody, let us use some common sense.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): It is with great pleasure I rise and speak on this important debate.

First of all, I would like to say, in reply to the comments that were directed to me this afternoon in regard to the Honourable Member who came over to the Liberal Party, I respect that and like I said during my campaign, it was going to be one of honesty and integrity, and at that time there was a member who crossed over to another Party and I respected him, still do, and I still do the same thing for the Member that has crossed over today. So the comments I will not go any further today with.— (Interjection)— That I do not believe and I will not accept that. Like I said, it was going to be integrity and honesty and it will continue to be, and let it sleep as far as I am concerned in my constituency. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, my first question and concern in regard to the Rafferty-Alameda project is: How many Manitobans are aware of this project? Like the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) this afternoon mentioned that on this side of the House, we did not know too much about the project. Well, maybe I am one of them and I will say that I do not have all the facts, except that Manitoba has been left out in the studies. It is quite clear there have been two studies, one for Saskatchewan and one for the United States. Why was Manitoba left out? And I think it is of utmost importance at this time that the Government look into Manitoba's interest.

There has been some concern in the studies that have been made for the United States and Saskatchewan in regard to Manitoba, and these should be addressed immediately by our Government. They should have been addressed before the licence that was issued in June of 1988, and I do not think it is too late to do so.

The interests of our Manitobans comes first as far as we Members here in this Legislature. There are 57 of us who represent Manitoba . . .

An Honourable Member: Fair deal.

Mr. Gaudry: Yes, and you are one of them and you should take an interest also.

Like the Member for Emerson (Mr. Driedger) said, it did not affect his constituency. It does not affect mine either, maybe, but I happen to have lived in St. Laurent, Manitoba, on the lakeshore of Manitoba, and when we talked about the diversion of Portage that affected that lake, still does, and I still have a cottage in that area and the people are concerned. It is a fishing community and it is their livelihood that is involved, and I am sure it is not the only community.

Therefore, I urge this Government to take action to look into the concerns of Manitobans before it is too late. As Members in the Opposition have all indicated today their concerns, and great concerns, the Members of the Liberal Party, Members of the NDP have also, and I think we voted together in support that we have a study made before it is too late, and I hope the Government will urge the Government of Canada to look into this project. Thank you very much.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we have got a very interesting debate and situation developing on the Rafferty-Alameda project which is in Saskatchewan on the Souris River. The Souris River is also a very interesting river in that it originates in Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Manitoba and we all have a vested interest, if you will, in that river.

I think if you take a look at what the Souris River does, some 19 percent of its waterflow originates in Saskatchewan, and what the Saskatchewan Government has proposed, and my understanding is, two dams. Those dams, when completed, will essentially eliminate downstream flooding in North Dakota, and as a result, in Manitoba to the same degree outside of the uncontrolled waters which emanate from Manitoba sources and impact downstream from there.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding—and I will stand corrected if I am wrong—that the Government of Saskatchewan has done an environmental impact study, the concerns about wildlife that were mentioned have been addressed in Saskatchewan where the wildlife is affected.

But yet my honourable friends seem to have developed somewhat of a holier than thou attitude toward the environment, that they are the only ones that really care about the environment. I simply indicate to my honourable friends that you are absolutely wrong in that premise.

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What you are doing and demonstrating today is a very political response, and I am going to say this with fear of retribution that someone is going to take offence opposite for me saying it. You are taking the classic political response to an initiative wherein New Democrats and Liberals, because there happens to be a Conservative Government federally and a Conservative Government provincially, you automatically are going to oppose a project that those Conservative Governments might agree to. The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans) said automatically our counterparts in Saskatchewan are opposed to this and will not proceed with it. That is an interesting political position for them to take.

Let me remind you that nothing changes in terms of flow in Manitoba except the very real potential for steadier flows and possibly increased flows. What we are going to see as a net result of the Rafferty-Alameda project in Saskatchewan is the containment of flood waters in the Spring.

* (2050)

I want to tell my honourable friends that in my constituency there is a project called the Deerwood Soil and Management Project. What that is doing is taking in the escarpment, the Pembina escarpment, and selecting sites, wherein you will construct small earth-filled dams for the purpose of containing that rush of Spring runoff water to prevent downstream flooding, to prevent erosion and to store water. Do you know who the water is being stored for? In some instances, for cattle; in minor instances, yet to be developed but as the project goes on, for small irrigation projects. The benefit is to hold water, not to flush it down to the Hudson Bay as quickly as possible, causing untold damage while it is going there.

The Saskatchewan project is not needed simply for cooling water for their thermal-electric plant, because they can get by with a much lower level dam in one location, but they are proposing to build a higher level dam and a second one to give you flood control in North Dakota and in Manitoba. It is of such value downstream that the Americans are recommending some \$40-plus million to be invested in that project to provide the flood protection.

