

**Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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authority of  
The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
<i>Vacant</i>	Fort Whyte	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 30, 2005

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

### PRAYER

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### Crocus Investment Fund

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Government was made aware of serious problems involving the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

As a direct result of the government ignoring the red flags back in 2001, over 33 000 Crocus investors lost over \$60 million.

Manitoba's provincial auditor stated "We believe the department was aware of the red flags at Crocus and failed to follow up on those in a timely way."

The relationship between some union leaders, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP seems to be the primary reason as for why the government ignored the red flags.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider the need to seek clarification on why the government did not act on fixing the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

Signed by Neirah Sankar, Gerry Sankar, Cathy Sankar and many, many others.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from General Byng School 18 Grade 9 students under the direction of Mr. Bruce Kemp. This school is located in the

constituency of the honourable Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Maples Surgical Centre Workers Compensation Cases

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, time and time again this NDP Premier's ideology has prevented him from partnering with private clinics in Manitoba at the expense of Manitoba patients. We have now learned that this NDP government's ideology has prevented the Workers Compensation Board from partnering with private clinics. On October 20, 2005, the Workers Compensation Board received a proposal from the Maples Surgical Centre offering unlimited MRI scans to WC claimants at no cost for the first year of operation.

\* (13:35)

My question to the Premier: Did he direct the Workers Compensation Board to ignore this offer from the Maples Surgical Centre, an offer that would have saved WCB some \$250,000? Did he direct them?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, \$250,000 was spent on bricks and mortar that should have been spent on Manitoba patients. We have also learned that more than two years ago, the Workers Compensation Board received another proposal from Maples offering to install, maintain and operate an MRI exclusively for the use of WCB patients. This offer came two years ago, well before this NDP government decided to spend taxpayers' dollars on purchasing an MRI for the Pan Am Clinic.

Why does this Premier continue to spend taxpayers' dollars on equipment when the private sector is there and offering to pick up the tab?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, again, I do not believe the limited machinery has yet been approved by the College of Physicians and Surgeons or has it gone

through the medical committee of the government. I would point out, as I did this morning, that we do fund procedures at the Western clinic. We fund them on the basis of cost and patient care. The cost for cataract surgeries went down from \$1,000 to I think it is \$700 after the Pan Am came in place.

I would point out to the member opposite that, as we understand it, and again, we have not seen a proposal in the sense of something that has been approved by the College of Physicians and Surgeons yet, but the machine at Pan Am will do head MRIs, the Maples one cannot. Apparently, I am advised, and I am not a doctor, the Pan Am Clinic MRI will do neck procedures. Apparently, the machine that is being proposed by members opposite, the MRI machine, cannot do neck work.

**An Honourable Member:** What about the rest?

**Mr. Doer:** I will get to that.

The machine at the Pan Am Clinic can do chest MRIs; the machine at Maples cannot. The machine at Pan Am can do abdomens, the machine at the Maples clinic, that has not yet been approved, cannot do it. The machine at Pan Am can do spine MRIs, and apparently the machine at Maples cannot. I would point out that some of those issues, I am not, again, speaking for Workers Compensation, but I do know that some injured workers actually have head injuries, neck injuries, chest injuries, abdomen injuries and spine injuries so I guess some of the facts are very important, as opposed to the ideology of the member opposite.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, Mr. Speaker, once again, more excuses from this Premier why he will not deal with the private clinic. This Premier's ideology is a luxury that this province can no longer afford. This government continues to ignore the offers by the private sector that would save money for Manitoba taxpayers, money that could and should be spent on patient care. We believe that the health care debate is about looking at innovative ways to help Manitoba patients who are suffering under this NDP government. This Premier believes in ideology and Manitoba patients suffer because of it.

I would ask this Premier: Why does he insist on spending and to continue to spend millions of dollars on bricks and mortar when the private sector is there and willing to pick up the tab? Why does he continue to do that?

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Doer:** Pick up the tab, Mr. Speaker, if a procedure is cheaper at a public, non-profit location than it is in a private location, then there is the issue of cost.

I seem to recall a number in the Chamber used by members opposite, and I will go back and look at Hansard, that was an amount that was higher than a comparable machine providing the same service with all costs in at St. Boniface Hospital, but I will double-check that Mr. Speaker. I know, in the past, the cost comparisons have been positive.

Mr. Speaker, I do not understand this, the members opposite saying that people under Workers Compensation should not have an MRI to do head MRIs, neck MRIs, chest MRIs, abdomen MRIs and spines. I know members opposite do not care about working people, but this is a pretty good example of that.

#### **Maples Surgical Centre Workers Compensation Cases**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, it is no secret, except perhaps from this Minister of Health, that, in most provinces across Canada, the Workers Compensation Board utilizes private clinics to treat injured workers to prevent bumping ordinary Manitobans waiting in pain, but in Manitoba injured workers are being expedited through the public system. This NDP government was given an opportunity to utilize the Maples Surgical Centre to treat Workers Compensation Board patients in the private system. Why did they refuse?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health):** Well, Mr. Speaker, let me spell it out again for the member opposite. Workers Comp has exactly the same tariff system that they have had for some time. It is the same level as it is in the public sector, and any clinic can provide that service, whether it is private or public. The Maples, in the past, has provided some services to Workers Comp on the basis of Workers Comp's tariffs. If they wish to receive work from Workers Comp, they are perfectly entitled to do so at the tariff that Workers Comp is prepared to pay. It is a published tariff. It has been there for a long time. That is the same way we deal with other private-sector groups.

As far as ideology goes, Mr. Speaker, we contract with Western surgical, and \$25 million a year worth of lab work is done entirely in the private sector in Manitoba. We are not ideological in regard to using private-sector resources or facilities.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Health has been all over the map when it comes to this issue. One day he is for; one day he is against. Here we are; there we are. Manitobans deserve some straight answers from this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this Minister of Health.

Two years ago, the Maples Surgical Centre sent a proposal to Workers Compensation Board offering to purchase an MRI for the exclusive use for Workers Compensation Board patients. This would have taken these patients off the wait list in a public system, thus reducing the wait time for all Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Why did this Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) use taxpayer dollars to buy equipment that the private sector had offered to purchase?

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it is important to remind members opposite that WCB has a tripartite board. It is an arm's length agency, and they make their decisions in regard to who they provide services to. I think it is important to remember that WCB is a private insurer that is funded by employers, and it is in the employers' best interests to get injured workers back to health and work as soon as possible.

Doug Sexsmith, the CEO of WCB, in a meeting on the 13th of October, in committee, said, "The private clinic in Manitoba that provides surgical services has been hesitant to provide us services at the fee structure that we have in place right now."

\* (13:45)

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I do not understand what these people do not understand about no cost. That is what they were offering, no cost. Members opposite seem not to understand that this issue is about patient care, not about their ideology. The minister had the opportunity to save millions of taxpayer dollars that could have been put directly, that is, directly, into patient care. Why did he refuse, Mr. Speaker? Well, the answer is simple, because the offer came from a private clinic. Oh, well. When will this minister set his ideology aside and stop compromising patient care for all Manitobans?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I know that members opposite have an outstanding history of representing working people and their injuries but, Mr. Speaker, I

think we have said it over and over and over again. The Western clinic is a private clinic that receives government contracts, has received renewed government contracts and received even further government contracts because its cost per patient care procedure is certainly in the public interest. We act in the public interest.

### **Workers Compensation Board Investment Decisions**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister responsible for Workers Compensation Board if she supported the WCB's decision to invest \$4 million in CentreStone Ventures. She informed the House that she had no idea of any of the investments the WCB was making.

My question today for the Minister responsible for Workers Compensation: Given that the CentreStone Ventures deal was completed in late November of 2004, could she inform the House who at WCB was ultimately responsible for making that investment decision?

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the WCB's investment committee is a statutory committee and in Bill 25 we changed the investment committee governance, and now the investment committee, the members opposite will be glad to know, reports to the board of directors of the WCB.

I just want to also inform members that I want to remind them that one of the reasons, Mr. Speaker, that the WCB is probably one of the best, financially sound WCBs in Canada, in the country, is because of the results of their investment committee.

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, in addition to WCB's \$4-million investment in CentreStone Ventures, they also received a \$2-million investment from Crocus, the Crocus Investment Fund. The reason I bring this up is because former WCB chairman Wally Fox-Decent held positions on both WCB and Crocus boards at the very same time of this investment back in November of 2004.

The question for the Minister responsible for WCB: Did it not trouble her that Mr. Fox-Decent's involvement in the investment decisions at both WCB and Crocus could be perceived as a conflict of interest?

**Ms. Allan:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps, once again, I could inform the member about the changes that were made in Bill 25 that they supported across the House.

Previously, before we made the changes to the governance structure around the investment committee, the investment committee was a statutory committee.

We felt that it was necessary to strengthen the governance structure of the investment committee and have it report to the board, Mr. Speaker. We are pleased to inform the member opposite that we now have an investment committee that has the strongest governance structure in Canada, and we thank them for their support on that legislation.

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, again I reflect back. It was November 2004 that this particular incident happened. So I ask the minister is she comfortable with this apparent conflict of interest.

**Ms. Allan:** Well, I have answered quite fully, Mr. Speaker, any concerns that I had in regard to governance structures at the WCB, because I did bring in legislation that strengthened the governance structure.

I, as the Minister of Labour, am responsible for the administration of the act. I fully understand my governance responsibilities in regard to the WCB. That may have been the way they acted when they were in power. They may have perhaps made phone calls in to WCB and tried to influence how the money was invested. That is not going to happen on this side of the House.

#### **World Trade Organization Negotiations Manitoba Position**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's agriculture industry depends heavily on international trade. The World Trade Organization ministerial meetings are taking place in Hong Kong in 14 days, and 10 days ago the Minister of Agriculture met with commodity and stakeholder groups regarding Manitoba's position.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Agriculture share with Manitobans the position she and the Premier (Mr. Doer) have put forward on behalf of agriculture producers in Manitoba?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in the House previously, the World Trade discussions have been going on for some time now. The members opposite implied that nobody was involved in this discussion and we were just having our first meeting with the producers. I can tell you

we have worked continually with the industry. We have had discussion with the federal minister about the position that we want to take. I can tell you that, in fact, earlier on, there was a meeting that was organized by KAP, much earlier on, where all of the industry came together, and we continue to have meetings with the industry.

What we want, Mr. Speaker, is to open access to have additional opportunities for our producers as we are an exporting country, but we also—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Eichler:** If our Ag industry has any chance of survival and growth, it must have the support and strong leadership of our province at the WTO meetings. Last week, the Minister of Ag attended the minister's conference in Regina where the trade issue was discussed. We are now at the 11th hour, 14 days to these important talks, and we are still awaiting Manitoba's position.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister now table this government's position on the major issues we will be putting forward at these very important meetings?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I say to the members opposite we have had discussion with them. I have told them that we have a resolution that has been drafted with the industry. It is our hope that we will get the members opposite's support to—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite knows full well that I said to him, "I will have the resolution for you, to share with you, after Question Period so that you can review it." I want the members opposite to review the resolution that the industry has put forward.

Mr. Speaker, ultimately, what Manitoba producers want is greater access to foreign markets, the ability to compete fairly and equitably in the global market by having non-distorting domestic subsidies, but at the same time have the producers maintain their right to have orderly marketing such as supply management and the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Mr. Eichler:** We would ask her to table that resolution, Mr. Speaker. Either the minister does not understand the importance of these WTO negotiations, or it is beyond this NDP government's ability to come up with a position. The minister

received advice from many commodity groups and advice from her staff. It is important that this Legislature show support of agriculture producers and that we have put a united front forward in the upcoming meeting.

Mr. Speaker, can she now show the support? The minister will she share our position with the government in putting it forward? Will she table it today?

\* (13:55)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I have had discussion with the industry. I told the member opposite that we would share with him the resolution that the industry developed, and I hope the member opposite will second the resolution when we bring it into the House so that we can indeed have a united front.

I would invite the member to review the resolution, but I can tell you that the industry is in support and that Manitoba producers and processors are looking for significant access improvement into our foreign markets, the ability to compete fairly and equitably in the global market without the distortion of domestic programs. As well, Mr. Speaker, we want our producers to have the right to maintain orderly marketing and have the ability to have supply management and the Canadian Wheat Board protected.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, this is a very important point of order because we have visitors from the cattle producers with us here today, and the minister has indicated that she will share this with the critic for Agriculture after Question Period.

Would it not be, obviously, correct to have this resolution, or whatever it is she has there, the position of Manitoba, tabled since she was reading from it in the House today so that the media, all of us here in the Legislature, could have access to it?

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Well, Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, we welcome any interest in the co-operative effort on this resolution because that is what the minister has

offered members opposite. First of all, it is important that the industry's views and input be made into the resolution. If they want to pre-empt that they do so at their own risk and at the risk of those industries. Number two, it is the intention of the government to have the co-operation of the opposition in terms of the framing of that resolution so that there can be a united voice from this Assembly. That is in the best interest of agriculture for Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before ruling, I would like to remind all honourable members that a point of order should be to point out to the Speaker a breach of a rule or departure of Manitoba practices and should not be used for a means of debate.

I have to rule that the honourable member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

#### Livestock Industry Slaughter Capacity

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate when something as important as this and our international trade negotiation is being held closely, and they expected all of us to join hands and run off into the sunset.

Since BSE struck the Canadian cattle industry, there has been an urgent and ongoing requirement for additional slaughter capacity and no more important place than right here in Manitoba, because of our distance from large markets and because we have one of the largest and fastest-growing cattle herds in North America.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture is what additional slaughter capacity can she point to at this time in this province.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** I, too, would also like to recognize the Manitoba cattle producers and thank them for their hospitality in providing us lunch with good Manitoba beef this afternoon.

I also, through this BSE crisis, want to recognize the many processors in this province who increased their slaughter capacity to help producers through the difficult challenge they had when borders were closed to us, Mr. Speaker. There are people that have been looking at increasing slaughter capacity in this province, and producers in other provinces have been looking at it.

\* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, I would invite members opposite to encourage producers to invest rather than what we heard from members opposite when the member from Emerson, at the beginning of the BSE crisis, said that we did not need any more slaughter capacity. When there was an issue with the Securities Commission, my critic said that producers were going to be drawing their money out of Ranchers Choice rather than encouraging them. I would invite them to get in line with producers and do everything that they can to have us increase slaughter capacity in this province and not try to discredit those people who are working on it.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, the only people discredited in this province in the cattle industry is the lack of leadership on that side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I asked a very serious question of the minister responsible whether or not there would be additional slaughter capacity in this province that she could point to. I now ask her if she believes there will be additional slaughter capacity. When can we expect to see it?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, producers in this province and investors in this province have worked very hard to increase slaughter capacity and to build a federally inspected facility. There is more than one group that has been involved, and our government has put in place programs. Our government has put in place funds. I hear the members opposite asking how it is working. Well, I would encourage them to line up behind those producers rather than chastise them.

Producers have been working very hard on this project. What I would encourage members opposite to do is encourage those producers who have not signed up to sign up for the plant. Our resources are there. What we need is animals to come through the plant, and we cannot have a plant if we do not have the endorsement of the farmers that they will put animals through the plant.

I would ask the members opposite to talk to the producers in their area, encourage more people to sign up so the resources that we have put in place will join with the resources that the producers have at this point. We will, indeed, have slaughter capacity. It is the one thing that we need for—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious situation, and it is not a matter of whether this side or that side gets one-upmanship in this House. It is about whether or not we really have a chance of getting some slaughter capacity in this province. I can assure you that there are people on this side of the House who have personally put their money into the opportunity for slaughter capacity. The lack of support is not on this side of the House. The government is responsible to show some leadership and assistance to make it happen. The one bit of capacity we have had in this province grew in spite of this government. When will she give us a deadline?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely astonished that the member opposite wants to put deadlines on producers as to when they might be able to invest in this slaughter capacity.

The board of directors has been working very hard to get sign up. We have put our money in, Mr. Speaker. We have put money in for infrastructure, and we have put in money to keep the co-op going. I am very pleased that the member opposite says he supports it. I would encourage him not to be like some of his colleagues who have said we do not need slaughter capacity in this province. My critic, who said, "Oh, producers are going to have doubts. They are going to pull their money out." Then he had to backtrack and say, "No, no, producers should not take their money out."

I do not want to put deadlines on them. This board is working very hard. We have made our investment, Mr. Speaker. I encourage the members opposite to recognize how important a federally inspected plant is for this province.

### **Water Protection Act Proposed Regulations**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, farmers are gravely concerned and worried about the proposed regulation of The Water Protection Act. These sweeping changes are a senseless attack on agriculture. This NDP government has coined a slogan, "Farm it in Manitoba; finish it in Manitoba."

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that these regulations will finish off many farmers here in Manitoba. Can the Minister of Water Stewardship tell this House what science-based evidence was used in developing these controversial regulations and which scientists have signed off on them?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, right from day one with The Water Protection Act, followed the sky-is-falling approach. He debated it extensively in the House, said that it would lead to catastrophic results. He then voted for it, and now we are hearing again the same sky-is-falling rhetoric that we always hear.

The member knows that in the act this government took the initiatives supported by all members of the House to ensure that all regulations are (a) science-based, and (b) subject to public consultation. That public consultation has taken place as we speak. I have had the opportunity to meet with many Manitobans including producers, and we will be listening to that public consultation. That is what good public policy is about, not the chicken little approach of members opposite.

**Mr. Penner:** Well, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I know the minister sounds more like a fish out of water on these things than anything else. These regulations are based on aerial maps that are 40 years old. The Minister of Water Stewardship drafted these regulations using outdated and insufficient information. Stakeholder groups have not been consulted and they have told him so.

Can the Minister of Water Stewardship tell us which stakeholder he consulted with prior to preparing these regulations since we have not been able to find a single group who even knew about these regulations before the consultation document was rereleased? Who asked for this?

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba asked for a government to protect Manitoba's water, something the previous government in 11 years did not do. The people of Manitoba asked for that. Again, the people of Manitoba have every ability to participate in the public consultations. Again, members opposite not only did not consult on water issues they did nothing. We make no apologies for bringing in The Water Protection Act. We are consulting on the water quality management zones, and we will listen to the consultations. That is what good government is all about.

**Mr. Penner:** We have not objected to The Water Protection Act. We will, however, object to the regulations. No one is more concerned with the protection of Manitoba's water than our producers who live off the land. These regulations, without any scientific basis, will completely stifle agriculture here in Manitoba. Staff in the Department of

Agriculture, when asked for copies of these regulations, were not even aware that they existed.

Mr. Speaker, was the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) involved in the preparation of these regulations? Did she have any input whatsoever into the development of these regulations? Was her department ignored as were many other Manitoba farmers and people in Manitoba?

**Mr. Ashton:** Again, the member opposite, I do not think gets it, Mr. Speaker. You know what? It is one thing to be dragged kicking and screaming to supporting The Water Protection Act, which was the case with the opposition, but if they are really committed to it, and this government is committed to the principles of The Water Protection Act, what you do is you act based on science. That is, indeed, what the draft regulations are. You consult with Manitobans. That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, maybe they do not know what their position is on protecting Manitoba's water. We do. We are going to act, and it will be in consultation with the farm sector which we have always said is part of the solution. The only people who are not part of this solution in the province are the members opposite.

#### **Sherridon/Cold Lake Environmental Concerns**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, the region of Sherridon, Cold Lake, Kississing Lake has some of the worst toxic contaminants in the whole of Canada. Last year, concerned about the people in the area, I asked the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), and he said that there had been a health assessment done and there was no problem with human health. Imagine my surprise to look at the report and find that there were measurements of contaminants in grouse and in rabbits, but there were none in humans. There was not even a measurement or assessment of people in the whole report.

I ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) to explain to this House why his government was claiming that there were no effects on health without ever having measured human health at all.

\* (14:10)

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** Contrary to the claims that we just heard from the Member for River Heights, our department did conduct health assessments in the area. We worked in conjunction with the Department of Industry,

Economic Development and Mines to make sure that that was carried out.

We also, Mr. Speaker, accepted the recommendations, last week, of the provincial auditor, who was looking at this. We understand that this is a very important issue that Manitobans want us to deal with as well. We have undertaken to make sure that a proper display of the contaminated sites is put on record for Manitobans to see, and we are moving forward in a positive way on this issue.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I am talking about human health, not just the health of grouse or the health of rabbits or the health of berries. We are talking about the people living in Sherridon and Cold Lake and on Kississing Lake.

Will the Minister of Health make sure that there is a thorough assessment of the human health of people living in Sherridon and Cold Lake and the Kississing Lake area?

**Mr. Struthers:** I do not know if the member opposite was listening to what I told him, but our department undertook a health assessment. We determined by that health assessment that we would move ahead, not only in terms of what the provincial auditor asked us to do last week, but we are actively moving ahead to remediate this particular site, and I might add, Mr. Speaker, a number of other sites, including abandoned gas stations. We are looking for ways that we can move forward to make sure that we protect Manitoba's water, protect Manitoba's animals, vegetation and, yes, Manitoba people as well.

**Mr. Gerrard:** This government should be absolutely disgraced by that response. There is a huge report but not one measurement of the health of people. This is a disgrace for this government.

When will the government undertake an assessment of the health of people? When will the government actually measure the contamination, the levels of lead, of cadmium, of arsenic? And the people living in the area, when will the government look to see whether there is any impact of these on actual health of people?

**Mr. Struthers:** Mr. Speaker, we have been assessing the impacts at the site that the member is talking about today. We have been taking action to remediate the site that the member across is asking about today. We are moving on this. It is an important issue for this government. It is an important issue in that site, and it is an important

issue at 2177 other impacted and contaminated sites around this province that we are moving forward on today.

### **Graduate Studies Government Initiatives**

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, considering the importance of graduate studies and research to our economy, would the Minister of Advanced Education and Training please inform the House what this government is doing to support Manitoba's graduate studies?

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, this government has, of course, committed to a \$2-million graduate scholarship, and yesterday at the University of Manitoba, I was pleased to join President Szathmary to honour and recognize the accomplishments of 58 MA and PhD research graduate students and the winners of this year's Manitoba government graduate scholarships.

Mr. Speaker, this is a strategic investment, an investment in our economy, an investment in human productivity, an investment in society. This government is firmly committed to the development of human potential, unlike the former government that cancelled the Manitoba Bursary in—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Water Protection Act Proposed Regulations**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say these proposed regulations for The Water Rights Act, are draconian to say the least and ill-conceived. I cannot believe they were drafted with the approval of the Minister of Agriculture.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture why she would allow her colleague, the Minister responsible for Water Stewardship, to move ahead with proposed regulations that are so ill-conceived that they would stifle the growth of especially the livestock agriculture industry in this province.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, one of the members opposite implied that our department was not involved in these regulations. I can assure the member that these are draft regulations and my department was involved in them. I would also tell the member that, as a department, we look forward, as the minister does, to have comments come back from the industry. Again, I say these are draft

regulations, and, yes, my department was involved in them but we want input from the industry.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, the farmers and the producers of this province should be insulted and are insulted that their Minister of Agriculture has used this kind of an approach to put those kinds of ill-conceived regulations before them, and then indicating that we will consult with you after the outrage to these regulations, I think, has been clearly stated.

My question is not to her, but my question is to the Premier. I am going to ask him whether or not he would intervene and ensure that these regulations are pulled and then an appropriate set of regulations is put out, a practical set of regulations is put out before producers and Manitobans that are, indeed, current and can address the needs of Manitobans, including the producers who are here with us today.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to say that all Manitobans including producers want a balance between the sustainability of the industry and the long-term protection of water. We all recognize across this province that the old practices are not sufficient for tomorrow's protection of water. Having said that, I want to make it perfectly clear that the regulations have not been passed by Cabinet. The regulations are in draft form. The question the member asked, would people be consulted prior to the regulations being passed, that is exactly what the two ministers are doing, exactly what the member asked for.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Before we continue, I just want to draw the attention to honourable members that we have guests in the gallery, the Manitoba Cattle Producers. I want to, on behalf of all honourable members, thank you very much for the wonderful lunch and the hospitality that you provided for all the members who attended. Thank you very much.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### St. Pierre-Jolys

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce to this House and to the people of Manitoba that the village of St. Pierre-Jolys and the St. Pierre-Jolys District Chamber of Commerce received a national award at the Economic

Developers Association of Canada Conference in Edmonton this last September.

The EDAC Marketing Canada Awards is open to those organizations which undertake to promote and market Canadian provinces, regions, cities, towns and areas with a view to improving the economic well-being of Canadians. I had the pleasure of attending the presentation of the award at the Cabane à Sucre, the Sugar Shack, in St. Pierre-Jolys on November 8, 2005. I know the community has worked very hard on their marketing strategy and it shows with new homes being built, their Hi-neighbour program, tourist booth, community newsletter and a new front on the main street of the town.

St. Pierre-Jolys has been innovative in marketing the community and attracting new people to live, work and play in their village. This is a very friendly and growing community that offers both French and English and a wonderful cultural experience. The annual Follies Grenouilles is just one example. St. Pierre-Jolys sets an example to other communities for their enthusiasm and positive fun-loving spirit. While in St. Pierre, c'est si bon, together.

Monsieur le président, je veux féliciter la communauté de Saint Pierre Jolys sur leur accomplissement et recommande que tout le monde qui entend ou lit cette déclaration visite le village et apprécie leur esprit remarquable et leur culture amicale.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the community of St. Pierre-Jolys on their achievement and recommend that all who read or hear this visit the village and enjoy the remarkable spirit and friendly culture. Thank you.

#### Sentier Cloutier Trail

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, this past summer, I was pleased to attend the sod turning for the start of construction of Sentier Cloutier Trail in my constituency of St. Norbert. This trail, which has been in the works for three years, unites the communities of historic St. Norbert and Fort Richmond by the common bond of outdoor exercise and fun.

Weaving through 44 acres of land, Cloutier Trail is open four seasons of the year for many different types of uses. Everyone from cyclists and pedestrians to cross-country skiers will be able to profit from this new addition to the national Trans Canada Trail system.

Furthermore, aside from the healthy living benefits that will accrue with the increased use of the trail, residents of St. Norbert will be exposed to the variety of unique habitats in the region. From tall-grass prairie and wetlands to oak and aspen forests and pristine river bottom forests, residents will be connected with the natural habitat through a variety of interpretive signage indicating the various natural aspects of the area.

Mr. Speaker, this small gem in south Winnipeg would not have been possible without the exceptional effort of the Cloutier Drive Residents Association, and, in particular, Janice Lukes, who has spent countless hours working on this project.

This community-driven group volunteered their time to work with both members of the community, all levels of government and private organizations to realize this walking trail. The Province of Manitoba provided a Community Places grant to assist with the construction of the trail.

Two groups that were especially helpful with the project were Group'Action St. Norbert and Fort Garry Historical Society. Rivers West also proved very helpful with monetary support of the Cloutier Drive Residents Association to help ensure the Cloutier Drive trail's completion. With the help of these parties, Cloutier Drive trail is now a reality and is being used extensively by both young, middle-aged, elderly and people of all abilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:20)

#### **AIDS Awareness Week**

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the house that this is AIDS Awareness Week in Canada. AIDS Awareness Week takes place every year from November 24 through to December 1, which is World AIDS Day.

AIDS does not discriminate. It affects men and women of all sexual orientations. Worldwide, it is a disease that has reached pandemic levels. In Africa alone, there are over 30 million cases. To the average individual, making a real difference in the fight against AIDS might seem impossible. However, there are a number of steps individuals can take to contribute.

First, as individuals we can promote AIDS prevention, which is the key to stemming the spread of the disease. Secondly, we can work to end the myths and misconceptions associated with AIDS.

Misinformation leads to stigma and discrimination. Those in our communities who have been affected with HIV are often discriminated against out of fear about how the disease is spread.

Finally, we as members should acknowledge and support the work of hundreds of organizations at all levels from community clinics to international support agencies which make it their sole purpose to educate, prevent and to help find a cure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Manitoba Mineral and Mining Convention**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, recently, for the 11th consecutive time, I was privileged to attend the Manitoba Mining and Minerals Convention. Many exciting developments are happening in Manitoba's mining and minerals industry.

The Manitoba Mining and Minerals Convention has been a flagship event for Manitoba's \$1 billion mining industry since 1968. It is our foremost marketing event, attracting up to 900 national and international delegates, and it promotes Manitoba's geologic potential, mineral properties and competitive investment and business climate.

Mining is and has been for many years the lifeblood of many of the communities that I represent: Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Snow Lake and Flin Flon. Exploration spending in Manitoba rose to \$52.7 million this year, up from \$36 million in 2004 and \$27.2 million in 2003.

In the Flin Flon constituency, a \$400-million expansion project was recently completed at HudBay's Flin Flon and Snow Lake facilities. The largest of these developments was the 777 mine which contains reserves to support a mine for at least 15 years.

A strong sustainable mining industry is an important component of northern development and provides significant benefits to northern communities. Our government has worked hard to ensure that northern communities are able to maximize the benefits from mining activities in their area. For example, the recent Mining and Minerals Convention offered an Aboriginal mining workshop. As well, northern residents can now take advantage of a three-phase prospectors training program through the University College of the North. In fact, UCN will undoubtedly become a flexible educational institution which will meet the increasing demand for highly trained mining professionals.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba continues to attract mineral investment because of sound incentives, regulations and geoscientific information. A healthy mining and minerals industry brings jobs, economic development and prosperity to Manitoba, particularly in the North. Thank you.

### Adult Education

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to address two important issues facing rural Manitoba today, adult education and agricultural support.

First, adult education: This week a coalition of rural, municipal and town councils, economic organizations and the Turtle Mountain School Division issued a call for the provincial government to increase investment in adult and continuing education in rural areas. I would like to echo that call to action.

The NDP government needs to be reminded that the Province currently spends about 25 times, that is 25 times as much per capita on adult and continuing education in urban centres as it does in rural and small northern communities. I suggest to the NDP government that some of this glaring inequity between urban and rural Manitoba can be addressed by broadening the adult learning centres' mandate and increasing financial support to the centres.

Agriculture: Turning to agriculture, this year, 2005, has been a hard year for Manitoba farmers. This summer we witnessed the devastation of almost a quarter of the unseeded and seeded acres, the normally seeded acres, as a result of flooding and drowned-out and very wet weather. Despite this it is clear that the NDP has chosen to not pay sufficient attention to Manitoba farmers. There has been no significant initiative to improve drainage and water management in spite of a lot of rhetoric. We are still faced with a \$1 billion deficit infrastructure in this area.

In the short term, as well, farmers should have some more financial assistance. The federal government has recognized the crisis this past week and pledged \$92 million for Manitoba grain and oilseed farmers. Normally these types of announcements are joint federal-provincial ones with the Province doing its part to match federal funding, but instead there has been silence from the NDP this week, no additional help from the provincial government.

Shame on the NDP. It is time that the NDP realized that Manitoba is more than the city of Winnipeg, and it is time for the NDP to take rural and northern Manitoba seriously.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill 7 for third reading to be followed by the following bills: 18, 11, 19 and then the remainder of the bills that are listed for debate on second readings.

## DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

### Bill 7—The Architects and Engineers Scope of Practice Dispute Settlement Act (Various Acts Amended)

**Mr. Speaker:** Resume debate on concurrence and third reading, Bill 7, The Architects and Engineers Scope of Practice Dispute Settlement Act (Various Acts Amended), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Inkster, who has 28 minutes remaining.

\*(14:30)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue my remarks yesterday on Bill 7 and to start it off, just to reinforce the conflict that was there that we saw first-hand in committee stage.

I can honestly say, Mr. Speaker, in most part it saddened me as a Manitoban to see professions in which I have a tremendous amount of respect for, and I am talking the architects, the engineers, our interior designers to have gone through this sort of a process. I think the industry as a whole, and the importance of the stakeholders as much as possible, working together and coming together with recommendations as to how to better ensure that the system works would have been my first choice. I acknowledge at times that it is not possible. As a result, we were put into the position of having to address this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there are, as I say, very mixed opinions and, as much as possible, I have attempted to avoid taking a side on this issue. I cannot help but to note that there is a particular stakeholder, and I am thinking in terms of the architects right now, in terms of the attitudes and the mindset that they have as a result of the legislation

that we have before us. You know the minister has indicated that she would like to be able to work in consultation with the stakeholders into the future in regard to changes.

I can indicate to the minister that there is a group of individuals who I believe all of us have respect for as a profession, but really feel that they have had a knife put into their back and that the legislation does, in fact, hurt considerably. We saw that in terms of some of the passion of presentations that were made. A great deal of concern was brought up from young architects from the university. I suspect in fairness that, quite easily, the youth within the engineering faculty could have equally come forward if we did not address the issue and that we could be seeing engineers saying the same sorts of comments.

What I am hopeful, Mr. Speaker, is that into the future what we will see is the engineers, the architects and, as I say, the interior designers working together in recognizing the important role they all have to play in our province, as the province will hopefully continue to grow and provide opportunities in the buildings and infrastructure that we have will be second to no others across Canada.

I give a special tribute to, as I say, those individuals that have taken the time and, once again, want to recognize three groups in particular: the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the province of Manitoba, in particular, the efforts of Mr. Ennis; the Manitoba Association of Architects, in particular, the efforts of Mr. Oliver; and the professional interior designers. I know this one, in particular, I had a discussion with and have a great deal of concern. I appreciate the efforts of Mrs. Grant, in particular, who did a follow-through in providing me some information.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), I acknowledge and I express my appreciation in terms of her providing me her speaking notes that she addressed in committee at the conclusion of the presentations. What I wanted to make reference to is that one of the greatest conflicts within the legislation was the issues of fire wall. You will recall that we have brought forward three amendments yesterday, and the purpose in good part of those amendments was to try to get the minister to be more specific, to give better direction believing that, ultimately, all the stakeholders would benefit by that.

We know, we all sat through or many of us sat through hours of the committee where one of the

biggest issues was in regard to the building area or the fire wall. If I use that as an example, and I would quote from the briefing notes in regard to how the minister responded to that particular issue. I quote: "We do appreciate that the architects continue to have concerns about the term 'building area' and the potential that fire walls could be used to avoid the need for an architect. However, changing the Building Code to use the term 'gross area' would first require considerable discussion." That is the end of the quote that the minister had put on the record, I believe, in committee.

What you will see is that, if you read that or you try to understand what it is that the minister is saying, she really has not addressed the issue. We believe that there is an obligation for the minister to provide more clarity on issues of that nature. That is why, yesterday, we attempted to provide the opportunity for the minister to be more specific.

*Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I wanted to highlight—and I know that there were a few individuals that made presentations in regard to the interior designers. There was one e-mail that I was sent that I would like just to quote from, in part. If the minister would like a copy of it, I can make available the entire e-mail message that was sent to me. This was on the third point in which the writer indicates that "In Table 2.1.7, Alterations, it would be a better clarification by stating the converse, i.e., if alterations do not significantly affect integrity of, you do not require professional involvement. Many people are presuming this converse statement is true, but it is not expressly stated. I am certain there will be challenges to the legislation if this is not clarified."

Another point, Mr. Speaker, is point 5: "Bill 7 focusses on building area which is very misleading for the public. For example, small renovations done by an interior designer are often under 600 square metres. But the building area is defined by the National Building Code as the greatest horizontal area of the entire building or a storey of a building. So even a small 1000-square-foot office renovation for an MLA would require the services and costs of an architect if in a building strip mall over 600 square metres. Most horizontal design office renovations in these buildings are under 600 square metres. Renovations area would add an important dimension in this conflict as solutions incorporating renovations area would be advantageous to clients without compromising the life safety issues."

Again, the reason I raised it is to highlight that there are other stakeholders that are out there that do have concerns, Mr. Speaker, that did, also, want to see some sort of clarity brought to the issue. It was interesting, she had indicated in the e-mail that it is more so to float the idea of laying out the scope of practice for professional interior designers. Again, I say this because I do believe that the work is not done, that we do need to do more, hopefully, not in the form of legislation unless, of course, we have a consensus that has been achieved by the different stakeholders.

I acknowledge, as I did at the beginning of my comments, that we have seen a great deal of interest in this bill. I believe there were in excess of 180 presenters. I have been in opposition now for close to 14 years, I believe, and when I reflect in terms of the bills, from the bills that I have seen, we suspect, or I would suspect that this ranks right around the top in terms of number of presenters. I had enjoyed the passion that was expressed. I would have liked to have seen, as I say, more of a consensus approach because, ultimately, I am hopeful that both the professions of engineers and architects will see the merit in terms of staying in our province and recognize that both professions have an important role in the future building of our province.

\* (14:40)

With those relatively few comments, I would ask that individuals that want to get more detail as to some of the clarifications that we were trying to seek, that we had raised through amendments yesterday, I still believe that they are valid concerns. I hope that the minister will at least take note of it and address some of those as she, no doubt, attempts to close debate on this bill, as I am anticipating the bill will likely be passing today. With those few comments, we are prepared to let the bill come to an ultimate vote.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** I, too, wish to put a few comments on the record in regard to Bill 7, a bill that I might put on the record has consumed an awful lot of my time, a lot of the time of this House, and we are pleased to see that it has proceeded up until this point and is now in third reading.

I think I would be remiss if I did not stand in this House and thank a few individuals who got us to this point. I would like, first of all, to thank the two individuals who helped with the majority of the research from PC caucus, Brenda Wilkes and, my own personal staff, Matthew Pruse, my legislative

assistant. Both of them made sure that at committee, as we sat from nine in the morning till midnight, we had the pertinent information and everything was there at our disposal.

I would also like to take this moment to thank the legislative support staff that takes time away from their loved ones, their families to sit with us and listen to everything that is said and make sure that it is done in accordance to the rules and that there is a record of it and it is all done in a proper fashion. I would like to thank all of those individuals who sat at the table with us and made sure that things ran smoothly. If they are not in this House, perhaps, that can be passed on to them.

During this process, especially when the bill was tabled, as I have always done in the past, we ensured that it was sent out to all stakeholder groups, sent out over 150 letters with copies of the legislation and asked for feedback. I want to actually indicate my appreciation to three groups who spent a considerable amount of time with myself and with my staff going over where they thought the bill should go or should not go. I would like to start with PIDIM, Professional Interior Designers Institute of Manitoba, and that would be Jason Kasper, President, and Brian Everton, past president. I very much appreciate the time and effort that they put into this.

I would also like to thank the MAA, the Manitoba Association of Architects, in particular Steve Cohlmeier and Don Oliver. As I have said to Don Oliver, if he gets any more mentions in Hansard, people are going to start thinking he is one of the MLAs, and not that that would necessarily be a bad thing. We would certainly welcome him in this Chamber. But he certainly got a lot of comments and his name mentioned often on the record.

I would also like to thank APEGM, Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba. In particular, I would like to thank outgoing Executive Director Dave Ennis, who, over the six years that I have been the Labour critic and have overseen a lot of this kind of legislation, has always been willing, has always put himself on-call. It seems to be rain or sun or sleet or snow or midnight or morning, it does not seem to matter, he is available, he is there. He is a great Manitoban. He has not shared with me yet what he plans on doing after this, but we certainly wish him all the best in whatever he intends on doing. If he is—

**An Honourable Member:** We are looking for a candidate in Winnipeg Centre.

**Mr. Schuler:** The Liberals are looking for candidates everywhere, says my Liberal colleague there, always looking for candidates. But I did say I would wish him a successful retirement, so running for the Liberals was not in that.

We certainly appreciate on the Conservative opposition side the work that you have done, Mr. Ennis, on behalf of all Manitobans.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I also would like to thank Allan Silk, who made himself available and, with great credibility, made his case for where he thought this legislation should go.

Then I would like to thank two other individuals who were very instrumental in helping in the process, one individual not as well known as the other: Mark Francis and, of course, MaryAnn Mihychuk. Now I can understand why MaryAnn Mihychuk had such great respect on the benches opposite. Having had the opportunity to work with her on this issue, I now understand why it was such a tremendous loss, why they just cannot seem to fill that void seeing as she has left. I know they are working on trying to fill the void, but, alas, that is going to be difficult. Again, we on this side of the House, and I am sure on behalf of all members, wish her well as she takes on a position in Toronto, certainly wish her all the best there.

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to get too personal in my comments; however, I would like to say once again on behalf of this Legislature, and I hope that members in this Legislature would allow me to speak on behalf of all of us of the incoming executive director once again, if our regrets, our condolences would be passed on to him. We know what a loss it was. We missed him at committee. We understood, and, again, Dave Ennis, we knew that you would step into his place and help out in this time, and certainly on behalf of the Manitoba Legislature, would you pass our condolences on to him one more time.

So, obviously, we had an opportunity to meet with a lot of individuals and got to speak with many, many individuals who felt that this was a very important issue and who wanted to get their side of the issue known. Mr. Speaker, I know Hansard cannot show how much paper I have on my desk, but it is reams and volumes and volumes. In fact, it was said to me that there were more presenters or almost as many as when MTS was sold. It shows to this

House and it shows to all members how serious this issue is to Manitoba, and rightfully so.

I just want to pause there and reflect that every time we cross a threshold into a building, into our home, even as we sit in this Legislature, the reason why we sit here with no fear, in safety, everything that makes our life comfortable and complete has probably gone across an architect's and an engineer's desk. It is because of them, they build nations, they build provinces, they build cities, and it is because of them and because of what they do that this issue was as high profile as it was. I want to stop again and pause and on behalf of all members of this Chamber thank all the men and women who with incredible integrity and often with great passion and some emotion got up in front of committee and made their case, presented their side, what they wanted to see and how they felt that this bill should proceed.

Mr. Speaker, when I was appointed Labour critic back in 1999 by then former Premier Gary Filmon, the former Minister of Labour, Harold Gilleshammer, a great Manitoban, came into my office and wanted to share with me some sage advice. He sat down and I thought maybe what he might do is tell me where in the basement of this building the bodies are buried. But, no, he sat and he said to me, "I will give you one piece of advice, Ron. Never get between the engineers and the architects." I looked at him and I thought, that is advice? I just did not understand how sage that was.