Is that wrong, or do you prefer to have us pay flood costs on an annualized basis, impacting upon the taxpayers of Manitoba? That is the choice you are making. I do not know of any circumstance where in this part of our country, the central plains area, having more water on a regular basis is detrimental: (a) to wildlife, (b) to human beings, and (c) to the environment. It meets all of the criteria that environmentalists ought to want.

Yet we have, for political reasons, this issue surfacing just, hopefully, in time for a federal election, so it can become an issue in a federal election. I do not like to see that happening, because I have not heard where this project damages Manitoba. I have heard where this project will benefit Manitoba, in terms of flood control and provision of steadier, more reliable flows of water to the communities along the Souris River in

southwest Manitoba, reliable flows, I might remind you, that are not available this year because we have a drought of abnormal severity in that region.

Are you against flood protection and steadier flows of water to those communities in southwestern Manitoba? Because if you are, continue with your opposition, because that is what you are telling those people. I object to that.

I want to tell you that I come from some knowledge in terms of dams, not a great deal, but I served as a consultant to the Pembina River Dam project in 1973. I want to tell you that the U.S. Corps of Engineers was proposing a high-level dam at Pembilier in 1973, and I was retained through a consulting firm, paid for by the then New Democratic Government of Ed Schreyer, to study that project of one high level dam at Pembilier. It would have provided us with flood protection, water storage for municipal and irrigation water supplies.

It was good for wildlife because for some strange reason when you have a lake you have fish. You have ducks and geese nesting; you have deer drinking. At home right now, deer have to go upwards of two miles to find water to drink because there is not a pond of water anywhere to be found in south central rural Manitoba. You are against that and you are saying you are against it because of environmental reasons, but yet you are willing to let the deer and other wildlife do without water, because you do not want water stored to provide a permanent lake and flood control. I mean, how regressive can you be in the name of environmental protection? That is pure and undiluted balderdash what you are putting out here in terms of wildlife concerns. Water means more wildlife. Any place you go in the world, where you have no wildlife is in the middle of the Sahara Desert where there is no water, and where you have wildlife it is at the oasis is where there is water. You are telling me that increased water is bad?

I want to tell you, we came up with a cost-benefit study on the Pembilier high level dam, and the cost-benefit ratio was beneficial to Manitoba. We did not have to put up very much money, but the then NDP Government said no way. They wanted to put the money up North where they had more political advantage, and anything that benefits south central Manitoba, Rhineland constituency to be exact, in terms of potable water supply, flood protection and irrigation was not a consideration of the then NDP Government, and that project got turned away, the entire lake being in the Pembina Valley in the United States with the exception of one-quarter mile of backup slightly into the Canadian side south of Kaleida.

We have the same circumstance again. We have now the Liberals joining the New Democrats, being the anti-development dogs in the manger. Open your eyes and have a little vision of what this project is meant to do. What this whole project is meant to do is flood protection, storage of water. Instead of having it run down the Souris River causing flood problems for approximately a four-week period of time in the year, in the Spring of the year, this project provides flood protection, steady supplies of usable water in an area subject to severe water shortages.

Now, I know that is not something that is popular amongst my honourable friends opposite, because it is not politically convenient to support it right now, but it is conveniently political to hammer a project, to hammer the federal Government, because we are probably within weeks or months of a federal election, and hopefully this will be an issue where they can say there was this trade-off and that trade-off. You know, that may well be. I do not know, but I will tell you one thing, if the trade-off was translating statutes, the federal Government paid. If the trade-off was a grassland park, the federal Government is paying. (Interjection)-

What did the federal Government get out of it? Have you ever asked yourself that? Ask yourself what the people of Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Manitoba get out of this project and you will find benefits, not the kind of fearmongering disincensive that you are trying to put on the record today.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): I would like to preface my remarks with a few comments about the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) diatribe in this House on the decision of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) to sit as a Liberal. The Premier is an intelligent man and it must be galling for him to see events unfolding as he knows they must. How long will it take for this first major crack in the Government caucus to lead to the knife throwing the Tories do best? Not long, because Members opposite have realized the changing demographics make it impossible for their Party ever again to form a majority Government in this province.

Pathetic suggestions by Tory Members that Winnipeg voters should be deprived of representation by population in this House show that they know their dilemma, a Party on the skids. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) suggests, perhaps hopefully, that the Liberal Party will take anyone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mark Minenko): Order, please. On a point of order, the Honourable Attorney-General.

* (2100)

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I would ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to call the Honourable Member to order. Under Rule 27, "Debates," I believe the rules of relevance apply. Here we are this evening discussing a resolution brought to us through the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) dealing with the Rafferty-Alameda Dam, and the Honourable Member is now telling us about something totally foreign to that. I would like the Honourable Member to be instructed to remember that the rules of relevancy apply.