Now, the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) has said to me on numerous occasions, "Why did you not share that with me a little sooner?" So I take a bit of blame for that. I should have passed that advice on. As I read Hansard today, as I read Hansard today, I have now come up with a new piece of advice: "When the NDP and Liberals debate the engineers and architects legislation, do not get between them either." It was really an interesting debate. I almost felt like I was back at committee. Certainly, we understand that members in this Chamber also share a lot of that passion.

\* (14:50)

I believe what we have done with this legislation is indicated to a lot of individuals how serious it is what we do in this House. In fact, I gave an example at committee, and I share it with this House. I was canvassing in 2003 and came upon a magnificent home. The owner was standing in front of the home and I introduced myself, explained there was an election, and this individual said, "Actually, I do not

vote because nothing MLAs do can ever affect me." I said, "Well, if that is the way you feel, that is fine," and I walked away. I can tell you that that night at committee, the hundreds and hundreds of people who came forward understood how very serious it is what we do in this House. What we do here does impact, does affect what goes on in the province. The legislation that is produced from this House is very serious and, I comment to my colleagues sitting here, perhaps they would like to listen.

This was a very, very touching committee. In fact, in the six years that I have been here, I do not believe I have ever seen, No. 1, that amount of young people coming forward and indicating their support or their dislike of the legislation and doing it in such a credible, such a passionate and emotion-filled fashion that I was genuinely touched. In fact, I spoke to some of them, especially when they said, "We think, because of this legislation, we must leave the province." I said to the one young individual—his first name was Colin, and I apologize to the House, his last name now escapes me, a young architect. His wife is a professional. He has got two young children. I think Colin Neufeld is the name. I said to him, "Colin, do you really mean, because of this legislation, if this is passed, that you would uproot your family, like you and your wife would actually pack up and leave?" He said yes.

I know the members of the committee were perturbed that there was this feeling on behalf of young architects, and they were out in full force, that somehow this was punitive. I know that after committee we went line by line, and I spoke with the minister and put questions on the record that gave the minister an opportunity to clarify some of these issues. In fact, I spoke with the minister and said, "You know, if need be, I would be agreeable on a bipartisan basis to go to the universities and speak to the young architects and engineers and explain to them that this House appreciates what they do, that we very much want them to stay, that they are integral, that they are very important." In fact, I pointed out to them that we need young people like them to be working here so that there will be somebody, some day, paying for the minister's and my pension. *[interjection]*

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I guess that is where we start to declare a conflict, I guess is what we should be doing there. But it is important. It is important that we do have young people getting their education, and it is a tough row to hoe to become an engineer or an

architect or an interior designer. We know that that takes a lot of education; it takes a lot of time.

So I know that there were a few issues that were raised and, Mr. Speaker, we know that this came out of a court ruling. The court ruling came on a Friday. The issue started to grow. It clearly caught many of us by surprise, and it put a lot of projects on hold. One thing that we cannot afford as a province is to have a slowdown anywhere in our economy. We cannot afford to have projects put on hold, and there was a lot of confusion. The call was for the government to do something to deal with this issue. As the official Labour critic of the official opposition, the Progressive Conservative Party, I can tell you that we felt that Bill 7 went basically too far, that what it should have done was just address the very need at hand instead of going quite as far as it did. There are areas in there that cause us some concern, and I have raised this with the minister. I am glad to see that there are some in the gallery.

One of our greatest concerns is the arena of a thousand seating capacity. We would have been a lot more interested if it would have been an arena of a thousand-person capacity. The reason is that in rural areas the arena during the summer is used for other factors. We would have been a lot more comfortable if that would have been changed. However, I would caution and I would add that we know full well that no engineer would design a building purposely or allow it to pass that somehow would put people and its safety at risk, Mr. Speaker. We know that.

I would ask the minister if, one more time, she would take the opportunity and maybe flag a caution that an arena of 1000-seat capacity, though it could have a person capacity much greater than just seats, and that maybe the minister could just put a caution that the intent never was to build a huge building with only 1000 seats in it. I sense from the engineers that were at committee, they were actually quite surprised at some of these issues that were raised. Certainly, this is one of them.

We want to make sure that we balance off having construction in rural and northern communities where we have buildings built and where we perhaps do not have access to architects or engineers like we do in other areas. We still want those projects to move ahead. On the other hand, what we want to do, above all, is protect safety of our populations.

Again, I refer back to the World Trade Centre. I mean, we always see these pictures of the buildings

falling, but, folks, take a look at what kind of a hit those buildings took and still withstood the impact. That is because safety was first and foremost on the minds of those who built it. The engineers and architects looked out for the safety of those individuals, the people who would be working in those buildings.

Those buildings are a monument to the architects and engineers of our community. That they did not come down right away is truly, truly a testament to these organizations. So I have great faith, and I know that the minister, when she makes her comments, will deal with that.

We spent a considerable amount of time, and the minister did as well, putting intent of the legislation on the record. I do not know how much time she is going to spend on that this evening. However, we want to make sure that the intent always is security, that safety is No. 1. We know that for both organizations safety is paramount. In my community, in which I have quite a few rural facilities, we have architects and engineers whose children also participate in the sports in those buildings, and they are just as concerned as everybody else.

We feel that this legislation would not have been what we would have written. Flawed as it might be, and we do not agree with all of it, we have been consistent as a Conservative opposition, however, that this issue had to be dealt with and it had to be dealt with in a suitable and appropriate time. We feel that the legislation came forward. We believe that all vested interest groups were notified.

We are confident that everyone, in fact, if there was ever an opposition critic who stood by and argued that we give every single opportunity for anybody and everybody to speak, I fought at committee, and the minister with the majority on committee went along with it, we broke probably every rule that this House has set up for committee. We called people not two times, three times, four times. We made all kinds of exceptions because this is so important. We gave everybody an opportunity to speak. In fact, we even allowed individuals to make written presentations and allowed them to come back and make them verbally. I think the committee went over and above and beyond what was expected to make sure that all Manitobans, every Manitoban had the opportunity to speak.

\* (15:00)

We have now had opportunity for the last 24 hours to make amendments. We know that the Liberal Party of Manitoba had some amendments to make. Those were discussed in this House, and now we are moving to the end of third reading. We encourage the government, we encourage this minister that, after she has spoken, we call in the Lieutenant-Governor, we get Royal Assent, we have proclamation today, and the issue has been dealt with.

I am honoured that I was able to participate in this process. It took a lot of time, but in the end it was worth it because we know that it got the full scope of the public's attention. Everybody was allowed to participate and we will move on. Let us move on and continue to build a strong province, and I know that is what all of those people who came forward and all of us in this House wish to see.

With that, I would close my remarks and I thank this Chamber for the opportunity to speak on Bill 7.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** It is an honour to have this opportunity to speak during the third reading of Bill 7.

Bill 7 was developed following extensive consultations, Mr. Speaker, not only with the professional associations representing architects and engineers, but also the City of Winnipeg, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, representatives of the construction industry, interior designers and other stakeholders who were affected by the recent court decision which ruled on the relationship between The Architects Act, The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Act and the Manitoba Building Code.

The consequence of the court decision put a significant number of building and occupancy permits in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba in jeopardy. We believe prompt action was required and that Bill 7 sets out a framework to provide greater stability into the future. Bill 7 provides practical solutions to the current problem and a framework for the future that respects architects and engineers as equal and valued professions while addressing the needs of permit-granting authorities for clarity and certainty.

We have appreciated the opportunity to work with both professional associations and are committed to continuing our work with them around any unresolved issues in the best interest of the

public. We know that further dialogue is necessary regarding the issues of concern around industrial buildings, arenas and gross area versus building area. These are concrete examples that demonstrate the need to revisit some of the overlap issues and continue our discussions with all of the stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. There is a mechanism in the legislation to do that. Bill 7 provides a flexible legislative instrument to determine which work may be done by engineers, interior designers or non-design professionals, and I have every confidence that Bill 7 provides more opportunity for architects.

I would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard to make this legislation happen considering the unique circumstances surrounding this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. We needed to be nimble and find a legislative solution to the delays resulting from this September 16 court injunction. I would like to thank the drafts people from Legislative Counsel who are so diligent and so incredibly helpful in putting together legislation. I would like to thank the Speaker's office who manages the committee hearings.

We have a great privilege here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. We are very fortunate to have public hearings on our legislation, and it is a very important part of the democratic process. We are one of the few jurisdictions in Canada to have that public committee process, and, as the MLA for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) said, we were very lenient with the rules to ensure that everyone's viewpoint was heard on this very, very important piece of legislation.

I would like to thank the officials from my department who worked so diligently on this legislation, my Deputy Minister Jeff Parr and Nancy Anderson from the Office of the Fire Commissioner, who worked with all of the stakeholders who were affected by this legislation. They did a remarkable job and took every opportunity to dialogue with stakeholders to get as much information as possible to make this legislation possible.

I would like to thank all of the presenters who came out to speak to Bill 7. We heard many passionate speeches over the 28 hours of committee hearings, and we appreciate the many individuals who put together thoughtful presentations in regard to this legislation. I would like to thank the architect students who came out to make their views known about Bill 7. I made a commitment to them that I would meet with them, and I look forward to honouring that commitment.

I believe Bill 7 provides clarity and is respectful of both professional associations and provides a mechanism for resolving outstanding issues of concern which will assist us in building Manitoba together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 7, The Architects and Engineers Scope of Practice Dispute Settlement Act (Various Acts Amended).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** On a matter of House business, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, just wait. So it has been agreed to and the motion has been carried. It has been carried.

**An Honourable Member:** Unanimously agreed.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Schuler:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker. I do not know if this is an appropriate time but could the record show that was unanimous agreement to the legislation?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House for the passing of this bill to be unanimous? *[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, just for the information of the House, the Lieutenant-Governor will be called to the House for four o'clock for Royal Assent for Bill 7.

**Mr. Speaker:** For the information of the House, the Lieutenant-Governor will be attending the Chamber at 4 p.m.

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill 18—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Impaired Drivers and Other Offenders)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, now we will move on to second reading of Bill 18, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Impaired Drivers and Other Offenders).

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 18, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Countermeasures Against Impaired Drivers and Other Offenders), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** My remarks will be brief, Mr. Speaker. Under The Highway Traffic Act, provincial licence suspensions and other related administrative sanctions are imposed on impaired driving offenders. However, licence suspension and ignition interlock, for example, do not apply to Manitoba residents or U.S. residents moving to Manitoba who have been convicted of an equivalent offence in the United States. The Canadian border, in our view, should not erase the risk and the record of an impaired driving conviction south of the border.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, will enable Driver and Vehicle Licencing then to pursue formal agreements with U.S. states so that those convictions can be noted on this side of the border and the appropriate interventions pursued.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that it be recognized for the record that this is regarding concerns about public safety, that if someone is, indeed, a risk to the public because of impaired driving, there be the checks and balances put in place with regard to that individual based on provincial law.

Second, offenders who are found guilty of an impaired driving offence and receive a discharge sentence are not subject to a provincial licence suspension or other administrative sanctions. This approach is inconsistent with the approach taken in the Criminal Code where a driving prohibition may be imposed by the court regardless of whether the person is convicted of the offence and receives a discharge. The amendments in this bill would address this inequity and the treatment of drivers who are found guilty and receive a discharge.

Mr. Speaker, these two issues were not addressed historically, perhaps because the numbers of individuals or offenders may not be high and may be, indeed, very low. I hope they are low. It is our view that there should be a principled approach and that these gaps should be filled.

\* (15:10)

The third area here deals with ignition interlock. Under provincial policy and pursuant to amendments brought in fairly recently by the Legislative Assembly, ignition interlock requirements are placed on repeat impaired driving offenders and offenders convicted of impaired driving causing injury or death.

The amendments in this bill would formalize this policy into legislation and remove from governments and the registrar any discretion. Specifically, The Highway Traffic Act would have an ignition interlock requirement for offenders convicted or found guilty of repeat impaired driving offences, impaired driving related offences where there is a passenger under the age of 16, impaired driving causing injury or death offences and equivalent impaired driving related offences committed in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to addressing any concerns from presenters or other members of this House at committee stage, and I will conclude my remarks at this point.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise this afternoon and put some comments on the record regarding this bill. I have had the opportunity to speak with the minister and some of his staff regarding the legislation and had the opportunity to look over the information that was provided. Certainly, this is another piece of the puzzle that goes forward in terms of drinking and driving legislation, ensuring that there is some measure of strong responsibility for those who are convicted of drinking and driving.

I do agree that there are certain provisions that had to be addressed and there had to be some coverage for it. I think that the work that is being done in terms of getting agreements—hopefully they will be reciprocal with other jurisdictions, particularly in the United States—to ensure that those who are convicted of drinking and driving in other jurisdictions, particularly in the United States, will be applicable here in Manitoba as well. That is something I think that most Manitobans would recognize as being important legislation, that the act of drinking and driving should not be restricted per jurisdiction where the offence takes place, but in fact it should have the same consequences, regardless of where it happens.

I also hope that the minister will continue on. He has given me his commitment that he will, in terms of getting reciprocal agreements with other

jurisdictions to ensure that those who might be convicted here in the province of Manitoba would also face consequences upon returning to their home jurisdiction. I do think that is important, Mr. Speaker. Also, the issue on the discharge to ensure that those who have a conviction applied to them but are given a discharge in terms of their sentence, that there is the appropriate follow-through in the assessment done after. I think that is also important, I suspect that most Manitobans would see that as fair and balanced going forward.

I have asked the minister directly and his staff to provide some statistics regarding the number of people who this might apply to and to see how much coverage the legislation will have. The commitment was made that that information will be coming forward, and I look forward to seeing those statistics. My guess is, and it was essentially confirmed, that it will be a very small number of cases where this kind of interjurisdictional issue is applied, and I suspect the discharge might be similar in terms of not being a great number of people. So the principle of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, is not one that we take objection to, certainly, I think on principle, ensuring that the legislation is consistent and applies across jurisdictions in ensuring that there is not a gap in the legislation in terms of the discharge issue is good.

I would encourage the minister also to look at other issues related to drinking and driving, things that might have a broader impact. While this is not insignificant in and of itself, there is a recognition that it would not apply to a great number of offenders, the people who are charged and then ultimately convicted with the offence of drinking and driving.