Mr. Reg Aicock (Opposition House Leader): To the same point of order, the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) is simply responding to remarks placed on the record by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tonight in this very debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The rules of relevancy apply. I remind all Honourable Members of the topic before the House, and all remarks should be relevant.

Mr. Kozak: Our Party is an open one but there is one Member of this House that we would delight in defeating at the polls. As he knows, his defeat will be a source of considerable satisfaction to many Members of his own Party.

Referring to Rafferty-Alameda, the defeat of the Tories will be well-deserved for many reasons, but one and the most recent one of which is the Rafferty-Alameda project. For here we have a Government without courage, a Government without the courage to draft a Budget without the guidelines provided by the last discredited NDP Budget, a Government without the courage to stand up to Brian Mulroney for Manitoba's share of the pie, and a Government without the courage to raise questions about federal projects that threaten the quality of Manitoba waters.

Manitoba has projects that are not uneconomic, as are the Hibernia oil field and the Husky oil upgrader. This Government lacks the courage to demand the federal Government's interest in the expansion of our forest industry, the development of our potash, the development of an aluminum industry. They lack the courage to defend our water quality, our wildlife, and our vegetation.

In the face of the Prime Minister's determination to give the Premier of Saskatchewan a political handout via the Rafferty-Alameda project—hardly surprising, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What did the Tories do when the Prime Minister handed the CF-18 contract to Quebec? They cancelled their annual meeting and laid low. Thank you.

Mr. Helmut Pankratz (La Verendrye): I also want to take this opportunity to speak to this issue and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, No. 1, I would like to

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pankratz: First of all, I would like to just put on the record a few comments in regard to this emergency debate. I think a lot of members here tonight have lost track of what is actually on debate. First of all, I would like to indicate that we are having an emergency debate and then members are discussing the defection of a member or other members for that matter. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe this is totally a waste of time. For members opposite to consider an issue as important as these two dams and for us to have an emergency debate on this and then go in their discussions onto all kinds of different topics, I think, is actually detrimental to the House as such.

First of all, the Rafferty Dam, which has been indicated by Members on our side for what the actual dam is for, it is for cooling, a hydro project, a hydro steam plant. Naturally, what the Opposite members, some of them, would like to see is that we would be able to sell them cheap hydro, possibly subsidized by the Manitoba taxpayer. So in that respect, I think there should maybe be a study done in that respect where they are possibly trying to gain some political points in respect to the hydro project instead of being concerned about what the actual dam is meant to perform and do.

The Alameda Dam which is a flood control project, which has already been stated by the Minister of Natural

Resources (Mr. Penner) and also the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery), is for flood control, and I think we should not take that lightly. We have Ducks Unlimited and all kinds of different organizations that are in our province studying where dams and dikes can be built for our wildlife. Here stating that it will be detrimental to wildlife, I believe, is making some irresponsible statements.

I believe that we, as Members in this House, should try to work together on different projects. We should by all means air our differences and our concerns in regard to this project just like any others, but we should not close our minds. I think the Member for Emerson (Mr. Driedger) brought out the Winnipeg Floodway. At one time, it was called "Duff's Ditch," and the last couple of years a great big plaque has been placed in honour of him for a floodway which today is protecting the City of Winnipeg and has saved millions and millions of dollars in the Province of Manitoba.

We are speaking of the environment. We are talking of ozone layers. Well, I think the Members opposite should also remember the environment is something that has to be approached more from a global point, and naturally each province must do its share. But when I see how in the Amazon area, Amazon in South America, they are burning the bushes and how there are thousands of fires glowing every night and millions and millions of acres of prime forest land being destroyed, and here we are trying to, in the one sense, exactly produce the opposite where we can retain moisture and they are in a sense actually destroying what is protecting our environment to some extent.

So I believe, when it comes to environmental issues, they should not be used for political posturing like I can see here again today in this House. I think the environment is a very serious issue that we should all be concerned about. We should not try for political reasons to deprive certain areas of our province or other provinces, for that matter, to turn their land into productive land by having dams and supplying the people and the vegetation and also the livestock with water in some areas where it is needed. What we should be doing is working together whereby we could maybe supply more water, get more water for the Souris River. We should be negotiating with the American Government wherever possible.

As the Minister has indicated, they have had joint meetings and they are by all means negotiating on this. That is what we should be doing whereby we could get more water running down the Souris River which runs into the Assiniboine River and then naturally into the Red River. We all know that Selkirk actually drinks that water. If any of you have gone to some of those treatment plants, you wonder how some of this water can be purified in any way. So the more flow we could get along any one of these contributories, the better we would all be off. I think this is something that we should protect, that the drinking water by all means is maintained. But the greater we can have the flow down some of these contributories, the better we would be off.

* (2110)

So instead of posturing here and trying to make political gains, I think we should be back at our expenditures, at our Budget and doing something worth while which this time actually was allotted for, and be concerned about the financial situation of this province. It seems to me that we are not as concerned as we should be. These emergency debates like we are having right now, I think to a great extent I can see again, with some of the Members and with some of the topics that they have been using, they are just using it to try to make political points. I would wish that we would get back to the issue of our budget and get over with our expenditures and pass them so that this province can carry on with worthwhile projects like these dams possibly, and help along with the environment, wherever possible.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to put a few comments on this emergency debate that we are having this evening. As far back as 1985 when we were in Government, we expressed to the Government of Canada our concerns and our proposal for the development of the Rafferty and Alameda Dams in the Souris River systems. Our Minister at that time wrote some letters, correspondence to the Ministers of the federal Government. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) had written letters, and we had assurances from the federal Government that our concerns, the Manitoba interests, would be addressed.

I find it very difficult or hard to understand why this Government is not taking a leadership role in terms of protecting the interests of Manitoba, including the interests of a Member from southwestern Manitoba, the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), why he is not pushing hard to push the concerns of that area. I have an article here that mentioned that he called for a meeting to address this very issue with his constituents. He had concerns about the quality of water in that area for his constituents. Today, he should be addressing that issue and also raise this issue with the federal Government, and also the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) and also the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) who are dealing with this issue.

The federal Government has once again misled us in saying that our interests would be protected. This thing was agreed to and a licence was provided for the construction and the proceeding of this dam with the Government of Saskatchewan without any regard to the concerns of Manitobans. We were assured that the interests of Manitobans would be protected and also would be heard. I would urge this Government and the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) to call on the federal Government so that we can go with an environmental study impact on this project, what kind of an impact it is going to have on the Rafferty, what kind of an impact these dams will have on the Souris and the river system flowing into the Manitoba waters.

We have experience here in Manitoba as to the effects of damming rivers on our waters here in Manitoba. Just look at Northern Manitoba, what has happened into the development of these dams and the environmental impacts that it has had on the resources and even on our traditional lifestyle of the aboriginal people. The water quality should be addressed, if there is going to

be any impact. I know that reduction of the water flow will cause a higher concentration of pollutants and other agricultural chemicals and sewage discharges and - (Interjection)- I am talking about—as Minister of Environment, he is chirping from his chair, but he should be concerned about the water quality that will be flowing into the Province of Manitoba which will ultimately flow through into Lake Winnipeg and flow into the Hudson Bay.

I can tell you about the poor water quality in many of the reserves and the impact that it has had. A few years back, we had this incident with a boy who had an operation and required major surgery and enormous expense to save this child's life. It was as a result of the many years of poor quality water not being available at Poplar River. So let this Minister know that we have had experiences about our quality of water. It is something that we should be concerned about, and also that everybody should have a right to a safe water supply and a good source of water we have here in Manitoba.

I know that we had our Governments meet with the members from the U.S. border concerning other dams, the Garrison on which an International Joint Commission was established. The same kind of approach could be made here to ensure that our waters are protected, at least once they enter into the Manitoba jurisdiction.

I know that we were talking about free trade. We want free movements of goods, but we want to ensure that anything that comes back here is good for Manitobans. I would urge this Government that they would take responsibility and leadership to ensure that the interests of Manitobans are protected.

The federal Minister has not shown any consideration at all in issuing a licence to Saskatchewan which, as a result, has ignored the concerns of Manitobans here. We need this Government to take the lead role, to tell their colleagues that the interests of Manitobans have not been addressed. As a matter of fact, before they issued the licence, they should have had a review, an environmental impact study done by the Clean Environment Commission. That is the first step that they should have taken, rather than granting a licence and then later trying to protect the interests of Manitobans. We are not really sure what kind of impacts this dam will have, these Rafferty and Alameda Dams will have in the Province of Manitoba. I urge the Ministers, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), to initiate discussions, and to ensure that the interests of Manitobans are protected. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (2120)

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): I rise on this matter to draw from my comments on this very important issue to all Manitobans. It was indeed with some concern that I had the opportunity of hearing the Members opposite saying that this was just another issue that we had suddenly expressed a concern in. In fact, our Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) first raised this matter in this Legislature on the 27th of July. At that time, we

in this Party considered this matter an issue of importance. Certainly, with the approaching date at the end of this month when the matter finally is to come to a conclusion, we find it is indeed important to debate this matter in this Legislature and hopefully, in this way, prompt this Government into action.

We earlier heard the comments of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) when he said that all we want to do is spend Manitobans' money in requesting this Government to have a study done and completed on the impact that this project may have on the quality of life of all Manitobans. I think many environmental issues over the past number of years have proven that perhaps penny-wise is not very good in the long run.