There are a number of other issues, I know, that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) could take. Certainly, in respect of the number of police officers, for example, on our rural highways in rural Manitoba we know that at any given time there are 40 to 50 RCMP officers who are missing, so to speak, that the positions are unfilled in rural detachments, and that continues to be a problem.

We heard from the Minister of Justice federally, perhaps the outgoing Minister of Justice federally, that there were 28 officers for rural Manitoba who were never even asked for last year, that they never actually had the request from the Province of Manitoba, even though the announcement came, I believe it was in last year's Throne Speech.

There still was no request that came in time from this Minister of Justice and, in her estimation, that was the reason that those officers were not coming forward for the province of Manitoba. In fact, the federal Minister of Justice, the outgoing Minister of Justice federally, did suggest, also, that there were no unfulfilled requests for RCMP officers in the province of Manitoba. She made that statement, despite the fact we know that there are many vacancies within the province in rural Manitoba. We could go through the list, detachment after detachment, Mr. Speaker, and we would see that there are not those officers in place. Part of that reason is because the Minister of Justice simply did not ask for those officers.

So, whether it is in rural Manitoba or whether it is in the city of Winnipeg, we know that the true way to help get at drinking and driving, in addition to advertising and prevention campaigns to go forward, which are all important, and certainly commend those programs, whether it is Operation Red Nose or similar sort of programs, that help to prevent drinking and driving.

We also know that there is an enforcement issue and that the more officers that we have, both on the rural highways and in the city of Winnipeg, doing the operation check stops and ensuring that they are not strategically located, but that there are enough officers doing them, that that, in fact, will have an impact in catching people who are drinking and driving and then, also, hopefully, deterring those from drinking and driving in the future.

So this legislation, again, while we do not oppose it in principle, the reality is we also know that it will not have any sort of significant impact on the number of people who are drinking and driving and the number of cases that we see each and every year. I think, from a practical point of view, Mr. Speaker, it will not do much on the drinking and driving side of things, but from a theoretical point of view and from a policy point of view we do not have opposition to it.

But I would encourage the Minister of Justice to look at those areas that truly will make a more significant impact that truly will have the desired effect that we all want to reduce drinking and driving occurrences in the province of Manitoba and to ensure that those who continue to do the offence are caught, that there is a true deterrence because we have a number of officers on the road in rural and in

the city of Winnipeg going forward and doing check stops.

So, with those few words, I look forward to hearing other comments.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that debate be adjourned.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

##### Bill 11—The Winter Heating Cost Control Act

**Mr. Speaker:** Now we will move on to Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Okay, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. As Liberals, we see there are major problems with this legislation as it has been presented by the NDP.

Let me explain. I will begin with clause 7(1), the establishment of a fund that can be used for a variety of reasons including cross-subsidization of natural gas prices using dollars generated from hydro-electric power generation. We are opposed to the establishment of the fund in this way and for this purpose. It is, quite clearly, a slush fund. The money in this fund will be used politically and in a politically driven decision-making process.

It is said, in the act, that the payments from this fund are to be made by Manitoba Hydro. In a lot of ways, this is not an adequate process of accountability. We know, in fact, that the direction to Manitoba Hydro will either come directly from the minister, or the direction to Manitoba Hydro will come from the NDP appointees on the board of Manitoba Hydro. Either way, we think it is rather unlikely that there will be full reporting of every single dollar in this fund and how it is spent to the Legislature. This is clearly what is needed. There is not a mechanism to make sure that every single dollar in this fund and how it is spent is reported right here in the Legislature. There is not an adequate

process that is open and transparent that meets the normal requirements for accountability and transparency in decision making about this fund.

\* (15:20)

What is very clear is that this fund is very poorly set up. It is likely to have very poor accountability. The NDP should have learned from what is happening elsewhere as well as here. They should have learned but they have not. We stand here speaking up for accountability and transparency because the NDP members will not.

We are opposed to this fund, as well, because it provides for cross-subsidization. That is that people who are paying for hydro-electric power, users of hydro-electric power, will subsidize those who use natural gas. The money will be put through this fund so that it is much less transparent than one would normally appreciate, that it loses the accountability which we normally expect in terms of hydro-electric operations and in terms of natural gas operations and Manitoba Hydro.

This is clearly a scheme to avoid transparency and accountability. It is bad business practice for all sorts of reasons and it is also bad environmental practice. The government is subsidizing natural gas which produces much more greenhouse gas. There is a limited amount of natural gas in Canada and in the world. We are subsidizing the use of a depletable resource, using dollars from a renewable resource, hydro-electric power, which produces less in the way of greenhouse gas, at least most of the time. There are some circumstances where you can get significant greenhouse gases from hydro power, but the reality is that most of the time and for Manitoba now the production of greenhouse gas from hydro-electric power is much, much less.

Let us look more carefully at this situation in Manitoba. There are 510 000 electricity customers of Manitoba Hydro. Half of this number, 255 000, is the number of natural gas users, consumers of Manitoba Hydro. The fact is that there are now approximately 255 000 users of electricity who will be now paying for the natural gas costs of the other 255 000 Manitobans. So half of Manitobans are going to be subsidizing the other half of Manitobans. This includes people who deliberately switched from natural gas to hydro for environmental reasons, and now they are going to have to pay twice. They are going to have to pay for installing the electricity furnace and now they are going to have to pay for the people who are using natural gas.

We had an individual at the AMM convention who described all the extra costs that he was being forced to pay because he could not even get natural gas, but he had to pay so that others could use natural gas. He had to subsidize the use of natural gas by others in Manitoba. This is forced subsidization, forcing 255 000 Manitoba customers to subsidize the use of natural gas in Manitoba, and this is unfair.

It is bad for all sorts of reasons, and we need to look at where this money actually goes. You know, the money, the payments for natural gas end up in the pockets of natural gas producers in Alberta and Saskatchewan. This is a perverse subsidy being forced upon the people of Manitoba.

**An Honourable Member:** Forced subsidization.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Forced subsidization by Manitoba of Alberta. This is a very strange, a very bad measure. Even Ed Schreyer, a former premier, said that this is retrograde and perverse. It is retrograde because it harks back to some of the things that could have been done years and years ago before we got to contemporary understanding. It is perverse in having poor northern and rural electricity users subsidize people who are much more well off in Alberta.

Ralph Klein must be cheering the NDP government in Manitoba for giving him so much help with their budget. What kind of a conversation must have gone on at the recent premiers' conference for Ralph Klein to persuade the Premier of Manitoba to subsidize people in Alberta?

Let me move on from this strange retrograde and perverse cross-subsidization of the NDP, which the NDP are forcing on Manitobans. I will talk next about the clauses in this bill which deal with what is called in this bill a temporary rate freeze for 2005-2006, 2006-2007 winter seasons. Now you know the rates for natural gas are normally reviewed four times a year and one of those is normally February 1. We recognize that it may be harder on people in the winter, particularly those who are poor and on fixed incomes.

You know, oddly enough, there are many who are poor and on fixed incomes who are only electricity users, particularly in rural and northern Manitoba, and the NDP seem to have forgotten about these people. But the problem here is, if we are going to be sensitive to people in the winter, that it makes sense to change the review times on a permanent basis not just on a temporary ad hoc always-shifting basis. We should move this time permanently. The

Liberals have suggested to have the review done four times a year, but do it so that we are not doing it on February 1 in the middle of winter where it could cause people distress.

\* (15:30)

The fact is that the way that the NDP are approaching this is not only retrograde and perverse, but it is very ad hoc and short term. There is no long-term approach here, and that is one of the differences between the NDP, who are perverse and retrograde and short term, and the Liberals who believe in a long-term vision.

Let us set the parameters. Let us look after those who need help without having to perversely distort the markets and without having to have poor people from northern Manitoba and from parts of the constituency of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) having to subsidize people in Alberta.

So we have suggested an alternative approach here which would be far superior to that of the NDP. They do not seem to be paying much attention because they seem to be quite full of their own opinion, but we are going to continue to advance good ideas that are more sensible from this side.

We also see that there is a far better way than this cross-subsidization from people in Manitoba to people in Alberta, from people who are poor using electricity to people who are much better off in Alberta or people who are much better off who are natural gas users. We would suggest that a much fairer way to do this would be if there is a big spike in natural gas prices, that at that time this issue should be addressed in a temporary way to help people, those who are in difficulty or in particular need, and that we should look not just at natural gas but at the broader range of home-heating oils and so on that are used for heating residences in particular. This would be a much better and a fairer way to approach this and is not so retrograde and perverse as this NDP legislation.

We also note that this legislation contains clauses, a clause which will override the decision-making power of the Public Utilities Board. It says the Public Utilities Board can no longer make orders described in section 3 or subsection 4(3), and essentially what this legislation is doing is overriding the powers, the normal powers, of the Public Utilities Board. The NDP not only want to override the markets, they want to override the Public Utilities Board and try to run things in an ad hoc, retrograde,

perverse way. That, of course, is typical of the approach of the NDP and, of course, sad for our province.

This bill provides for some level, it is not clear exactly how much, of recovery of the shortfall in prices from Centra Gas by rate hikes in the future. What is interesting here is that this will postpone a significant rate hike until April 30 or sometime after that. That is why I asked the Premier (Mr. Doer) whether he was going to call an election before April 30 when such a rate hike might occur. Maybe that is what this NDP government is planning, to go to the polls before there is a big rate hike. This is clearly politically driven in the way that this bill is put together. What the Premier and his government cannot hide from people in the long run, prices will adjust. They can fight the markets. They can attempt to override the markets, but we on the Liberal side believe in a free province and in free markets. We would like to work with the markets instead of trying to distort and pervert and override the markets at every possible occasion.

*Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I think that it is clear to us that the approach that the NDP are taking is an odd one. Ed Schreyer has said "perverse." It is clearly retrograde. You know, it is too bad for Manitoba that at the moment we have an NDP government, but that is the way that people chose last time. But we expect that, based on this sort of legislation and this sort of approach, people will choose differently next time around.

It is the arrogance of this government in thinking that they can override the markets, the arrogance of this government in trying to convert Manitoba to a province which is no longer free and with no longer free markets. This is their approach to government. It is our view that we should be working with the markets in a way that makes common sense, helping people without trying to override or distort normal market processes, without trying to override or distort normal regulatory processes like the PUB.

Clearly, this is a strange bill coming from the NDP, and we feel that this measure, which is retrograde and which is perverse, should not be supported. Having said that, we know that the NDP is determined to proceed. We are going to talk now, so that there is plenty of time with the NDP wanting to proceed, so that this can go to committee, if not this week, next week and so that the NDP can hear not just from us but from many other Manitobans, like Ed Schreyer. We hope Ed Schreyer will come to

committee and say what he has said publicly already, that this is retrograde and perverse.

But there are many, many others who we would love to hear from at the committee stage because we believe that our view will be widely supported. I know that, when I talked at the AMM meeting, there were many people who supported our view and who are very opposed to the NDP view. We would like that those people have an opportunity to come forward and have their say, as they do on other legislation, as people do on other legislation, and let us give the people of Manitoba, the poor people who are in rural Manitoba who are using electricity a chance to have their voice.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I would hope that, since we recognize that many of the people that the NDP are trying to grab money from are not well off, that they live at some distance from Winnipeg, at the committee stage there should be an approach taken so that we can get submissions via the Internet or in other ways so that people do not have to travel if they cannot afford to travel from Swan River to Winnipeg.

**An Honourable Member:** Satellite hookup.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Sure, this should be open, democratic. I think it is very important that we hear from people in the constituency of the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), in outlying areas where they do not have access to natural gas and that they have an opportunity to present. Let them speak up and be heard because this is important for people in Manitoba to hear, from people all over the province.

Indeed, if the government is not ready to be innovative in using satellite hookups or Internet phones or Internet communications in some way or other, what we would say in the Liberal Party is that we are ready for this committee to travel. We think this committee should travel around Manitoba to hear from Manitobans. We want to hear particularly from the Manitobans who cannot afford to travel, the Manitobans who are using electricity, but not natural gas. It is very important that their voices be heard. I am speaking for the people in Turtle Mountain, and, although they have access to natural gas, the people in southwestern Manitoba, the people who we heard from during the Healthy Kids task force—

\* (15:40)

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, that dog and pony.

**Mr. Gerrard:** No. On the east side of Lake Winnipeg, Manigotagan, who were claiming about the high prices of milk that the government was operating this province so that they would have to pay much higher prices of milk than people in Winnipeg. The fact of the matter is that they do not have natural gas there, and people who are not well off are being forced to use electricity to heat their homes. They do not have a choice.

We want to make sure that we hear from people, and we would like to hear from people in the Interlake where they do not have natural gas. We would like to hear from people in the Parkland area who do not have natural gas, and places, I would think, like Ethelbert and so on. Let us make sure that the voices of all Manitobans are heard at committee stage.

We would recommend and we support this going quickly to committee in a way that Manitobans will have a choice to speak up. We believe what we have said. This is bad legislation and will be reinforced by people from all over Manitoba speaking about the poor approach of this government in managing the economy, in managing Manitoba Hydro and in using perverse and retrograde subsidies. Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, let me start off this bill by quoting a famous Manitoban, and I quote, "It's so wrong it's perverse." It goes on at the beginning of this wonderful article, "Former NDP Premier Ed Schreyer blasted the current NDP government yesterday for its plan to force Manitoba Hydro to use its electricity exports to keep natural gas rates unnaturally low." Well, he continues the comments: "'It is emphatically wrong,' said Schreyer. 'It is 180 degrees opposite to the long-term public interest.'"

I truly believe that the former NDP, and if Hansard would underline NDP I would appreciate it, the former NDP premier has soundly criticized what this government is doing in regard to this bill and for good reason. He has soundly criticized this government.

I want to pick up on the point that the Leader of the Liberal Party has suggested. I think we should hear from Manitobans about this bizarre, twisted policy that the NDP, the new NDP, has discovered, Mr. Speaker. Let us bring this legislation to Manitobans. Let us hear what Manitobans have to say on this bill. I would like, I would welcome the opportunity to hear from someone like Mr. Schreyer following his comments to the *Free Press*. I believe

that there are many Manitobans, you know, we have a provincial minister here who has a daughter running in the upcoming federal election on January 23. I would be interested to hear if she would stand up for northern Manitobans who use home heating oil, who use propane. What about those who use electricity and do not use natural gas?

What about all those residents in northern Manitoba? Would she support those individuals and their interests, or is she going to do what her father is expected to do and sit on his hands? I know the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) is a big fan of the former Premier Ed Schreyer, but I suspect much like many of his colleagues in those benches, they are going to have to sit on their hands, put on some duct tape and say nothing, Mr. Speaker, because this is an issue which I believe that they are quickly becoming more and more aware that they have made a mistake on, and it takes a leader of great courage to be able to come and admit when they have made a mistake.

I look to the Premier (Mr. Doer), the recipient of the Homer Simpson award, Mr. Speaker, the first annual recipient of the Homer Simpson award, I am looking to him and I am hopeful that he will see that he has made a mistake. I would suggest that maybe he go to a restaurant and invite the former NDP Premier, Ed Schreyer, to sit down and share those concerns that he has.

Maybe if he is honest, Mr. Speaker, and reflects on what is being said and listens to northern Manitobans, and I say northern Manitobans because, you know, it is an easy one to point out. What we are really talking about are Manitobans throughout the province. That is how profound of an impact.

You know, it is amazing. One day they are doing something bad on Crocus and it hits 35 000 Manitobans plus, or 33 000. I want to make sure I have my numbers right here, 33 000-plus, over \$60 million. Oops, that is just 33 000 Manitobans.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we have over 500 000 Manitobans and, once again, here is a government that just seems to not understand the concept of good policy, good long-term policy. I challenge members opposite to tell us how this policy is in the long-term best interest of Manitoba Hydro, whether it is future exports or internal domestic consumption.

We have a wonderful asset in Hydro, and this government is finding ways to destroy that asset. Remember it was only a few years ago when they

drew out \$200 million from Hydro, Mr. Speaker. Where do they think that money comes from? They have to learn to keep their grubby hands out of Manitoba Hydro.

They are creating yet another slush fund for them, Mr. Speaker, as if \$200 million was not enough. They are creating more problems for Manitoba Hydro. When will they learn that Manitobans do not want your grubby hands in their pockets dealing with Manitoba Hydro?

It is time that you do what is right. Allow Manitoba Hydro to do something that this government has failed to be able to do, Mr. Speaker, and that is to be a driving positive force in terms of our economy. That is something that this government has failed to do, yet Manitoba Hydro is in a position where it can do something. When that happens, what do they do? They go and they put their hands into the pockets again.

Mr. Speaker, I find that it is insulting and that it is not in the best interest, and it is interesting, we have had a number of members, New Democrats, who have stood up and tried to defend the indefensible, a number of them who have actually already spoken on the bill. I think even the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), and if I grab it, I believe the Member for Wolseley actually spoke to it.

The Member for Wolseley likes to think that he is one of those environmentally friendly type of people. *[interjection]* Some members yell hear, hear, or suggest hear, hear. Well, I would challenge members to tell me how this bill is environmentally friendly. It is absolutely beyond me. Yes, he did speak to it, November 21. The Member for Wolseley spoke to this bill, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to know how members in the New Democratic caucus can explain to Manitobans how this is an environmentally friendly piece of legislation because it is not. They will say, "Well, you know what, Manitoba Hydro is promoting geothermal energy and windmills and all this kind of stuff."

Well, Mr. Speaker, good for Manitoba Hydro. They are going to do this whether it is you who are in office or it is the Tories or it is the provincial Liberals. They are moving in that sort of a direction. That makes sense to do that. We trust that Manitoba Hydro does have some competent, able individuals who are going to bring it in that sort of a direction.

\*(15:50)

We believe that to be the case, but where this government is environmentally unsound when it comes to hydro development, Mr. Speaker, is in one budget they take \$200 million. That is not good for the environment. At the end of the day, that is going to have a negative impact on the bottom line of Manitoba Hydro, and Manitoba Hydro is far better at producing power than relying on Alberta or Saskatchewan natural gas or other fossil fuels, and one would think that, in fact, with this legislation, now we are going to have cross-subsidization. Imagine if you will, a number of years ago, a vision of hydro where we were encouraging people to convert over to hydro use. Now, we have something that is the absolute opposite. We are forcing electricity users to subsidize natural gas users. How bizarre is that?

The government tries to ridicule members of the opposition because, after all, they have the billions. They have the money to go and advertise this program, and they challenge us to vote against it because then they are going to say we vote against the seniors and the reduction that is being given. Mr. Speaker, nothing can be further from the truth. We support our seniors, whether they live in northern Manitoba and use heating oil or propane, or whether they live in the city of Winnipeg or in southern Manitoba.

This is a cold-hearted government that saw an opportunity to try to manipulate Manitoba Hydro in order to get votes. That is what Bill 11 is all about. Who cares about the environment? Who cares about the negative impact that this is going to have on electrical users? That does not matter. For this government, it is all about votes and the manipulation of Manitoba Hydro. In the long term, that is going to be to the detriment of the province of Manitoba. Manitoba Hydro is a future for our province. We should not be subjecting it to the type of political manipulation this government has subjected it to over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker.

There are different ways of dealing with the rebate system that could have had a much better, more transparent—you might have to reach into general revenues. That means Manitobans would have realized exactly what it is that you are doing. You would not have had the same opportunity to manipulate Manitoba Hydro. Yes, I will give you that, but I would argue that is to the better. It would

have been a far fairer practice if you recognized the important senior that happens to live in the community of Thompson, or the community of Snow Lake, or other communities throughout the province that do not use natural gas. They might just be using home heating oil or they could be using electricity. After all, at one time, government was encouraging and not subsidizing natural gas. They were encouraging people to go towards electrical heating and you know what? That is the way to do it.

One of our greatest treasures is hydro, Mr. Speaker. One of the economic advantages that we do have, a true Manitoba advantage is, in fact, our hydro power. All that wonderful water that we have been blessed in our province to have, working within our communities up north and turning that water into electricity, and then being able to provide the lowest rates in North America. We have the lowest, and the government, at times, tries to take the credit for the fact that we have the lowest, but that is not true either. It is not because of the New Democrats—well, you are entitled to leave the Chamber if you choose.

I would suggest to you that it is not because of the New Democrats that we have the lowest utility rates. It is because we have Manitoba Hydro and that is the way it should be. Lowest utility rates provide opportunities for consumers. If you are just a consumer and you have a home, and when you compare us to other jurisdictions, it is one of those advantages. Our hydro bills are not as much as people who live in Saskatchewan or Ontario, even Alberta. That is a Manitoba advantage.

Could you imagine if you were a business that relies considerably on hydro-electricity? You know, the manufacturing industry has not done well over the last six years. There have been a lot of government jobs created, but we do have a manufacturing industry, and that manufacturing industry could benefit tremendously and benefits today tremendously because of the utility rates, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure that continues because, again, it is a part of that Manitoba advantage. By doing that, we are creating jobs, not only government jobs, but also private jobs. We are diversifying our economy.

These are the types of positive impacts that Manitoba Hydro could be having in the province of Manitoba. We should be doing what we can to enable that to continue well into the future. *[interjection]* It is a laptop, for the Premier (Mr. Doer), just in case he does not understand what it is.

Well, he pointed to my computer. I am just demonstrating or pointing out the obvious. I will not make any reference to the Homer Simpson award because I have already done that at the beginning of my comments. But, you know, this is—*[interjection]* You know, the Premier says he has never watched the show, but he sure seems to know a lot of the details about the show. *[interjection]* Well, you know, the Premier and Homer have a lot in common when it comes to public policy, a lot in common in terms of public policy.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, as I say, about the future of our province and the critical role that Manitoba Hydro has to play. That is why—*[interjection]* You know, if I could have leave to continue on after the L-G has come and gone, I will be more than happy to take a seat. If I can have leave, I will do that; otherwise—*[interjection]* Well, noting that there does not seem to be a will for that, it is the greatest asset, as I say, that we have, and we want the government to do what is right when it comes to hydro in our province.

That is why I challenge the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology (Mr. Chomiak) and our Premier (Mr. Doer) to do what is right. If this thing ends up going to committee, allow Manitobans throughout the province to be able to provide input. Let us take the committee up to Thompson. Let us take the committee out to Brandon. Let us hear what people actually have to say about this, quote, "policy" that is supposedly in the long-term best interests of Manitobans, when we know for a fact that it is not in the best interests of Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just Liberals and Conservatives. The Premier says, "Let us make it an all-party type of thing." Well, even former Premier Ed Schreyer agrees with us, and in this case, like the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) says, "I am with Ed." We need to listen to Mr. Schreyer. We need to hear what Manitobans have to say about this.

The Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party is right. I would welcome the opportunity to see this bill go to committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I hate to interrupt the honourable member. The Lieutenant-Governor will be arriving shortly.

The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will continue with his debate on the bill

once we have Royal Assent. He has about 14 minutes remaining.

So right now we will just prepare for His Honour's entrance. It should be in about a minute or so.

### ROYAL ASSENT

**Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Blake Dunn):** His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

*His Honour John Harvard, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the Throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in the following words:*

**Mr. Speaker:** Your Honour:

This sitting of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba has passed a bill and asks Your Honour to give assent to.

\* (16:00)

**Madam Clerk: (Patricia Chaychuk):** Bill 7, The Architects and Engineers Scope of Practice Dispute Settlement Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur le règlement des différends portant sur le champ d'exercice des architectes et des ingénieurs (modification de diverses dispositions législatives).

In Her Majesty's name, His Honour assents to this bill.

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Please be seated. Thank you.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 11—The Winter Heating Cost Control Act

**Mr. Speaker:** We will now resume debate on Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. It is in the name of the honourable Member for Inkster, who has 14 minutes remaining.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, the member from Elmwood indicated that he might not have actually spoken on this bill, but maybe now he will, and I really do appreciate that. In fact, I would like to see all members of this Chamber debate this bill because it is a good bill to debate. I think that you can really see the difference between an incompetent government and an opposition that has actually caught the government making a big mistake. The government, having recognized that they have made a big mistake, is not smart enough to acknowledge it and change its policy. So I am going

to encourage members of the New Democrats, as they stand up to answer a couple of very specific questions, if they would do this, I think it would take a little bit of courage to do it, but I would really encourage them to do this.

Why is it that your government does not want to assist seniors in northern Manitoba or in other areas in the province that use heating oil and not using natural gas? I think those seniors have a right to hear a very clear and concise answer. I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that future members of the New Democratic Party that stand up will answer that question. I will watch and take note to see who does actually have the courage to answer that question.

I believe that those seniors do have an interest in this debate. If you do not have the courage to answer that question, I am going to challenge you then to, at the very least, allow the committee to go to Thompson. This way we can hear the public from Thompson comment on this bill to see if, in fact, they think it is a good idea.

Another interesting thing that I would like to hear from members is how, in particular, well, the member from Wolseley has already spoken, but I would be very much interested in knowing how NDP MLAs can knock on a door and say that this bill is good for the environment. Really what we are talking about now is the cross-subsidy. What you are doing is, what you are saying to Manitobans is that it is okay. We are going to subsidize your gas and this way you do not have to worry about those electrical rates, Mr. Speaker. If the gas goes up, not to worry, we will protect you because, after all, we will use those electrical rates to subsidize those high gas prices. How does that promote or encourage people from using electricity into the future? To what degree do you really think that you can control the worldwide free marketplace?

Then there is another question that I would like answered. You know, we have 510 000 individuals that use electricity throughout the province. Out of that 510 000, half of them, virtually half, 255 000 of them, in addition to electricity, use gas, and the other half do not use gas. Some of those individuals, I am sure, converted from gas to electricity. Why? Well, maybe because of cost, maybe because they wanted to be more environmentally friendly or consumers of electricity, all of which are very positive things.

Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker? In the summertime you are on gas. Now you are using electricity to heat your home and now you are being

asked to subsidize those others who are using gas, even though you just finished converting. Of course, the government says this bill will not do that. Well, this bill enables it to happen and it encourages it to happen. How do you justify, how can you honestly say that you are a party that favours the environment? I do not quite understand how you can do that.

Mr. Speaker, another question that I would put to the New Democrats is how do you justify politically manipulating Manitoba Hydro to the detriment of our province, by going back to Hydro in order to secure more votes into the future. As I pointed out, I would be very much interested in hearing New Democratic MLAs tell us why they took out hundreds of millions of dollars out of Manitoba Hydro just a short, few years ago and what sort of an impact that has had on Manitoba Hydro. You know, with a deficit, an annual debt, or I should say a deficit, I believe, that is well into the billions of dollars, not quite \$10 billion, but it is growing. It is growing in part because this of government's actions. How is that in the long-term best interests of the consumers of our province?

You know, Alberta, Saskatchewan, in part, were very fortunate in one sense that they have a considerable amount of oil, Mr. Speaker. That oil has led to a generation of considerable amount of wealth and, as a result, at least, in part, Manitoba is the only have-not province west of the province of Québec. I see that not as a positive thing. I see that we need to do more to try to ensure that our standards here in the province, our resources in our province are able to, at least, come closer to the plus-side of the have and have-not provinces. I believe that we need to provide more hope. One of the ways that we can do that is through allowing Manitoba Hydro to do what it can do without political interference, and that is it has the potential to generate phenomenal wealth for our province.

\*(16:10)

You know, the province of Ontario recently purchased and made a commitment to huge volumes of power, Mr. Speaker, and Manitobans will benefit by that tremendously. I would like to think that the future speaks exceptionally well for Manitoba Hydro in terms of being able to continue to generate wealth, real wealth for our province, not some of the artificial stuff through government jobs that have been created, in particular, the spin doctors, government bureaucracy that this government has been able to create. I am talking about real wealth at

the end of the day that is going to be able to generate a better lifestyle for all Manitobans, that it would reduce our reliance on Ottawa. You know, that would not take very much. If the Conservatives were to form government in Ottawa and they decide, "Well, we want to cut back 10 percent of transfers payments," you are talking into the hundreds of millions of dollars. Where are you going to come up with that kind of money? Sadly, you might turn to Manitoba Hydro.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? What we need to do is we have got to turn our province around. We need to get more hope in the province of Manitoba. The best thing the New Democrats, this government, can do between now and Christmas is give Manitobans a Christmas present. You know what would be a wonderful Christmas present?