When I was indeed a youngster, and that was not all that many years ago, I remember some initial involvement in matters of environment through Pollution Probe. At that time, that organization was raising many environmental concerns, concerns that were not necessarily popular issues but concerns that they saw that would endanger not only our environment, endanger not only our physical surroundings, but our lives.

I believe, over the last number of years, we keep seeing examples of our technology rushing a little too far ahead a little too fast without really understanding what the impact may be on all of us. I understand that scientists often look to many different animals to see the perhaps ultimate effect on human beings: the example of canaries in mines, the effect of DDTs on various birds, and all the various other pollutants and how they have affected wildlife and fish throughout the Great Lakes area of Canada. Again, I am concerned when the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), when referring to one of the American studies and says that he is not too concerned about the whole issue when he points out that study says that there may be damages to Manitoba.

I think history has reinforced the idea that many "mays" have turned into positives and it is indeed grave concern for all Manitobans, not simply Members on this side of the House, when words like "may" are dismissed without some study of the issue to determine what is the result of particular human endeavours, and in this case this particular project which we are debating today.

Again, we hear various speakers raise the issue that we certainly have looked to the federal Government to have public hearings. That is why we felt that the federal Government would look after our interests. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am concerned when I hear people talk about other Governments looking after our concerns.

We are here to represent the interests of Manitobans, and like every lawyer would say, that he can only represent one client, that there sometimes arise conflicts of interest, as the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) did several weeks ago in debate, where he said that "There is a conflict of interest, and as a result I cannot participate." It is in this same way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am indeed concerned when we look to others to protect Manitoban's interest.

Legislatures in the Province of Saskatchewan are elected by the people of Saskatchewan to look after their interests. Our legislators elected to the federal House, the House of Commons, are elected to consider the concerns that are national in scope. We, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are elected to look after the concerns of Manitobans and in that way we feel that it is indeed an important step to protect the interests of Manitobans in order for us, for this Government, to look a little closer at what the impact of this project will be on Manitobans.

It is not enough for us to say this or that about different surveys, different studies, different concerns, raised by people who do not represent Manitobans. We cannot serve two masters, we cannot serve two clients, and our clients are Manitobans.

One of the concerns that is certainly explored in the potential impacts of this project is that the water quality may in fact and will in fact be adversely affected. The water will be affected, as we have heard various speakers say, in many different ways, and again I would ask that this Government look to a Manitoban study to consider the impact upon Manitoba, because it has concerns not just to our general well-being, but again to our economy, and that should be of interest to us as well.

If foreign elements are introduced into our various waterways, I certainly would not want to speculate on the potential result of that situation. As a result, I stand this evening to state my concerns with respect to this Government's inaction in this particular matter. Because indeed I, as every one of us 57 in this Chamber, was sent to this Legislature to serve Manitobans, to consider their interests in our deliberations. I certainly believe and certainly very strongly feel that in order for us to give this matter the fullest consideration as to what its implications will be on Manitoba is for our own Government to have a study done as to the implications of this on us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Kildonan.- (Interjection)- I did not see you, go ahead.

* (2130)

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, we cannot have them from the same side, one after the other, when one of our Ministers is standing up.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Municipal Affairs): My appreciation to the Member opposite. I am sure there will time for him to express his views in a moment as well.

I was not really chomping at the bit to get involved in this debate until I listened to some of the comments a little bit more closely. I realized that I had a grocery list in my pocket that has about as much relevance to this topic as some of the comments I am getting from across the way.

The Finance critic from the opposite side got up and talked about us not having any courage. He did not display a great deal of courage because he did not

say anything that was relevant to the debate. He simply wanted to talk about our inability, in his opinion, to deal with a myriad of other problems and simply forgot to say anything about this particular issue. So I guess that indicates that if he knows as much about the other topics as he does about this issue that perhaps his comments there are not too relevant either.

We look at this project. I think there is something that we have to bear in mind. Perhaps a little bit of trivia that happened across my path the other day would be relevant to the debate. That is that, if you look at the average relative humidity in the Sahara Desert, it was probably about 15 percent. Manitoba this past year, on occasion, dropped as low as 30 percent. Now given those circumstances, given that the Pembina Triangle of this country was considered another Sahara Desert or potential Sahara Desert when it was first explored, why would we have a long tirade today from Members opposite, who are concerned about the fact that there might be a possibility to increase some of the water holding capacity in that area?

There is no one in this House and there should not be anyone in this House who is not concerned about environmental issues, who is not concerned about the impact of what is done in developments and particularly in developments of considerable magnitude, such as we see when dams are built. But in this particular case, we are looking at a construction of a dam and a holding capacity that in my opinion would simply enhance the ability of the area to make better use of the resources that it has.

So we are coming down through the United States where there are a series of reservoirs with varying amounts of holding capacity that will hold back water that can be used on the American side of the border and ultimately brought forward for use on the Canadian side of the border.

This Summer is a very good example of why projects such as this need to have some serious consideration because while some of the Members opposite smile and some of them wince, the ones who understood the comments winced when the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) said that the cows would not even drink the slime that is in the Souris River this summer. Maybe if we think that we should not increase the flows, we should talk to the people out there who are affected.

The result of international cooperation this summer, a result of agreements that are in place, that were in fact exceeded, were when we saw the flows on the Souris River this summer voluntarily increased because they needed more water in the Souris River. Now is that the kind of concerns that the Members opposite are worried about, that they want to see the water come rushing down the Souris? Head her through just as fast as she will go, that is what we as farmers are accused too often of doing, when we put in drainage works. We do not want drainage, we want conservation. We are talking about retention of water at the upper end of a watershed so that it can be managed, not thrown down the river, to try and flood out the downstream recipients.

We are talking about water management, and what is the philosophy of the people opposite? What is their

philosophy? Is it simply to stand there and complain because they do not have an understanding of the work that is being done by Natural Resources, the work that is being done by Environment, the work that is being done on this side of the House? Do they just want to stand there and complain or have they got a philosophy? The only thing that I can take from what they said today is that their philosophy is, well, let her go. Pull the plug and let her go, why bother with conservation efforts at the far end of the river?

We are talking about retention of various levels. We are talking about international cooperation. We are talking about the opportunity for a neighbouring province, fellow Canadians to have an opportunity to tap into funds from south of the border, and if those funds are properly acquired, if the agreements are properly put together, there will be benefits, tripartite benefits. I think that we have seriously misrepresented in this House today the potential benefits of a project such as this.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner) on several occasions today, in Question Period and in his response this afternoon, has indicated that his department is concerned and is doing everything that is necessary to make sure that we have an opportunity not only to maintain the flows that are coming into this province but maybe, just maybe—and this is something that has never been mentioned by the Members opposite—there will be an opportunity to enhance those flows at a time when the people downstream need them. And who is downstream? Who is downstream? They have all sorts of ideas, but there is not one of them that will admit that the people in the Souris River Valley might want some of that water when the relative humidity in this country drops to 30 percent as it did this summer.

The NDP is in no position to lecture this Government about philosophy on water levels and water management, the management of land. The Northern Flood Agreement has not been finished. Who has fiddled with that? They talk about jerking around the Native population in the northern part of this province. Who has done nothing in the Northern Flood Agreement? Who have been the patron saints of the North that have talked and not listened to the people up there? They have no right to talk to this Government about our ability to deal with the natural resources and to deal up front with the people on behalf of this province.—(Interjection)— You bamboozled them. One of these days they will realize that they got a lot of words, but no action. All they need to do is look at the ink on the Northern Flood Agreement. It sure as heck is not theirs.

* (2140)

I ask the redundant question: Is there a philosophy over there of water management? Is there a philosophy of conservation? Is there a philosophy that says that we should take the resources that we have and manage them properly? If you want to do that with the water, you have to have reservoirs so that you have reserves, so that when the water dries up in the Souris River, you have something more than slime to let out of the

dam south of the border. You will not have if you continue to say that these programs have nothing to offer for the people on this side of the border. All you care about is making cheap political shots to try and do something on behalf of the Opposition—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cummings: —in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the Honourable Minister to withdraw his last comments, “cheap political shots.”

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, if “cheap political shots” is considered unparliamentary, then allow me to withdraw that and replace it with these words.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Minister.

Mr. Cummings: Their debate this afternoon has done nothing but demonstrate that they do not care about conservation; they do not care about water management; they do not care about the people in the Souris River valley. All they care about is making headlines for tomorrow's paper.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): We are in this House to conduct positive debate, to hear opinions from all sides of the House.

Today in the process of approving an emergency debate, we wanted to present to the people of Manitoba positions from all sides about an issue which is extremely important to Manitobans. Mr. Speaker, I first learned of the project when I was visiting the constituency of the Honourable Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), where a number of his constituents approached me with what they believed to be a major environmental problem.

So within the first week of the opening of this House, on the 27th of July, the fourth day of this Session in which questions could be asked, we asked questions on the Rafferty-Alameda project. We asked the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery) on that day if he would conduct an environmental impact study. We did that because we knew, if such a study was to be conducted and the results analyzed prior to the 30th of September, they would have to be done very quickly. The people of the Souris Valley and other interested Manitobans would be able to participate in a positive or in a negative way about the impact of this particular dam. We got a negative reply from the Minister of the Environment.