**An Honourable Member:** A lot more Liberals.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** A lot more Liberals. I agree. I agree with the member from Elmwood. A lot more Liberals would be wonderful. I agree. Having said that, what you should do: Give us a present, and that present could be in the form of a commitment to protect Manitoba Hydro from your political grubby hands and your hidden agenda that puts the interests of the New Democrats and a few elite within the union movement, put those interests second and put Hydro's interests first. If you were to make that commitment to the province of Manitoba, I will give you full credit. Not only that, I would be inclined to even give each and every one of you a Christmas card, and in my spring general mailer I will even give you credit. But I say it obviously somewhat tongue in cheek, realizing the chances of you changing your attitudes toward Manitoba Hydro, unfortunately, are not that great.

But, you know, the nice thing about this is that we are only what? Possibly a year, maybe two years, hopefully, tops two years, Mr. Speaker, away from a provincial election, and I believe that Manitobans are going to see, you are going to see Manitobans come to the realization that what you are doing in the province of Manitoba is not in the long-term best interests of our province. It really is not. If you really look at it, I have been talking about Manitoba Hydro and the devastating blows that you have given to Manitoba Hydro, in the long-term interests, and the member from Selkirk might say, "Wrong," but I am not alone on this. Ed Schreyer is in agreement on this. Where is the quote? There. Let me quote, this is NDP, former premier, former NDP icon, Ed

Schreyer. He states, the headline: "It is 180 degrees opposite to the long-term public interest." I think even the Grade 12 general math will tell you 180 degrees means you are heading in the opposite direction. You are in the opposite direction of what is in the public's best interest. That is me and Uncle Ed saying that to this current crop of socialists.

So that is one of the treasures that we have in the province. But, Mr. Speaker, I am glad the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) is here because look at the other thing that you have done that is really scaring a lot of people. You can spend money. I cannot believe how much money this government can spend. Since 1999, you spent over \$2 billion more since you have taken office. No, it is not about spending more; it is about spending better. Spending, you are going to bankrupt the province.

Take a look at it. Put it in perspective. One of our greatest treasures is Manitoba Hydro. One of the greatest responsibilities you have is to protect Manitoba Hydro, not take it down. Not only are you taking down Manitoba Hydro, not only are you taking it down, look what you are doing with the general revenues in terms of overall expenditure of our province. You are hurting the long-term best interest of our province.

I implore, do some work, Mr. Speaker. Protect the seniors in Thompson. Protect the seniors throughout, all those on fixed incomes. There is a better way of providing that rate subsidy. There is a better way. We need to say, look, yes, we have made a mistake here, in terms of the government, and acknowledge that and do the right thing. The Premier (Mr. Doer) is not too late to do that. I will even withdraw the Homer Simpson award if he has the courage to admit the mistake and make the change. After all, I could probably give it to one or two other ministers. But that is a little off the topic.

So, having said that, Mr. Speaker, I trust that the government now understands why it is the Manitoba Liberal Party does not support the way in which this bill is attacking Manitoba Hydro and that it needs to be changed. That is why the last challenge I give is bring to all Manitobans, allow all Manitobans the opportunity—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** Well, certainly, the member from Inkster raises some interesting points in regard to Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. I guess the intent of this

bill looks like it is going to prohibit any further increases in natural gas prices for this year and then probably allow the government to limit those increases next year. The second part of the bill, as I understand it, is going to require Manitoba Hydro to establish a stabilization and affordable energy fund, whatever that will be.

As a matter of interest, I had a call from a constituent of mine, a rural constituent in Turtle Mountain. This particular individual is a farmer. The ironic part of his story is he has a natural gas line that runs through his farm; however, he does not have access to natural gas. Therefore, this particular individual is forced to use electricity and only electricity.

So I think that really speaks to the nature of this bill. Many Manitobans, and I think my colleague pointed out there was over 500 000 Manitobans use electricity, of which probably half of those have no access to natural gas.

So, clearly, as my constituent pointed out to me, he felt that this was a cross-subsidization. In essence, what we are doing is we are using electricity users to subsidize the gas users in Manitoba. From his perspective and from many of my constituents in Turtle Mountain who do not have access to gas, it clearly is a subsidization, where they as electricity users are subsidizing the gas users.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, we think this is poor public policy. We do not think that the Cabinet table here should be actually setting and establishing the gas rates. We think this is an issue that should be addressed by the Public Utilities Board. Quite frankly, this bill, it goes without saying, does encourage the subsidization of Centra Gas with Manitoba Hydro's money. I would expect that, when Centra Gas was purchased by Manitoba Hydro not that long ago, it was not the intent to subsidize the gas with electricity rates.

The other thing that this bill does not really address—and it is a short-term bill; it does not address the long-term repercussions that we may face with gas prices. So there is no guarantee that down the road, whether it be two years or longer, that we will not see a dramatic increase in the gas prices.

\* (16:20)

I think one thing that Manitobans are not aware of that certainly should be brought to their attention is the debt issue surrounding Manitoba Hydro. The current debt of Manitoba Hydro is over \$9 billion,

which is, I think, a shock to most Manitobans. A lot of Manitobans did not realize that Manitoba Hydro was so far in debt. I think the other interesting statistic, Mr. Speaker, is what we found in the increase in the debt since 1999. The debt of Manitoba Hydro has increased almost \$2 billion since 1999. When this particular government took office in 1999, the Hydro debt was \$7.2 billion. Again, I remind the members opposite that the debt now of Manitoba Hydro is over \$9 billion. I think we have to remind the members opposite that the total debt of the province is now over \$20 billion.

So, clearly, Manitoba Hydro's debt represents about 45 percent of the total debt of the province. I think that is an issue that most Manitobans do not recognize, and I think the important part about debt is we have to service that debt. We, as Manitobans, have to service that debt. In this case, with Manitoba Hydro, it is the consumers of the product that have to service that debt. At this point in time, Manitoba Hydro and the interest rates are over half a billion dollars or \$500 million per year. Clearly, we have a lot of our revenue generated by Manitoba Hydro that goes directly into servicing that debt. So, clearly, I do not think Manitobans recognize the importance that that debt load of Manitoba Hydro has and the significant repercussions it has for them as users.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we have concerns about this bill on the grounds that it is not a viable solution to the long-term increases that we may see from Centra Gas. I think the other thing, and it has been touched on quite a bit today, was the environmental aspect we are dealing with. Gas is not a renewable resource, so we should be looking at other options to natural gas. I think that the onus, we should have Manitoba Hydro looking at providing different options, different incentives for Manitobans to use outside of using natural gas.

Clearly, the other thing that I think we should highlight for Manitobans is what this NDP government has done in the past history in regard to Manitoba Hydro. I am thinking specifically of the revenue draws or the drain from Manitoba Hydro that occurred back in 2002. The NDP government figured that, because Hydro had a few extra dollars in its account, we will just go in there and we will use that \$203-million fund. In essence, it was a raid on Manitoba Hydro.

So then what happens? Subsequent to that, we get low water volumes, so Manitoba Hydro is not able to generate as much electricity as they would

like, so, to cover off some of this extra expense they incurred, Manitoba Hydro has to go and borrow more money. Obviously, to borrow more money, it costs more money. So, clearly, this government is just adding to the debt of Manitoba Hydro.

The other thing that this NDP government did was also to increase the water rates that Manitoba Hydro is forced to pay. So, clearly, that is just another, well, we will call it a tax on Manitoba Hydro. As a result of that extra tax on Manitoba Hydro, the users of electricity are forced to pay an extra hidden tax that this particular government is becoming very famous for.

The other issue that really came to light prior to this bill being implemented was Manitoba Hydro in viewing their debt that they had, and we just went through a 7.5-percent increase in hydro rates in Manitoba, but, in view of this debt, they recognized that they still needed to look at their long-term debt. In essence, what they were asking the Public Utilities Board for was another increase in hydro rates. I think we were talking about another, was it another 5 percent to 10 percent that they were requesting and Manitoba Hydro was requesting? Again, that would have been on the backs of the electricity users across Manitoba, but because this bill came out and there was such a hoopla around this bill, there were quite a few people opposed to the bill, so someone, some higher authority came in and said to Manitoba Hydro, "Hold the phone. Maybe we had better not increase those electricity rates to Manitobans."

Mr. Speaker, clearly, again, I think it is focussed back to the Cabinet table. It is the Cabinet table that is directing Manitoba Hydro, directing the rates, coming up with some of this information. Why is the Cabinet taking the Public Utilities Board right out of the equation on this particular issue?

I guess the other thing that comes forward in this particular piece of legislation is the fund, and we certainly have concerns from this side how this fund may be used in the future. I guess what the government is trying to do is force Manitoba Hydro to take some of their revenues that they are generating from export markets and funnel it into some kind of a slush fund, Mr. Speaker.

Well, we are not sure exactly what this particular slush fund will be used for, and we know from the history of this government that they are always looking for avenues to take money from or to add some hidden tax, so it would appear to us on this side that this particular fund could just be another slush

fund that the government would use for their general revenues.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it does not really speak to transparency in accounting. It does not really speak to accountability to Manitobans. This slush fund, I really do not see any valid reasons for establishing a slush fund. There may be some ulterior motives there that may benefit the environment, benefit Manitobans, but we think there are other options to move those particular issues forward.

It was interesting to note Mr. Schreyer's comments about this plan being perverse. He also talked about it being "the most retrograde step the government could possibly take." So, clearly, he feels that it is an environmental issue as well and, again, we are talking about natural gas which is a non-renewable energy source.

Some of the people in the public interest they feel that this is a tremendously unfair plan as well. Again, we are thinking specifically of rural users who really do not have the access to natural gas, forced to use electricity. So, really, it is an unfair disadvantage for electricity users.

Some of the other comments we are getting back from the business community, and this is very important. There are some very significant users of electricity around Manitoba, and at a time when we are facing tremendous profits in Hydro, why would we be looking at any kinds of rate increases on Hydro?

Some of these businesses came here because they felt that Hydro was relatively economic, but of course what we have seen over the last few years has been a raise in the rates. Hydro, again, they are looking at an increase in rates. The government has kind of curtailed them on that particular latest rate increase, but I am sure down the road we will be expecting more rate increases. Mr. Speaker, that is a real detriment to the business community here in Manitoba.

The other thing that came to light just recently too was a strategy that Manitoba Hydro seemed to be putting in place, and again it impacts the business community directly, and this particular policy is one where they actually force the business that is going to be expanding but requires extra amounts of electricity, electric service, they are actually forcing that particular business to pay for the hookup of that extra service.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, that is not productive to the business community in Manitoba. We think that this government and Hydro should be bringing forward initiatives that would enhance the business community here in Manitoba.

\* (16:30)

I know this government talks about geothermal. Well, I am glad the government finally woke up to geothermal. This is a technology that has been out for years and years and years. This technology has been available in Manitoba for years. I know, for instance, my father, when he built a house in 1997, 1997, that is eight years ago, and, at that time, he installed geothermal system then. So I am glad it took eight years for the government to realize that there was even this technology available.

The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is correct. It would appear from all the media that we are getting that the NDP government just invented geothermal. But I remind the members opposite it has been in use in Manitoba, in rural Manitoba, for over eight years.

Now, the other thing, I would be remiss when we are talking about Hydro, if I did not bring up one of my pet peeves, and that is the wind energy in Manitoba. We are happy to hear that the government is at least still thinking about the additions on more wind energy in Manitoba. We are hopeful on this side that the government does not get a road in front of and create roadblocks to the investors that want to invest here in Manitoba. We think it is long overdue. We think that there are lots of options for wind farms here in Manitoba. I know in my particular area we have a couple of developments that we would like to see move forward. We have a number of companies out there that are looking at land, they are looking at acquiring land, they are busy signing up farmers as we speak, so we are quite optimistic that we can move this forward. We are just hopeful that the government does not get in the road and create roadblocks that would end up diverting this potential investment outside of Manitoba.

So there is a sense of urgency that we move on with the wind energy program here in Manitoba or else this investment will be forced either to Saskatchewan or, even worse, probably into the United States. So I want the members opposite to recognize that this is a very important issue that has to be moved forward very quickly.

So many benefits to rural Manitoba. We know the conditions of the rural economy right now. The farm producers are looking for any kind of advantage they can get to help subsidize their farm operation because, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, some of these farmers, if they do not find some form of subsidization for their farm, they are going to be out of business.

**An Honourable Member:** But that bunch does not understand that.

**Mr. Cullen:** And that is true. This particular government does not recognize the critical situation we are in in rural Manitoba when it comes to the farm economy and not just the farm economy, but that particular economics is passed right back through all rural economies and rural communities. Quite frankly, we have a major crisis occurring in rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. The number of sales we are going to see in the next six months is going to be tremendous. A lot of the cattle producers that were here today, I know they have many friends in the business who will be looking to liquidate their herds. There is a little bit of money in the market right now, so they are going to liquidate their herds. They are going to get right out of business unless they can find some other options here. Quite frankly, the wind energy, I think, can be very good for not just the individual farmers, but for the municipalities as well, because it does provide, you know, quite a bit of investment and equity there, and it provides for an extra tax base that these particular municipalities will certainly use to support their infrastructure.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, clearly, the government may have to go back to the drawing board when they have another consideration of Bill 11. There are a lot of very important issues that have to be addressed there. Clearly, Manitoba Hydro can be a very good Crown corporation for us in Manitoba. We hope, if managed properly, allowed to pay back some of that debt, which I know the company itself would like to deal with, once they get that debt issue resolved, they are certainly, hopefully, working on export markets, which clearly should be in a position to generate some revenue so that Manitoba Hydro could pay off those debts and really make the Crown corporation a very effective Crown corporation.

I think that, when we talk about development of Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro can play a very important role there, and I think it should be there to attract business, keep business viable, by providing

fairly low rates to the business community in Manitoba. We certainly do not have the oil and gas reserves that other provinces have, so we have to rely on corporations such as Manitoba Hydro to help us out here in the economic times that we are in in Manitoba.