Despite questions that were asked on two other occasions, we continued to get a negative reply. What can be more simple than conducting a study? What can be more democratic than asking the people to tell us their concerns? And yet this Government is unwilling to conduct a study, this Government is unwilling to listen to the peoples concerns. They are not conducting a study which is of an environmental impact nature which allows for full participation of the public.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, this does not come as a great shock to me, because I sat in this House from 1986 to 1988 when they were the Official Opposition. They only asked nine questions on the environment in 1986 and they only asked 22 questions in '87. In the brief session in February, they only asked one, so the environment has never been high on their list of priorities. We have seen as issue after issue after issue has entered this House—and I might inform the Members that Members on this side, including Members of the New Democratic Party, have asked over 40 questions on the environment in a little over a month and a half. That I think gives you some idea of the difference in direction of this Opposition from their Opposition.

What are some of the questions that should be asked of the public, should be asked of the experts, not just departmental experts but experts who have no axe to grind, no political master to serve? The question should be asked: What about the water quality? We have had reports that the water quality will deteriorate. Is that satisfactory to this Government? We have been told that, in good years, maybe you will get 100 percent of the flow but, in dry years, maybe you will get 45 percent of the flow. This is the question that has to be asked and the expert testimony has to be given. What of the wildlife habitats? What of the natural shelter belts?

We passed an environmental Act in 1987 and I supported that Act but, when I spoke to that Act, I said it was not strong enough. It was not strong enough because it gave the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery), no matter what political party that Minister belonged to, too much optional power. One of those areas in which the Minister could use his optional power was in the appointing of a study on the environment with regard to a particular project. Regrettably, even mega projects do not require absolutely, unless the Minister concurs, an environmental impact study. That was the weakness in the legislation, but it was better than the previous Act and sometimes you have to settle for what you can get at a particular time in history.

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) said, let us have a bit of common sense. What we would like on this side of the House is a principle that is fundamental to parliamentary democracy, and that is ministerial responsibility. We would like to have a Minister who would respond to the individuals who ask for an impact study, who show genuine concern about the problems facing them. The Minister says do not worry, we had a study from the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Even that study indicated that there were serious environmental problems for Manitoba. So even the study that he applauded on the 27th of July pointed out weaknesses for our province of this project.

We know there are studies in North Dakota, and I congratulate the North Dakota Congress on that. We know there are studies in Saskatchewan, and I congratulate the Saskatchewan Government on that. But it is our Environment Minister (Mr. Connery) who is responsible for the quality of the environment in the Province of Manitoba, and we cannot look to our protection south of the border or to the west of us. We can only look to our protection from within our own provincial boundaries.

That is why it is essential for this Government to finally listen. The only way we can get them to listen is by holding emergency debates, because we raised it four times in Question Period and the Minister refused to listen. So we have to bring about an instance whereby he will listen but, regrettably, that is not unfortunately in the cards because the Environment Minister refuses to answer questions about this project.

He passes the questions on to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Penner), and my consternation today must be: What are they afraid of? You know, they love to talk about fearmongering; 45 times so far in this Session, we have heard fearmongering in Question Period from that side. Mr. Speaker, what are they afraid of? Are they afraid of facts? Are they afraid of information? Are they afraid of a different point of view? All that an environmental impact study can do is to provide valid information—(Interjection)—oh, you have used “concern” 320 times and, just to make it easy for the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), all you have to do is go into the computer and you can get the information in a matter of seconds.

We have participated in a debate today. We have participated in a debate in which we tried to get a response from a Government. It is very sad that, regrettably, we cannot get them to respond because it would take, in order to get that response, an action. It would take their having to make a movement, and that is all that we requested on this side of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): I am pleased to take part in this debate. It is one of my first non-medical debates here. I would have loved to have the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) today here because, every time I ask him questions—Mr. Speaker, the basic question about this debate is the openness of this Government. The basic principle of any decision making is to take advice from all the people, all the parties who are concerned, and then make a rational decision.

When the first time a question was asked on July 27 to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery), at that time, the Minister said he does not need the study. How can he justify it when Saskatchewan has a study done, when North Dakota has a study done? Why not we? What for are we elected here? Just to make a decision just from one person and then wait for his actions? The second important thing, the person should be responsible and not passing the question to the next Minister and then next time it is going to be the next Minister and then somebody else. Is that the basic principle of making a decision?

The second, yesterday's Free Press the Minister of the Environment said, “It is too late and the study is unnecessary.” I think, Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable that, when the Minister had six weeks to make a decision, he did not make the decision, and I regret to say that I am extremely disappointed with the Minister's ability to handle the affairs.

* (2150)

Mr. Speaker, the second question that comes now has been said so many times, “Taylor-made” stories.

We are proud of our Member who has brought one of the most important issues for the last six weeks, the PCBs. We should have learned from that issue that the environment is such an important thing, it affects people. When we are studying a lot of things, we do not know about them and we should wait and have a study done and then present it to the public. We are not here to have a negative impact on anything. We are here to help this Government, and that is what we have been doing. That is what we did.- (Interjection)- Well, I am glad the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is listening and, no, I do not have to rush with my question. The next time, I may have to supply him with my printed questions. I am going to do that.

An Honourable Member: Get the written copy later.

Mr. Cheema: Well, next time we will be supplying that.- (Interjection)- It is a basic principle. I think the Member for Brandon should know that. I even discussed with him, in private and in public, that I think there are a few issues and one of them I raised with him. That is the way this Government operates. Even look at the example of the Brandon Mental Hospital. How can these two Members sit on one side and the other side, and they are not concerned about even the Mental Health Centre at Brandon. There is not even one full-time psychiatrist. Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable the way this Government is operating.

Let me point out a few of the facts now. A lot of studies have shown that is going to impact on the water in terms of the flow during the dry season and in the event of surplus water. The second is: What is the effect of this project on our environment in terms of the effect on the wildlife? What is the effect of this study on the environment, as such? What are going to be the economic benefits of this project? Why not a study? When we are studying each and everything, why not this, when these studies are going to cost like \$500,000.00? Why is there a medical network when we have agreed the system is already there, when all the reports are there? Why should we not rechannel some of the money where it is most important now? That is the fact I want to discuss and I want to share with my Members on this side of the House.

I must congratulate my colleague from Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), who has done extremely hard work and brought the facts to this House. We hope that, with the debate we have contributed today and for the last two months, will continue to do that and we can achieve something we can present to the public of Manitoba. At least, I can tell the Kildonan constituents that we are doing something right and we want to present the facts to them. Mr. Speaker, I end my speech with that. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I would like to maybe bring some common-sense approach to the Souris River basin project, just a common-sense approach so that maybe the people across the floor will get a better understanding of what in fact they are actually trying to do.- (Interjection)- I am willing to continue to talk to the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) afterward if he would like to continue on after ten o'clock.

I want to comment regarding the Moose Mountain, or as I say, the basin project itself. The Moose Mountain Creek and the Souris River flow into the United States and then they come back up into Manitoba, as we are all aware. In 1959, the Saskatchewan Government was given the power to retain some 50 percent of the water going through their province, the water flow. The project itself is entailing what I would classify as a mega project. We are looking at the Rafferty Dam, the Alameda Dam, and also in the United States they are putting in the Minot Channel, the Lake Darling Dam and the Villa Levee.- (Interjection)- I do not know that for a fact so I will not put that on the record.

What I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is it is a major project. It is not a small project. Before we sign any type of agreement of consent that it is important, it is crucial that we do have some type of an impact study done here in Manitoba. We know the Province of Saskatchewan and the State of North Dakota have conducted these most valuable impact studies. They know what is going to happen to their provinces. We know there are some benefits and we know there are some downfalls to it. Here in Manitoba we also need to get some type of an impact study done because we need to know how it is going to affect the Province of Manitoba. There are many things that are involved in this.

Let us look at some of the impact, the loss of farm land because of flooding in different areas. In Saskatchewan around Estevan, where they plan to do some of the irrigation, they will no doubt benefit from it. I have lived several years in Saskatchewan and I have kind of a kinship for the province. I think it is important that we realize that, yes, there are many benefits to it. I support it to a certain degree, but my major concerns are on how it is going to affect the Province of Manitoba. Ideally it would be nice to have a federal impact study conducted but, if we cannot settle for that, the least I can settle for is the provincial impact study conducted on it.

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Driedger) commented, "Trust us, we know what we are doing." I somehow find it very hard to trust the Government, the Members on the other side when they said, trust us regarding the PCB incident, the CF-18, whatever it might be. I can recall the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery), telling us, trust me, the boxcar in Transcona is safe, that we are not in any danger, not having a lock on the boxcar, anything of this nature. I just find it really difficult to trust this Government, especially at face value.

The Rafferty-Alameda Dam project is really there to initiate three purposes. One, to provide irrigation waters for the Saskatchewan farm lands, to provide flood control primarily to North Dakota, and to provide a cooling pond for the Shand Thermal Generating Station located near Estevan in Saskatchewan. There are effects here in Manitoba that we will pay if this project does come into being. Some of those effects are as easy as the quantity of water that would be in sewers, especially during the dry years. Will the Town of Souris have to start getting their water from the wells? If that is the case then we are going to have to look at pumping.

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We are looking at, my colleague says, \$1 million. Who is going to pay for it? This is the type of thing that we need to find out is what will happen if it does go ahead. I cannot emphasize that enough. That is really all I wanted to comment on. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call at ten o'clock? (Agreed)

The hour being 10 p.m., pursuant to Rule 21.(4), this debate is now terminated. This House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).