So we certainly hope that the government will reconsider Bill 12 as it moves forward, and I think if we do get to the committee stage, once we do get to committee stage, there will be many Manitobans who want to step forward and bring their ideas to the government. Quite clearly, from what I have heard from my constituents, they are not in favour of this cross-subsidization of gas with revenue generated from electricity.

Mr. Speaker, I just ask in closing that this government take a real hard look at Bill 11 and come up with some alternatives for us that will look after us long into the future. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be speaking today to Bill 11, The Winter Heating Cost Control Act. I did not intend to speak to this bill till I managed to listen to the Liberal Leader's address and then the Member for Inkster's (Mr. Lamoureux) address, and I just had to respond after listening to the two of them and the previous member who just spoke.

Mr. Speaker, the member who just spoke was talking about the debt of Manitoba Hydro, and I keep looking at the, you know, each day the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik), the Finance critic continues to misrepresent the total debt of the province, and now the member is misrepresenting the debt of Manitoba Hydro. He is saying that it is \$9 billion and, in fact, all he has to do is look at the quarterly report of Manitoba Hydro, September 30 of this year. You know, unless Manitoba Hydro debt went up \$2.5 billion in the last month and a half, I do not think that is the case, but clearly, clearly the liabilities of Manitoba Hydro are \$6.5 billion, not \$9 billion. The \$9 billion he is using is the total of the long-term debt and the equity in the corporation. The equity in the corporation, the amount that the corporation is worth, if you were to liquidate its asset and sell it off, would be \$1.3 billion. That is what the corporation is worth.

So, you know, the member thinks he can get away with misrepresenting the debt of Manitoba Hydro. I could see if he was maybe out a couple of million here or there. You could accept that, but \$2.5 billion when the total picture is only \$6 billion?

I mean, that is a huge variance. He ought to get some better researchers over on that side. Obviously, we should be providing more research to the Tory caucus.

Now, the Member for Inkster, I want to deal with some of his comments, but I would like to point out that Manitoba Hydro has some costing sheets out for people who are thinking of making a conversion from gas to electricity, and I want to tell the members that, in fact, if you look at their conversion sheets you will find that today, if you have a high-efficiency gas furnace, in fact your costs are still lower than if you have an electric furnace. The heating costs are about roughly \$100 cheaper, \$100 lower with a high-efficiency furnace. In fact, I got a furnace replaced for myself in July and simply went to a high-efficiency model rather than going over to electric. Now the Member for Inkster is questioning that and kind of upset that I would not go right to electricity, and I want to tell him why you would not do that.

Number one, for the Member for Inkster, all you have to do is count. It is still \$100 cheaper to have that gas furnace. Second of all, I am actually helping the province because, if you have a rush of people from gas going over to electrical heat, what you are going to do is you are going to cut into our exports, and we are making a fortune. We are making a fortune right now for the people of Manitoba and the long-term viability and stability of Manitoba Hydro by being able to export our power.

\*(16:40)

In fact, in Manitoba, I was looking into the wind farm issue a year or so ago and was told at that time that Manitoba Hydro was selling the power, I believe, to Manitobans at about 5 cents a kilowatt-hour, Saskatchewan was around 6. In Alberta, the pricing was 75 or 80 cents on the unregulated free market. That is where we are selling power that we do not use here. So, you know, the reason that Manitoba Hydro for many years has promoted Power Smart is quite simple. The more they can get Manitobans to become more energy-efficient, then that means that Manitobans have more power to export at huge pricings.

So what the member from Inkster is trying to do is to create a stampede of people over to electricity. He wants to whack them, he wants to sock them, he wants to get them with a free-market 44 percent increase this winter. That is the big Liberal plan. I guess, you know, they and the Tories want us to give

it to the public; and, in the middle of winter when my constituents are phoning me by the hundreds complaining about this 40 percent, then the Tories and Liberals will do an about-face and they will be on the other side of the issue. In one of their speeches last week they were on both sides of the issue in the same speech.

So, Mr. Speaker, the idea of Manitoba Hydro is to smooth out the spikes, to get the constituents, for the next two years, over this period without major 40 percent-plus increases in their bills. But the idea is that while this is happening, while we are getting them over this hump, we are encouraging them and offering incentives for energy reduction, reduction in consumption. We are offering a number of programs. One of them is free insulation, a free insulation program for people who want to improve the insulation in their houses. Hopefully, that program has been available to electric users, but has not been available up till now to the gas users. That is what we are going to do, is offer it to gas users, so people can insulate their houses and their usage of gas will drop and they, in fact, will not have to pay a fortune for their heat.

What we are really doing is taking care of the spikes that would happen here if we do not do anything. If you look at the bill, Mr. Speaker, all the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has to do is look at the bill and he can see in one of the WHEREASes it says "WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba and the PUB consider that the hardship that Centra Gas customers experience from escalating natural gas prices can be alleviated somewhat by deferring the price increases." That is all we are doing.

Well, what has the member done? He has recommended that we put out a huge amount of money out of general revenues. He wants to send out cheques to people that way. His federal government was planning a \$500 million, a half-a-billion-dollar program, and that bill was introduced to the federal House. Rather than—[interjection]

The Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) wants to know how that worked. I want to tell you how that worked. They were so concerned about getting that half billion dollars out to the energy users this winter that, in fact, when Paul Martin had the opportunity to put the election over to January-February and get through the Christmas season, the opposition parties had agreed they would pass all the bills. What did he do? He did not co-operate. So, in

fact, when we go through the next two months of federal election, I think it is incumbent that we point out to voters in our ridings the fact that those Liberals were playing a cynical game by introducing a bill and then, in fact, letting the bill die so that people will have a hardship, could have been partially alleviated had that bill gone through. That is money that they were going to spend right out of the Treasury. The Liberals are very good about spending money out of the Treasury. They promised to spend a lot of money to handle the problem here, and this member is complaining that we are trying to defer the problem for up to a couple of years and smooth out the spikes.

Another point that was brought up by one of the members, the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) yesterday, he was saying, well, you know, this is not such a bad plan. The hedging idea is a good one. The hedging is not so bad. Now, he was not talking about hedgehogs; he was talking about hedging, something that Manitoba Hydro is good at. He said, well, this was a cynical ploy. He was saying that this is a very cynical ploy on the part of the government that, in fact, they have this two-year program and two years is going to end in 2007, just after the election is over, right? But he has not calculated that we actually have a five-year mandate. If it was part of a cynical ploy, we would have probably had a three-year program to take us well past 2008 when the election is likely to be. But, no, the Member for Arthur-Virden, who was advised by the highways minister yesterday to move his birdbath because the No. 1 highway was being twinned and going right through his backyard, a matter that the member opposite seems to forget about. They constantly complain about this highway not being built. Another highway not being, you know, Highway 200, the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) was talking about, and I drove that section she was talking about last year and I think I only saw one car in the whole 10 miles of road.

The members opposite are looking for any little thing they can complain about. Every little road they want in their area that is not paved, they think that it should be paved, and then they jump on that and tell us that we should be paving this road and that road. The fact of the matter is that they are all over the place. One member says, oh, the hedging is not so bad, it is a good idea, well, it is a cynical ploy and another member is talking about cross-subsidy.

Now, let us look at the Liberals here for a moment. You know, the Liberal Party's contribution

to Manitoba energy is really not a very—other than D. L. Campbell electrifying rural areas back in the 1950s and building one or two small plants on the Winnipeg River, that is the end of the Liberal Party contribution to Hydro development in Manitoba. As a matter of fact, when Sharon Carstairs was here as the leader of that group, when they actually had some members, she referred to Limestone as lemonstone and she was constantly criticizing that project. Yet the NDP government of the day brought that project on-line, on-stream, \$1 billion under budget and that was one of the great testaments to development of Hydro development under the NDP.

Let me also tell you something about Limestone. The fact of the matter is that Limestone was actually started under the NDP government of Ed Schreyer. When Sterling Lyon became premier in 1977, he mothballed it, shut it down and stopped it in mid-shovel. It took the re-election of the Howard Pawley government in November 1981 to start the project back up, and then we finished the project. To this day, it is viewed as one of the major, major, major developments, and not supported by the Liberal Leader at the time.

\* (16:50)

I would like to ask the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) what he is going to say when we start Wuskwatim. What is he going to say when we start Conawapa? Are they going to have some similar complaints? Of course, they will. *[interjection]* Exactly. The Industry Minister says they are going to like part of the project, but at the end of the day they are going to think, oh, the timing is off. You know, if we just wait till a Liberal government gets elected, we could build a project. Well, if we are going to wait for a Liberal government to get elected, the project will never get built. It will be, like, 500 years. There is a greater chance of a thousand-year flood than there is having a Liberal government elected in this province again.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Leader and the Member for Inkster, they went on at length about why they do not like anything, really. I mean, I have not found anything that they are in favour of. But, certainly, when it comes to development of hydro projects, they have not been supportive over the years. So I would be very interested to see where they are going to come down on our future developments.

They are asking that the public be hit by huge increases. As a matter of fact, the leader said he did

not like it because it interfered with the market. He is now the Adam Smith of Manitoba politics. He wants the free market, when it comes to these price increases, yet he also does not want to override the powers of the PUB. Now he has become a big fan of the PUB process, and listening to him I kept thinking of the grassy knoll theory of the Kennedy assassination. He was coming up with this big conspiracy theory about how the government was planning to just get through the next election based on this slush fund that he was talking about. He is going to be really shocked and surprised if, in fact, perhaps the natural gas prices moderate a bit and dip a bit, and, in fact, we do not have to dip into this area at all, and then what is he going to have to say? But it was a great speech and it filled the time and he has something now to send out to his constituents.

You know, Mr. Speaker, one of the big areas that we have started to develop in Manitoba is the area wind power, and I have been very, very supportive and interested in that. The Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen), now I know he is new and I know he is kind of nervous about what Merv Tweed might be thinking these days. You know, "I would not want Merv to be making any false moves. Keep those guns holstered." But, you know, he is talking about how wind power is a big issue and how supportive he is on wind power.

You know something, Mr. Speaker? We did not hear a peep out of any of those members for 11 years while they were in government. Not one peep was ever mentioned. In 1992, in Pincher Creek in Alberta, there was all sorts of wind development going on, and in Québec and other places, too, but particularly Pincher Creek. Was there any effort on the part of those members, when they were in government, to start a wind farm in Manitoba? Not at all. We had Gull Lake in Saskatchewan starting to develop. We had Pincher Creek developing, nothing in Manitoba.

As a matter of fact, I was not too happy that it took us so long to start moving in that area, too, because we did not start as quickly as I think we should have. I think we should have developed them under Manitoba Hydro's auspices, too, and the first one has gone into kind of private-sector development at this point, but we have a number more coming and maybe the ownership structure will change a little bit.

Nevertheless, the Member for Turtle Mountain is finally on to something, that this is good for the

Manitoba economy, and the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) was at the opening. You know, we were on a grassy knoll. We were sitting on a grassy knoll out there in St. Leon, perched high above St. Leon, and we were making this big announcement, and, you know, I tell you, as the cameras were whirring, the Member for Carman was right up front there. He never missed a click. He never missed one of those pictures, getting in there in all those shots, because the fact of the matter is, as the Member for Turtle Mountain points out, this is great for those rural economies. There are local farmers who have contracts now where they make money having the turbines on their land, and this power is very good for the environment.

There is no way we have right now to store the power, which, you know, hopefully in the future we can develop some sort of a system, but right now you either use it or lose it, and the winds are not always blowing, but we have 99 megawatts out there, and we are looking now at a thousand megawatts, and who says we have to stop at a thousand megawatts. I mean, I do not know who came up with that figure of a thousand megawatts.

It is too bad we could not have wind farms up north, but I am told the wind patterns are not just right and so on. But I mean who is to say that we will not find some way in the future of developing wind farms up north, and that is the answer to all of our energy problems. It could be part of the answer to part of our energy problems up in northern Manitoba. But let us deal with southern Manitoba and those thousand megawatts that we should be developing, are going to be developing over the next couple of years, that the Member for Turtle Mountain talked about. That is, people are permanently employed in that area because of these wind farms.

Another big area that we have to look at is manufacturing. Right now the companies, General Electric, Vestus—Vestus is, I believe, from Denmark. The turbines are built over there, and they are sent over to Canada, the blades and the turbines. But the cones that hold the blades up are actually made just south of here in North Dakota and South Dakota because there is a huge development in North Dakota, South Dakota around Edgeley and other places, development of wind farms, a lot of them co-operative wind farms in those areas of the United States.

There would be some big advantage to us if we can attract some of the construction for these wind

farms right here in Manitoba. In Saskatchewan when they are developing Gull Lake, as we speak, they are going with another 99 kilowatts wind farm, and what they are doing is, I think, it is Hitachi, but they are actually building the, I forget the name of what they call them, whether they are cones or the parts that the propeller hooks up to in any event. They are building those in Saskatoon, so you can see that Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, has attracted some extra jobs and some business because of the wind industry. The quicker we can develop this area, and Manitoba Hydro has asked for proposals for development, but this is the way we should be moving.

Now the Member for Turtle Mountain talked about the geothermal, and as if somehow that was another one of their great ideas that they never talked about, that they kept secret for the 11 years they were in government, but the fact of the matter is that this government believes in geothermal. This government is actually doing something about it.

We have the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), we have the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), two members right here who actually have geothermal in their own houses. I am proud to say the Member for Dauphin is actually a constituent of mine as well; he has geothermal in his house.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that geothermal is a type of technology that works better in new developments, so the members opposite are very thrilled about the Waverley West development and want to see that development. The former Member for Fort Whyte was concerned about development out there in the Waverley area. That Member for Turtle Mountain should know that those houses, all those new houses, I believe, are going to have geothermal installed, because that is the time to put it in, when you are building new houses, but to try to put it into existing houses, you really have to be committed, as my two colleagues are, committed to the idea and be prepared to pay a bit more up front to get started with the technology, knowing, of course, that it will pay off in the long term. But a lot of people are not looking that way. They want to know what the cheapest cost is for today and for this year, not what it is going to be over five or six years, but those members have shown the—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) will have six minutes remaining.

The time being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 30, 2005

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